

Isaiah continues to open up different aspects of the work of the 'Servant of the Lord'.

1. The predicted Servant refuses to follow any path of self-preservation or self-protection

- He willingly hands Himself over

- He will not protest or defend Himself

1. The predicted Servant refuses to follow any path of self-preservation or self-protection.

⁷He was oppressed and he humbled himself, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

In all the events that take place as the Servant approaches execution, he willingly hands himself over to his divinely appointed sufferings and death. He deliberately submits. He refuses to complain or shout out a protest. He refuses to defend himself.

⁸From being held in custody and without experiencing any justice he was taken out to die. And among his contemporaries, who considered that he was cut off from the land of the living because of the transgression of my people to whom the blow was due?

2. He was a sacrifice for sin but was without sin himself

- He faces much injustice

- At the time of His death nobody appreciates what is happening

- The events of the New Testament fulfil this prediction

2. The Servant was a sacrifice for sin but was without sin himself. The Servant faces much injustice. There is no restraint of the hostility against him, and no justice in the decision to execute him. Worse still, he dies without anyone appreciating at the time what is happening. The truth is: his death is a substitutionary sacrifice. The blow should have fallen on the people, but it falls on the Servant instead. Isaiah is the speaker in verse 8c. 'My people' means Isaiah's people. But although he suffered among sinners he himself committed no sin.

⁹He was assigned a grave with wicked people, and with a rich person in his awful death, even though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

What led Isaiah to say these words is a mystery to us. It seems to have been the very direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Only the New Testament story of Jesus' being crucified among thieves and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea provides an explanation.

3. He gives himself as a guilt-offering and must be received as a guilt-offering

- Apparently deliberate ambiguity

3. The Servant gives himself as a guilt-offering and must be received as a guilt-offering. It is difficult to translate the Hebrew in verse 10 because there is a phrase which seems to be deliberately ambiguous. The Hebrew of the second line may mean 'If and when his soul makes a guilt-offering . . .', and it may also mean 'If and when you make his life a guilt-offering . . .'. It seems this ambiguity is intended. Jesus offers himself as a sacrifice. By faith you **also** have to make him your sacrifice. Both sides of the matter are equally true – and equally to be found in the Hebrew here. The only way I can translate it is to use an 'expanded translation' that has both phrases in it.

¹⁰It was Yahweh who wished to cause him to suffer by crushing him. If and when his soul makes a guilt-offering, and if and when **you** make his life a guilt-offering, he

• The Servant offers Himself as a sacrifice, and you must receive it

• The Servant becomes the administrator of the will of God

• The Servant takes joy in the good results of His work

• He provides righteousness for all who will receive it

4. The obedient Servant is given God's people as his reward

• God gives the Servant the many

• Authority is His reward

will see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh will flourish in his hand.

God makes the Servant to be a sacrifice for sin. The Servant offers himself as a sacrifice for sin. And you — the individual who hears the news — must **receive** the sacrifice. 'You' also must make him a guilt-offering. When all of this happens 'he will see his offspring'. That is, sons and daughters for Yahweh come into being. The people who receive the Servant of God (the Lord Jesus Christ as it turned out) become the children of God. And 'he shall prolong his days'; his life continues despite his death! And 'the pleasure of Yahweh will flourish in his hand'. The Servant, once dead but subsequently alive, becomes the administrator of the will of God.

Verse 11 goes on to expand various aspects of what has already been said.

¹¹Because of the toil of his soul, he will be satisfied with what he sees; by his knowledge the righteous one, my servant, will provide righteousness for many, and he himself will bear their iniquities.

The Servant himself takes joy in the good results of his work of sin-bearing. By his 'know-how', his knowledge of what God demands and what is needed, he provides righteousness for all who will receive it. He is the righteous one, so the righteousness he provides is evidently his righteousness. It comes because he has carried away their sins by his death.

4. The obedient Servant is given God's people as his reward.

¹²Therefore I will allocate to him the many, and the strong he will allocate as spoil. For he poured out his life unto death, and let himself be numbered with the rebels. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

God (who is the speaker in verse 12) gives the Servant 'the many' — those who have become God's people by their faith in God's Servant. Among them are 'the strong' (the kings already mentioned in 52:14–15). The Servant is now the King over all kings and disposes of them as he wishes. His authority is his reward for (i) his self-sacrifice, (ii) his willingness to become one with sinners, (iii) his death as a sin-bearer, (iv) his faithfulness in intercession.



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