

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

The Fourth Servant Song

Isa 52:13-53:12

Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

Many were appalled at him — his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men — so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of pains, and acquainted with sickness; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded through our transgressions, he was bruised through our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of Yahweh to bruise him; he made him sick; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand;

He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

No passage in the Bible is more startling than this fourth Isaiah Servant Song. The attributes of this Servant are distinct, unique, and explicit.

Invariably this Song has been assigned to Jesus. From being exalted, Acts 2:33, to a direct quotation of Isa 53:1 in John 12:38, to great suffering, Mark 9:12, to bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, Matt 8:17, to bearing the sins of many, Heb 9:28 and I Pet 2:24, to being put to death for our trespasses, Rom 4:25 and I Cor 15:3, to opening not his mouth, a phrase in 53:7 quoted in Acts 8:32, to being numbered with the transgressors, Luke 22:37, to taking his grave with the rich, Matt 27:57-60 — there is an unshakable tradition that this Song was a prediction of Jesus.

Only since the turn of the twentieth century has scholarly opinion marshaled more objective question of such assignment. Unfortunately, modern scholarship, influenced by its godless attitudes, was unwilling to search for other possible historic candidates. The traditional assignment to Jesus conditioned all views to expect an extraordinary personality, so extraordinary that historic human mortals were not considered reasonable candidates.

The attributes of this Servant are distinctly different from those described in the first three Servant Songs. In the other Songs the suffering of the Servant is not great. He may suffer from a condition of restraint, but he is not subject to the extreme physical trauma indicated here. Physical disfigurement described in this Song is notably absent in the other songs. This Servant is afflicted by God, a suffering not experienced by the other Servant.

Also, the task of the Servant of the first three Songs is uniquely different from this Servant. The other Servant declares judgment to the nations, and serves as a *light to the nations*; this Servant *sprinkles* many nations and astounds kings and rulers with his work.

To draw out the features of this Song which make it so unique, and which show this Servant as also unique, I shall tabulate essential items. This is not intended to be exhaustive of every phrase, but to display the strength of the prophetic forecast.

As I shall show, this forecast is not of Jesus, but another identifiable historic Servant known to all of us. Sufficient evidence exists within the New Testament to demonstrate that the apostle Paul well fits the listed attributes.

The following summary of verses briefly shows the attributes and actions of the Servant.

52:13 His personal conduct and his exaltation in the heavenly realms.
52:14 Many were appalled at him. His physical appearance was marred beyond human semblance.
52:15 His impact upon the nations.
53:1 The wonderment of the world at the power of his work.
53:2 His youth and his lack of beauty.
53:3 Afflicted with disease that turns men away from gazing upon him.
53:4 Afflicted and smitten by God.
53:5 Wounded, bruised, and punished through our transgressions.
53:6 Oppressed and afflicted, led to slaughter like a sheep that opens not its mouth.
53:8 Taken away by perverse judgment. His generation did not consider the depth of their offense against a servant of God.
53:9 Without violence or deceit he was taken away and buried with the wicked and wealthy.
53:10 Yahweh wished to use him as a demonstration to the nations; the reward to the Servant shall be eternal life.
53:11 He shall turn many to righteousness, and shall see the fruits of his labor.
53:12 Because he was numbered with the transgressors, but poured out his soul to death, Yahweh will give him high honor in the heavenly realms.

Through such listing we can more easily recognize the flagrant misplacement in attempts to assign this Song to Jesus. Although one can distort the episodes of the death and crucifixion of Jesus to force this prediction, we can now clearly perceive how foolish such assignment becomes. Overwhelmed by the fact of his life, death, and resurrection appearances, the apostles — and all Christians since — isolated pieces out of this prophecy to show the greatness of God, only to twist and distort this important revelation.

As I enter the details of the prophecy I shall review those traditional assignments from the perspective of a higher context.

I shall relocate phrases to simplify examination.

Behold, My Servant!

This phrase occurs only twice within the Bible. The first is in Isa 42:1 where it introduces the other Servant. The second is here where it introduces this Servant. (Matt 12:18 quotes Isa 42:1.) This restriction to two occurrences shows unique application; it is not an expression used universally for various Servants.

The two occurrences of the phrase show that the Servant passages do not refer to one individual. They are introduced separately. The revelations distinguish between the two.

Yahweh is asking the reader to carefully consider these Servants. They are instruments in the unfolding of his destiny program.

These are human Servants, not divine Servants. The term servant occurs approximately four hundred times in the Old Testament. It occurs approximately eighty times in the New. It is universally applied to human mortals who serve some higher authority. Moses was a notable Servant of Yahweh, Exod 14:31 and Num 12:7. Elijah, II Ki 10:10, David, II Ki 19:34, and Job, Job 1:8, were all servants of Yahweh. Although divine beings in Rev 19:10 and 22:9 identified themselves as fellow servants the term is never applied to high administrative personalities from the heavenly realms.

Jesus, as a divine being — the Creator, Yahweh — is not a human servant. The word *servant* is not used in the forecasts of Jesus, Ps 22, Zech 9:9 and 11:12. Neither do the prophecies on Melchizedek use the word *servant*, Ps 2, Ps 72, Ps 110, Isa 9:6-7, Isa 11, and so on. The words used for Melchizedek are *anointed*, *Lord*, *child*, or *son*. The word *servant* marks the prophetic difference between divine personalities of high administrative authority and subservient personalities, human or celestial.

Although the word *servant* was applied to Jesus by the apostles, they did so out of their view of supposed assignment by the Isaiah prophecies, and from Jewish tradition. See Acts 3:14 and 4:27, and Paul's modified use in Romans 15:8.

Shall Deal Prudently, 52:13

RSV has *shall prosper*. Other translations have *wisely*. The Hebrew word means one who acts carefully. Paul, in all his work, from his letters, to specific episodes, demonstrated diplomacy and tact. His address to the Athenians, Acts 17:22-41, his leaning over backwards to accommodate the Corinthians in their Charismatic fervor, I Cor 12-14, his conduct in his visits with the apostles, Acts 21:17f and Galatians 2:1-10, and his defense before kings, Acts 23-26 — all display his prudent dealings with others. His letters, with their penetrating and prudent logic, have fascinated the generations.

(It is instructive to note his condemnation of Peter, a display of Paul's righteous indignation in face-to-face confrontation with insincerity, Gal 2:11-21.)

Jesus certainly used great care in his conduct, that his mission not be jeopardized. Not until his final days, when he drove the money changers from the Temple, and brought face-to-face condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees, did he throw aside such cautions. The ascription to Jesus is appropriate, but Paul easily fits the description.

Shall Sprinkle Many Nations, 52:15

RSV has *startle*, but this is not supported by the Hebrew. Brown, Driver and Briggs, in their monumental *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, show support for *sprinkle* in Hebrew literature and note that *startle* is highly dubi-

ous. They cite only this Isaiah passage and then in the form of *spring* or *leap*. *Startle* is further derived from *to leap in joyful surprise* at the news of Jesus. This extrapolation of presumed meaning from dubious translation is an excellent illustration how translators will distort text to meet their *a priori* assumptions of the intent of the writer. The idea of *startle* or *astonish* may also be influenced by the disfigurement described in the preceding verse.

Sprinkle denotes the result of the activity of this Servant, not the impression left from his physical appearance, nor that the nations would leap in joyful surprise at the good news of Jesus. We can easily recognize the results of Paul's labors; the western nations converted to Christianity, and became modern civilization, mostly as the result of his work. While other individuals labored to take the news of Jesus to the pagan countries of Europe, Paul was the bright theologian who built the foundations of intellectual understanding, so important to the Greek and Roman world. He opened the religious doors which led to the massive conversion of those people. His letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Galatians in Asia Minor, and those to the Corinthians and Thessalonians in Greece helped to create that theological foundation. Although he apparently never worked directly in Rome, except for personal visits during his household arrest, his letter to the Romans shows how he provided theological justification for the new Christian teachings, although that church was founded on the work of others. Of all his letters, the one to the Romans is the most tightly reasoned and most broadly applied to theological issues. He offers many quotations from the Old Testament, surely an indication of a strong Jewish population, but he also directly addresses the Gentiles, Rom 15.

The value of Paul's letters to Christian belief, understanding, and theology, may be seen in their survival under intense scrutiny, and their irreplaceable service for the past two thousand years.

Paul does not hesitate to describe his commission from God to the nations, Rom 15:15f.

He directly quotes Isa 52:15 in application to himself, Rom 15:21.

How many pagan people conceived the things that Paul taught? From his address before the Athenians about pagan gods, to his exhortations to the Corinthians, to his work among the Galatians, the pagan world never heard such teaching.

He hoped to go on to Spain, Rom 15:24, 28, but we have no evidence he did. He truly developed the theological foundations of Christian doctrine and belief. Although not without contest in early Christian times, Paul's work was the mortar that melded the body of Christian believers into one church throughout Europe. He did, indeed, sprinkle many nations.

Kings Shall Shut Their Mouths, 52:15

In his defense before Felix Paul openly explained his teaching, holding Felix fascinated. Felix may intentionally have held Paul prisoner for two years to converse with him often during that period, Acts 24:24-27. In his defense before Festus and Agrippa he described his experience on the road to Damascus, Acts 26:2-23. At last, unable to withhold his fear and surprise, Festus exclaimed, *Paul, you are mad. Your great learning is turning you mad.* Those rulers and kings heard things they had never heard before.

The historic record does not describe other kings and rulers who may also have heard directly from Paul. Nor do we know how many kings and rulers shut their mouths at his teachings after his death. We do know the pervasive influence he had on the western nations.

A Young Plant, 53:2

He grew up before him like a young plant.

Paul was young at the time of his persecution of the new sect. When Stephen was condemned, Paul was the agent for the Sanhedrin. In preparation for the stoning the men laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. Saul consented to his death, Acts 7:58-60. Saul then went in pursuit of many others, still as a young man, but his visitation by Jesus on the road to Damascus cut short all such plans and efforts.

This youthfulness also distinguishes Paul from the first Servant who is described in older years.

The Arm of Yahweh, 53:1

Who believed what we heard? To whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?

In ancient times the word *arm* was used to denote the power and might of a ruler. *The arm of Yahweh* means the strength and power of Yahweh.

Ps 77:15 — Thou didst with thy arm redeem thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

Ps 89:13 — Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, high thy right hand.

Isa 40:10 — Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

Indeed, to whom were the might and power of Jesus revealed? Of all human servants, who was favored with a special visit in celestial majesty and heavenly glory?

When we consider the nature and character of Paul we are struck by his devoted service to God, both before that momentous visit on the road to Damascus, and after.

Acts 22:3

I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day.

It was Paul's nature to be zealous for God. That was his character. And it was because of his character that he could be such a great Servant for Jesus.

But something happened. He turned from a devoted Jew to a more devoted Servant. The visit of Jesus profoundly altered his attitude.

And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and approving, and keeping the garments of those who killed him.

The nobility and stalwart courage of Stephen was the psychological event that turned Paul. Here was a man who espoused a new and strange belief; a belief that a divine Son of God had lived on earth in human form, was born as a babe of the world, had lived as a man, and had died on a cross that he might save the people of this world.

Stephen was not some ignoble fanatic — some ignorant drifter, clinging to delusion. He was an educated man, articulate, and powerful in his belief. His faith in Jesus was exceedingly great, to the level that he would willingly give his life in testimony to that divine Son of God.

Neither was Paul an unfeeling man, some frustrated maniac, out to prove the power of Jewish authority. He was filled with fervor because of his love for God, because of his devout allegiance to the God of his fathers.

The witness of Stephen had a powerful impact upon Paul. Paul was faced with the event of an intelligent man who willingly gave his life for his belief in Jesus. And Paul was also faced with the fact of a man who exhibited a zealotness and a sincerity equal to Paul's. How could he explain such devotion from transient emotions or intellectual fascination?

Paul requests letters of authority from the Sanhedrin to continue his suppression of the new believers. He is filled with continuing fervor to remove them from the midst of the Jews. He begins his journey to Damascus. Then, at that noontime hour, as he ponders the strength, courage, and sincerity of Stephen, he comes to grips with that fact that there is far more to this new sect than cult frenzy. And perhaps the stories of the resurrection of Jesus are true. As the focus of his psyche concentrates intensely on that dilemma a brilliant light strikes from the sky.

As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting."

Now Paul knew the reality of a living divine being who could personally visit him in glorious celestial light. Now he knew the reality of a living God. Now he knew that the testimony of Stephen and all those others was founded on a reality that did not appear in mere theological differences, cult perversions, or fanatic frenzies.

Paul's Special Commission

Out of that visit Paul was forced to profound reexamination of his attitudes. He was forced into complete reassessment of his beliefs and his theology.

Jesus identified himself to Paul. Paul was faced with the fact of directly meeting a divine being who had lived as a man among men. He had to deal with that fact. He also had to deal with another fact. Jewish men, compatriots, claimed that they had spent several years with Jesus, and that they were commissioned by this God-man. He also had now received a special commission. How should these two separate commissions relate to one another? He would go up to Jerusalem and speak with the apostles about this man who had lived among them and who claimed to be a divine Son of God. There was now no doubt about their experience, their testimony and their claims. But he also knew he had a separate commission — that Jesus has assigned him a task that did not depend on them. He would go up to Jerusalem and attempt to sort out this dilemma.

But he elects not to do so. While reports of the appearances of Jesus after his death on the cross were now, in Paul's mind, authentic, no other person had reported the profound visitation he had experienced. He was unique. Furthermore, why should he submit that experience to the judgment of others, no matter what relationship they may have had with Jesus during his life? He did not feel a need to seek human authority. Instead, he waits three years while he sorts out this dramatic experience, and its theological ramifications. Then he goes up to Jerusalem to speak with Jesus' personal apostles.

When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, "Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me." And I said, "Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in thee." And he said to me, "Depart; for I will send you far away to the Gentiles."

Now Paul had confirmation that his mission was distinctly different from that of Jesus' personal apostles. He knew that he had been commissioned to a special service to the Gentiles.

1 Tim 1:12-14

I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 4:17-18

But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the nations might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Certainly the power of God was revealed to Paul that momentous hour on the road to Damascus. But more than that, the power of God was exhibited through Paul in his conversion of the western nations. Truly, the arm of Yahweh was revealed to and through Paul.

Paul's Physical Appearance

Paul's unusual physical appearance is noted in the record. He speaks of it himself; a later Christian writer also briefly mentioned it.

The Christian author, who lived in the latter part of the second century, wrote a treatise on *The Acts of Paul*. He made this remark:

. . . a man of little stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining, and nose somewhat hooked.

The small stature and crooked legs suggest a skeletal malformation from a childhood disease. Rickets is one possible candidate; it would be caused by a dietary deficiency.

We know Paul had a strong, if disfigured, body. He was physically fit. His many journeys, his shipwreck at sea, II Cor 11:24-25, his surviving of a stoning in Lystra, his subjection to beatings and scourgings, and his personal maintenance as a tent-maker (Acts 18:3) — all speak to a strong physique.

How unusual was his appearance?

Note Paul's remarks about himself in Gal 4:14.

And though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

Why would a malformed skeletal structure, a mere short stature and bowed legs, be a trial to the Galatians? Did he have greater disfigurement than suggested by the second-century writer? Indeed, Paul amplifies this remark.

What has become of the satisfaction you felt? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

Clearly, Paul's disfigurement was great, much more than simple body malformation during childhood. The statement about eyes strongly suggests a facial disfigurement.

Now consider the Isaiah passage:

As many were appalled at him, his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, (great disfigurement), and his form beyond that of the sons of men, 52:14.

The word *astonished* found in many versions does not capture the sense of the Hebrew. Brown, Driver and Briggs show the word as *awestruck*, *stunned*, or *appalled*.

The Isaiah statement seems exaggerated, almost beyond realistic description of a human condition — even for application to Jesus hanging on the cross.

To fit this description to Jesus the supposition is made that this appalling disfigurement, beyond human semblance, occurred at the crucifixion. However, the context shows someone disfigured in life, not in death. John, in his gospel, 1:14, says that Jesus was full of grace and truth. Those who knew him beheld his glory. How could a human figure, hanging on a cross, be caused to go beyond human semblance?

This is an example of the distortions that are forced on this passage to make it apply to Jesus.

Although, at first thought, without reflection, we might doubt that Paul's statements would meet the great disfigurement given in Isaiah, his physical condition certainly was a trial for the Galatians, and for all who saw him, wherever he went. Should we deny that they were appalled at him? Or stunned? Or shocked? Can we say that the plucking out of eyes is a mere rhetorical remark? Was it not an attempt by Paul to convey the extremity of his disfigurement?

How much of a trial was his physical condition?

As one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not, 53:3.

A more appropriate view of this Isaiah remark is suggested by McKenzie in his Doubleday Anchor edition of Second Isaiah: *As one from whom men avert their gaze.*

Indeed, Paul's statements about himself accurately reflect the sense of the Isaiah descriptions.

As he further stated in Gal 4:13

You know it was because of a disease of the body that I preached the gospel to you at first.

The translations differ on the rendering of the phrase in Galatians. NIV gives it as *ailment*, while ASV and KJV give it as an *infirmity of the flesh*.

Here is another important reference by Paul to the Isaiah passage.

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of pains, acquainted with sickness, 53:3.

Although the versions differ on the translation of these words, where *sorrows* is used instead of *pains*, and *grief* instead of *sickness*, the sense is of someone who has suffered disease and lives with the effects of that affliction. The attempt once again is to alter the literal meaning for application to Jesus. If Jesus suffers our sorrows and griefs he is empathizing with us; if someone else suffers our pains and our sicknesses he is a living example of human condition.

Again, Paul refers to his physical disability in II Cor 12:7 where he states:

And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a "pain in the body," ("thorn in the flesh"), was given me, a messenger from Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.

The skeletal malformations strongly indicate that disease afflicted him, and that it originated in childhood when the physical frame was developing. Whatever the cause, it brought a continuing pain that carried through his life.

Once again we find a parallel in Isaiah.

Like a root out of dry ground, he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, nor beauty that we should desire him, 53:2.

Out of dry ground denotes a withered or shrunken plant, one that grows in the desert. Comparison with Paul's skeletal malformation certainly is apt.

Repeatedly we find Paul referring to the Isaiah passage, although he does not quote it. In Gal 6:17 he states:

Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Compare this with Isaiah 53:4.

Surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains; we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

The Galatians, as well as all other people to whom Paul offered instruction and enlightenment, certainly must have felt that he was stricken and smitten by God, afflicted in his youth. The sicknesses and pains which he carried were not those which we each personally feel but those which afflict mankind in general. He was a living example of the devastation of human disease.

That this physical disfigurement, and its spiritual significance, was known to other people is indicated in Colossians 1:24.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my body I complete what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

Paul unquestionably saw himself as an agent to complete the work of Jesus, one who held a special role for his Lord; his suffering from disease was part of the price to be paid in that work.

Yet it was the will of Yahweh to bruise him, to make him sick . . . 53:10.

Paul's Social Afflictions

Paul was reconciled to the fact that he had to endure social affliction as part of the price of his service to God. His words are eloquent in II Cor 11:23-30

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one — I am talking like a madman — with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Consider the words of Isaiah:

But he was wounded through our transgressions, he was bruised through our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed, 53:5.

As a demonstration of a prediction of Jesus the versions translate *wounded for our transgression* and *bruised for our iniquities*. This choice of prepositions then supports the theological concept that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who gave himself on the cross for our sins.

Alexander Harkavy, in a Hebrew-English printing of the Old Testament, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, 1916, translates the prepositions as **through**, the form I chose. Brown, Driver and Briggs show the **mi** prepositional prefix on the two words as **because of**.

It is helpful to separate the thoughts. Was Paul wounded? Yes. Was Paul bruised? Yes. Did Paul suffer stripes? Yes.

Paul was wounded **because** of our transgressions, and he was bruised **because** of our iniquities.

A stumbling block to clear understanding is the use in Isaiah of the form of the collective pronouns. The word *our* shows a class of people who are all part of that group which brought these afflictions upon Paul. It was *our* transgression which crucified Jesus; it was *our* transgression which wounded Paul. It was *our* iniquities which brought bruising to Jesus in the final hours of his life; it was *our* iniquities which brought a lifetime of bruising to Paul.

Did Jesus heal us with his stripes? Submission to the cross brought far more than healing by Jesus; it brought the promise of eternal life. As Creator, Jesus could heal us without the stripes he suffered at his crucifixion.

Did Paul heal us with his stripes? He brought the news of the gospel of personal salvation and the promise of eternal life to the western nations, all of us who are descended from those people. Through the sacrifice of his life, and not merely his death, Paul brought a healing to the peoples of Europe, and through them, to the world. Through his sufferings, his wounds, his bruises, and his stripes he reconciled the *wild branches* with the parent stock, the Gentiles with the Jews, as one body of spiritual Israel. Indeed, it was through his stripes that we were healed. It was the chastisement that Jesus brought upon him that made us whole.

We were the sheep that had gone astray. All the pagan people of Europe had turned to their own ways. We showed our disrespect by laying on Paul our iniquities. It was the will of Yahweh to lay on Paul the iniquity of us all.

Yet it was the will of Yahweh to bruise him, to make him sick.

Would we deny such tribute to Paul?

Numbered With the Transgressors

He was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors, 53:12.

No sane Christian would claim that Jesus was beset by the sins of human kind. Jesus was the incarnate Creator. He was free of sin. He was free of transgressions. Yet, to force this passage upon Jesus we number him with those trans-

gressors who hung by him on the cross. From this view Jesus bore the sins of the world, and made intercession with the Father. We would not deny that Jesus suffered a terrible death because of *our* transgressions and *our* sins.

On the other hand every Christian admits that Paul was numbered with the transgressors. Paul was an adamant and vociferous persecutor of the new sect. But he also bore the sins, directly on his body, of many. He poured out his soul for the nations, and truly made intercession for the sins of us all.

Like a Lamb to the Slaughter

Paul appealed to Caesar. As a Roman citizen he exercised that right. King Agrippa obeyed his wish. He was taken to Rome, via a torturous route, heavy storms, and shipwreck. According to Acts he lived under his own roof for two years, although guarded and bound by chains. From there he wrote the letters to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians.

To the very end he expended his energies in communicating with, and exhorting, the churches. Nowhere do we have evidence that he complained about his imprisonment or his oppression.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken because of the transgression of my people?

Indeed, out of his generation who considered that he was cut off and stricken because of the transgression of the nations? Had they recognized the great service he rendered for God they may have had a different attitude about him.

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth, 53:9.

We have no evidence of Paul's death or of his burial. Early Christian tradition held that he went under *Nero's chopping block*. As a Roman citizen he would not have been crucified, nor fed to the lions.

This is the most specific statement used to identify Jesus; he was placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man. But such coincidence does not justify the application.

Paul's Heavenly Reward

He shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous.

The *offspring* are not human biological children; they are the *seed* of his work, the result of his labors. He shall see these results, as they spread over the generations, from his vantage point in the heavenly realms. He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. By his great learning Paul, the righteous one, Yahweh's servant, brought many to righteousness. Yahweh will prolong his days; he shall offer Paul eternal life.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The *great* are the great of heaven. It will not be *spoil* which Paul will divide with the strong of heaven, but the fruit of his labors, and his rewards on high.

He shall be exalted, lifted up, and be very high.

Now his heavenly rewards come. He shall be counted among the great of heaven.

This is not worldly exaltation, nor earthly elevation. It is heavenly status for the service he rendered to God.