

## THE SERVANT SONG 4

March 30, 2020

Welcome to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, Bible study spinach that tastes like cake, where we love and lift all we've been given. I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Bible Study Evangelista. We're about to finish up our Songs of Isaiah series, say that ten times fast. And I'm going to do a little recap here from the first part of the last song. And then I'm going to go verse by verse and then I'll pull it all together in a summary and a verse by verse reading and commentary on that last song in Isaiah 53. And I have a feeling it's probably gonna end up being another show, so this last Servant Song will end up being, I think, three parts. And I'm gonna reserve the last part for the Friends of the Show because I appreciate you so much and I love you and thank you.

So let's just get to it. We left off in the last show looking at Leviticus 14:2-7, where it talks about how the Servant is the Sprinkler of Nations. And that's important for a couple of reasons. First of all, the sprinkling was a ceremonial cleansing for those who had infectious disease, specifically leprosy in the Old Testament. But really any infectious disease, a boil, some kind of infection, anything like that. And he was supposed - the priest - the person who was being cleansed, would go to the priest who would offer two clean, live birds. He would do that with cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop. We sort of traced that scarlet threads, somewhat, through the reading of last week. We looked at how, at the beginning, where Adam and Eve, God slew an animal and made a covering after their sin. So, He took - somehow that was a sacrificial blood of an animal, that was in Genesis 3. And then Genesis 4, Abel's blood was an acceptable offering. It wasn't obviously something that he did on purpose, but he was basically a martyr because Cain, his brother, murdered him out of jealousy.

Then we have that blood in the sacrifice, the attempted sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac, where the blood of a ram, which is nothing but a male sheep, was substituted for Isaac, substituted for a son, in Genesis 22. Then the Passover lamb was slain and killed, and the blood was sprinkled with hyssop, or spread with hyssop on the doorposts of their homes, in Exodus 12. The temple sacrifices, those animals that were sacrificed there, took away the sins of the people. Specifically, we spoke about the red heifer, the Day of Atonement. That was in Leviticus 16.

And of course, all of those scarlet threads lead to the cross. That's where John the Baptist said, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in John 1. So, the blood of Jesus, then, redeems us from sin, a wasted life. In 1 Peter 1, he says, "It's not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect." It also, as I said, washes away our sin. It says in 1 John 1, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."

And finally, it brings us into relationship with God. I'll actually, probably spend a little more time on that, but what I really want to do at this point is - we talked about the hyssop and what that was, and of course the acacia wood. But God is telling us, basically, in this Servant Song, this last one, we looked at the part that was in 52 - chapter 52 of Isaiah last week. This we're going to finish up with the entire chapter of 53.

God is telling us that His Servant, the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, by the sprinkling of His blood, is going to provide a cleansing from a disease far worse than leprosy or infectious disease. That is sin. He says in chapter 53:1, Isaiah, "Who has believed our report [or our message]? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" That is the strength and the power of God. And remember, in our series on the Magnificat, we did an entire show on the arm of the Lord. That is a sort of metaphor in the Scriptures for how God hides His activity until the time of fulfillment at which time it becomes visible very quickly. Typically, He has let sin grow and grow and grow. He lets the people, who are involved in the sin - maybe we could even say *leading* the sin - He lets them grow and grow and it's almost like there's a bubble that builds and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger until the strength of God's arm pops the bubble and those people are humbled. They are shamed. They are vanquished. He is saying that this is all accomplished through the Servant.

He says, "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" That's a question really that Isaiah is asking his audience, but also, obviously, for us. We're reading this - at Jesus' time they would have been reading this as sort of prophetic of their own time and now we're looking backward on it. The arm of the Lord has been revealed - and it was revealed on the cross where the sinful leaders of the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees, the Jewish leaders - their sin had just blown up to the point that they put to death the Son of God, the Messiah. The Messiah they said they were looking for. This chapter makes it so plain what the Suffering Servant is going to do.

Of course I mentioned last week that the Jews still believe that this is speaking of the Jewish nation, but it's very obvious in the reading of it that it's speaking of the Jewish nation, yes, but then it is also speaking about a specific person. No one has fulfilled

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all of these prophecies the way the Suffering Servant has, and I'm going to sort of lay that out in a later part of the show today, the prophecies against the fulfillments in this very last song.

But Isaiah was sent to preach, then, in the declining days of the kingdom of Judah. He was forewarning all of those people that were listening that they should repent. He also even said that all that preaching for repentance was not gonna bring any result. Of course, if you parallel that to Jesus, Jesus preached of repentance, and, of course the Jewish leaders, they not only didn't receive it, but they put Him to death for it.

So that really should make us pause and ask the question, "Has Jesus' preaching of repentance throughout this series - and throughout this quarantine we might even say - has it brought results in your life?" What have you been forced to do away with throughout this quarantine and this COVID crisis that you do not want and should not want to pick up again after it's over when we're allowed to move about freely and the economic storm has passed. We should really be thinking about that. Who has believed our message, the message of the Suffering Servant?

Well, as I said, we'll go through and do a summary of all of that at the end of this show, or perhaps in the next show. The second verse says, "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground. That's sort of a picture of a suckling. My husband, actually, is a Master Gardener and he calls those "sucker plants." It has the meaning of a plant that sprouts new growth after the tree itself has died. In botany, they have a word to describe plants that do that. It's "sub-piliferous." I'm sure you've seen a tree trunk after you've cut the tree down and it has this sucker plant growing out of it. It was a dead tree.

That brings to mind the resurrection of the dead stick in Numbers 17 where Aaron was disputed as being the high priest. Moses, under the command of God, had all of the tribes of Israel, all 12, to bring their shepherds staffs into the holy of holies. Aaron's was the one that budded. It not only brought forth leaves and flowers, but also almonds. That was called the Resurrection of the Dead Stick and it was a picture of the dead priesthood that would be resurrected at Christ and through Christ and after Christ in the Catholic Church, the priesthood, the resurrection of the priesthood. It also indicates, according to the Church Fathers, this is a picture of Mary, who was a dead - we'll say barren - a barren plant, who, a virgin, who put forth the fruit of her womb, the Messiah.

So that dry ground is speaking of His parents and their lack of influence or wealth or importance. It says later on in that verse that "He had no royal bearing or handsomeness or status that we should esteem Him." So, they were just nobodies, really. He was born to poor parents in a poor part of the country that was pretty much despised, in a town that people said nothing good can come from, here in Nazareth. He lived in a cave. He worked at a trade. It's talking there how there was nothing that - in fact it says "there is no beauty that we should desire Him, or that we should admire Him." Although, He was admired by those who would actually listen to His word. He is a root out of a dry ground. Roots that spring up in fat and fertile fields owe everything to the soil in which they're growing. So, we don't wonder about those kinds of plants, but if we see a root or a tree poking out of the rocks or in the middle of the desert, we're surprised and we kind of admire its grit. More to come in a moment.

So, Isaiah 53:2, "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness, and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised and we did not esteem Him." So once again, we left off looking at the shoot out of the dry ground, and it makes me think of being in the Holy Land. We were in - we were at Mount Carmel, and there's a church there, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I remember - I actually have a picture, I might just use it for the show this week - but it was this plant at the very top of the edifice of the church, which was stone, it was all stone, and there was this plant growing out of the top of it. It really shouldn't have had any dirt or anything in there. I don't know how it was growing. But that's what I think of when I think of that verse, that "He is as a root out of dry ground." He is the Servant - the Suffering Servant, is a root that gets nothing from the soil in which it grows. But instead, it puts everything into the soil.

Jesus does not live because of His surroundings, but He makes everyone who surrounds Him, and who lives in Him, thrive. In the same way, the Church, and Christianity, takes nothing from the world except what's gonna make it watered down, or even injure it. But it gives every blessing to everywhere that it comes. Note, then, this truth, that Jesus is always a root out of dry ground. He takes nothing from the outside. He is completely self-contained and self-sustained in all the strength and excellence that is inherent in His Divinity.

Then again in 53:4, He assures us that many Jews were converted by the reading of this chapter, and particularly of this verse that says, "He is as a God, wounded and afflicted." We've mentioned that the Jews don't speak of a Suffering Messiah. They were a people under Roman rule, and they believed in a political Messiah. That was part of why the rejected Christ, because He was put to death. In fact, He allowed Himself to be put to death.

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They believed the Suffering Servant, Isaiah, was the holy nation of Israel. Of course, it definitely did suffer. Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 that, well in several places, when He talked about how the - "Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up." He was speaking, of course of His body, but He's also talking about how, in the end, of that generation, the whole temple would be destroyed. And that was true. That happened in 70 A.D., when the Romans raised the entire temple area and it was never rebuilt. There's just that one wall, that Wailing Wall, left. And in fact, it's been taken over by the Muslims. That mosque is sitting on the top of what they believe is Mount Moriah.

That's part, we think, what Phillip was preaching to the Enoch in Acts 8, who probably knew of some of these official teachings. But this passage of Scripture, the Apostles - that was part of what the Holy Spirit brought back to their remembrance - say on the road to Emmaus when Jesus preached to those disciples who were upset that Jesus had been killed. He opened the Scriptures to them, and He told them about the suffering that the Messiah had to undergo. Of course, of *course* He used this passage of Scripture, this chapter, but probably most of Isaiah and some of Jeremiah and the Psalms, which He quoted while He was on the cross.

Then we have, in chapter 53:4-6, we get this vicarious suffering, this vicarious atonement, that is a unique characteristic of this prophecy. He pays the price for our sin. That's not just Old Testament theology. We find it in the New Testament, obviously, in all its fullness. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul says, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Again, in Galatians, Paul says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." It was considered, not only a humiliation, but a curse to be put to death on a tree. And of course, the cross, we know, was wood, it was a wood cross. The Jews would have seen that to be a curse. He says, Peter says, in 1 Peter 3, "For Christ died for sins, once and for all. The righteous for the unrighteous."

So, we have this doctrine of the Suffering Servant, and that vicarious suffering. He says, "Surely He has borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him. And by His stripes have been healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Perhaps what's most remarkable about the Suffering Servant is how *unremarkable* He is. There's no majestic bearing to attract people's attention, there's no beauty to please the eye, He was shunned, He was avoided. In fact, He was mocked and spit on and so brutally treated by the Roman executioners and the Pharisees. And yet, the prophet says that it was for us that he suffered and for us that He endured all that shame. So foolishly, they assumed He was reaping the fruit of His own failure, but now we can see back on the truth. It was our sins that brought Him low. We might even say, we did the crime, but He did the time.

Maybe if He would complain or express anger or be resentful at His death, maybe that would make us feel less guilty. But He accepts His fate in complete silence, this dignified silence. No finger-pointing, no "woe is me." He bore the wounds, but we were healed. He did not do any wrong, Isaiah tells us, but somehow it suits the will of God to make Him a reparation offering and to let Him be cast aside among the wicked.

It's a really surprising self-sacrifice because it was willing. Isaiah gives it that spin and that was surprising because any religious person of his day would have seen this Suffering Servant as rightfully being punished for some kind of sin. But the prophet is seeing this, then, through a different lens. With this beautiful imagery, Isaiah is announcing an ultimate vindication for the Suffering Servant and it's because His suffering is vicarious, and it will justify the many.

God, we see throughout the rest of the Servant Song - He greatly rewards this Selfless Servant and turns His suffering into the ointment that heals the whole world. This vision would probably have shocked Isaiah's audience because a Messiah who would suffer and die instead of riding in with a sword to drive out the foreign dominators was just preposterous to them. So was this notion that He could justify many, that one man could justify the sins of the whole nation. Not just the nation of Israel, but all of the nations of all of the world, the Catholic, the universal church.

The Messiah's light is gonna shine on Israel first, not upon the nations, but then later it would, it would draw in the Gentiles as well. And it's gonna be difficult, indeed, for them, for the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, and all of the Jews to long for such a suffering Messiah, one who would redeem. And truly this sort of highlights, maybe, part of their religious prejudice because they would not have - that's part of why they didn't accept Christ because He ate with sinners and tax collectors. Remember, that was part of their criticism of Jesus. All of this is why they would not accept Him as their Messiah.

I wanna go back to this idea of the sheep. It's in chapter 53:7-8. It says, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgement, and who will declare His generation?" It talks about Him in terms of this lamb

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that is being slain, a paschal lamb, the Passover lamb, that is being slain. And if you've ever noticed or seen like a video of a sheep being sheared, they are silent. They don't bleat at all. It's kind of strange, actually, but it talks about the Suffering Servant in these terms.

I want to mention, since it's speaking here of the Messiah in terms of a lamb again, I wanted to just sort of flesh out the idea of the tower of the flock, which I've mentioned before. In the ancient times of Jacob and Rachel, Bethlehem was called Ephrath. Jacob buried Rachel there, beyond the tower of Eder, after she died giving birth to Benjamin. That's in Genesis 35. The tower of Eder was the Migdal Eder, or the tower of the flock. That was where Ruth and Boaz, well where Ruth, gleaned wheat and then Ruth and Boaz actually married in that same area. King David was born and crowned the King of Israel there by Samuel. And then Bethlehem, Ephrath, meaning the "house of bread of fruitfulness," later came to be known as the City of David.

Joseph and Mary, as David's descendants, were in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth because, remember, that Roman census was ordered. So, they had traveled to Bethlehem in order to be counted. That was their ancestral hometown. They were to be counted for census and taxation. As it was prophesied, Jesus was a direct descendant of the line of David and He was born in that City of David.

In Micah 5:2, it says, "But you, Bethlehem, Ephrath, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me, the One to be ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting." That was actually in the readings this week. The Pharisees were saying, "The Galilean cannot be the Messiah because the Messiah is supposed to come from Bethlehem." And that's where they get, partly, where they get that prophecy. More when we get back.

So, we're talking about Bethlehem out of which the Messiah was supposed to have come and we're also talking in Isaiah in this Servant Song in chapter 53 about Jesus coming as a sheep before its shearers as a lamb to the slaughter. He opened not His mouth. He was oppressed and He was afflicted. In those outlying areas of the little town of Bethlehem, as the song says, Bethlehem, Ephrath, on the road to Jerusalem, there was something called the Shepherds' Field. We saw that, if you went with me to the Holy Land, we went to the Shepherds' Field, and this is where - the same field where Rachel was buried and Ruth and Boaz got married and King David was born and anointed. This is where the coming of the Messiah was prophesied, in this Shepherds' Field. It's right outside Bethlehem, Ephrath. It was not an ordinary place. The Jewish Talmud, the sacrificial regulations, specified that the lambs sacrificed in the temple had to be born and raised within five miles of Jerusalem. So, the lambs that were destined for sacred use in the blood sacrifices of the Jewish temple ministry twice a day, and especially for the Passover, they were all born in that Shepherds' Field.

So, the unblemished male rams were designated mostly for the burnt offerings, or the sin offerings. The female ewes were reserved for peace offerings. That's in Leviticus chapters one and three, you can see that. Bethlehem was famous for those sacrificial lambs because of its proximity to the temple.

The shepherds, who watched over those flocks - and remember, that was part of the Christmas story - the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, remember? But they weren't ordinary shepherds. They were trained and employed in Levitical regulations by the temple priests that were close by in the temple. So, those shepherds kept watch over the sacrificial flock, every day and night, from this upper story vantage point of this agricultural watch tower called the Tower of Eder. The sheep that were in labor were brought into the lower level of the Migdal, or the tower, it was kind of a protective place in the Shepherds' Field.

They were in the lower level of this tower in the Shepherds' Field. Rather than a stable with donkeys and chickens and cows that our Christmas stories always talk about, the tower only sheltered lambs that were consecrated for holy use. The priests inspected all of the lambs that were born in that tower of the flock. The shepherds, then, would have brought in those laboring sheep to give birth in that lower part of the tower. So, the tower of the flock in the fields of Bethlehem is where the lambs were born and inspected for defects so that they could be used in the temple sacrifices. They were precious and they were terribly fragile little baby lambs - the ones that were unblemished and deemed worthy for temple sacrifice. They were wrapped - get this - they were wrapped tightly in swaddling cloths and laid in the protection of a manger. That was to keep them from bumps and bruises and broken bones and other blemishes until they could relax, and rest, and they were able to grow sufficiently, because they could not be used in the temple if they were blemished at all.

So, that manger was a feeding trough, hewn from stone. The lambs that were born were wrapped in swaddling cloths. They had - those sacrificial lambs had to be reserved, unblemished remember, within five miles of the temple. The cleanest stable with the cleanest feeding troughs - a perfect crib, right? - would naturally be at the tower of the flock in Bethlehem. Joseph probably took them there on purpose in the pinch because they were travelling, remember, to Bethlehem for the census, and there was no room at the inn.

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The Lamb of God that would be led to the slaughter, as Isaiah 53 says, was born at the place where all the other lambs for sacrifice were born. In Micah 4:8, it actually gives us - I'll tell you in a moment - the actual wording of the prophecy, how the lamb would be born, or the Messiah would be born, in Bethlehem, Ephrath.

1 Peter 1 says, "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Those five outlying miles of pasture around Bethlehem, Ephrath, are where the angelic announcement took place and where the shepherds witnessed it. I take pilgrims there every time I go to the Holy Land to see this Shepherds' Field. Of course, it doesn't look anything like it would have then, but it is still a pasture area and we actually have Mass there. They were guarding this sacrificial flocks on the hills of Bethlehem that night when the angel startled them out of the darkness.

It says in Luke 2, "Be not afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of a great joy which will come to all the people. For to you is born this day, in the City of David," which is where it was prophesied the Messiah would come from, "a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you." Now, here's the sign. "You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

A swaddled baby was normal. An expecting mother embroidered swaddling clothes for her newborn baby with symbolism from her family and the father's, sort of to show that the two families had come together and move forward in a new child. Middle Eastern Christian mothers still do that to this day. They wrap their babies in these special, embroidered cloths to protect their arms and legs and help them rest peacefully. In fact, I bet if you have your own children, gave birth to your own babies, you probably did that. You probably wrapped 'em in those swaddling cloths like they do in the hospital. But a manger?

So, the sign for the shepherds, who were those people privileged to receive that first announcement, that first public announcement of salvation came to the shepherds guarding the sheep in the fields, the Shepherds' Field that night. It was - the sign was a human baby, wrapped in swaddling cloths in a manger, just like their fragile newborn sacrificial lambs would have been.

When the Heralds and the Glory had left them, in that silent Holy Night, the shepherds must have said to each other - well, they did, we have in Luke 2:15 - "Let us go to Bethlehem." The Messiah could have been resting *anywhere* in Bethlehem. But they did not need any further direction. They knew exactly where it was, because those who - those shepherds who raise the sacrificial lambs for the temple knew exactly where to go. The sign of a manger could only mean a manger in the tower of the flock in their field.

Surely, they recalled Micah's prophecy as they *ran*, knowing from experience that the restoration of Israel's royal authority in the Messiah was gonna come from the bottom floor of the Migdal Eder. Not merely in Bethlehem, but more specifically, Bethlehem, Ephrath in Micah's chapter four and five. "In the town of David, the home of Boaz, the burial ground of Rachel." Who else would have understood that kind of message but those shepherds? Babies don't belong in mangers, but the One who was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world could - where else could He have come from?

God used this untimely census to get the Holy Family to Bethlehem, the inhospitable crush of the crowds to get them to the tower of the flock. I just wonder to myself what thoughts Mary and Joseph must have thought in their hearts as they approached that tower where those sacrificial lambs were resting on that cold night. I wonder if they missed the implications. I doubt it. Did they think about Isaiah's Messianic prophecies here in chapter 53 when that holy scene, that little happy scene, that we reimagine every single Christmas, and we reparticipate in? Did they think of these scary, sad, suffering prophecies in Isaiah? Did Simeon's prediction, maybe, in the temple 40 days later, confirm their thoughts and their fears possibly?

Could knowledge of Jesus' birthplace have been what prompted John the Baptist to say that He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? We don't know. I wonder how often Mary recalled the Providence in that dismal detail surrounding Jesus' birth as He hung there on the cross before her, skewered like a roasting Passover lamb.

On that first cold silent night, Mary had a little Lamb, and His fleece was white as snow, and it would one day be stained with the blood of redemption. His first breath, His first moments of life, were in that tower of the flock. Our weary, oblivious earth announced that salvation had come as a sacred lamb of sacrifice as this Servant Song in Isaiah 53 prophesied. And yet He remains on the Catholic altar, the lamb standing as though it had been slain in Revelation 5. He's broken and spilled out in the Eucharist for me and you. It was all first prophesied here in Isaiah 53 and in those prophecies in Micah and Jeremiah and the Psalms. All of those places and all of those prophecies.... It is just - it is too much to overlook. I don't know how the Jews do it to this day, but they continue to. We think - we read these, and we wonder how we could not recognize the suffering Christ in the Servant's face here painted for us.

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Isaiah paints this portrait of this Suffering Servant so beautifully. He suffered silently for our sins as a lamb who was slain for the sins of the world. I also think, when I read this passage about how He opened not His mouth and He was led to - as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before His shearers is silent. "He opened not His mouth." It actually says that twice. It's repetitive. "He opened not His mouth." It says it twice.

I always think of Job 42:3, I wanna read that to you. Besides the Suffering Servant, probably nobody in all of the Scriptures suffered worse than Job. He says, at the end of all of this suffering and all of this back and forth with his friends - and of course we did an entire series on the mystery of suffering and on this book of Job - but he says at the end, when God confronts Job with all of his disputing that he's innocent. God confronts him, and Job replies to him, he says, "You asked, 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore," Job says, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know." I'll explain that and the silence as soon as we get back.

Job has seen something of God. God has revealed something of Himself to Job. He does it in such a way that Job is suddenly speechless. He has nothing to say in light of what he experiences of God. This is part of why I always say - you know, people tell us that we shouldn't ask God why we suffer. I always say, you should ask! You should definitely ask. God, if He cannot answer you, He will give you something. God either couldn't or wouldn't answer Job, for whatever reason. He wouldn't answer Job to why he suffered so greatly. He does something similar with Moses, when Moses asked to see God's glory. God said to Moses, "You can't see My Glory, or it would kill you." And yet, God gives him something. What He gives him makes him faceplant.

There's something similar happening here in Job. He says, "You asked, 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know." In essence, Job is saying, "I was talking out of turn. I had no idea what I was saying. And from here on out, I am just gonna keep my mouth shut." Listen to what he says. "God said to him, 'Listen, please, and let Me speak.'" I'm sorry, Job says to God, "Listen, please, and let me speak. You said, 'I will question you and you shall answer me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees You and I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Job basically says, "I spoke out of turn. I had no idea what I was saying. I should never have, first of all, said that I was completely innocent." Although God himself said at the beginning of the book of Job that he was righteous. In a similar way, the Suffering Servant is suffering innocently. He opens not His mouth. It's not because, as it was in Job's case where He sees something of God that He didn't know before and He's silent. Instead, the Suffering Servant is one with God. Because He knows God so intimately and so deeply, He does not resist His accusers.

It says in verse 8, "He was taken from prison and from judgement. And who will declare His generation, for He was cut off from the land of the living? He was killed for the transgressions of My people; He was stricken, and they made His grave with the wicked. But with the rich at His death because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth." Now in that verse, in verse 8 in chapter 53, He was taken from prison and from judgement, and He was cut off from the land of the living.

This indicates - the prison and judgement - indicate the injustice with which the Suffering Servant was treated. Jewish law provided for what is known as a preliminary examination before a Magistrate first, and not by a priest. But the trial of Christ was held at the high priest's palace first. No trial was ever held at the residence of the high priest. All the meetings of the Sanhedrin were supposed to be held in the hall that adjoined the temple. A trial at any other place would have been illegal, and it was.

Furthermore, blasphemy was not a capital offense in the law that warranted a death penalty. The Jewish court were not supposed to question a prisoner. We see that in Matthew 26, but they did. The Jewish law prohibited the opening of a trial by night, and yet Jesus' trial was at night, chapter 26 of Matthew. No capital offense trials were supposed to be allowed the day before Passover, and yet He was tried the day before - or actually, He was condemned the day of Passover, but His trial was at night, the day before the Passover.

What legal trial of Christ led to His crucifixion? The night before He was sentenced to death by crucifixion, He was arrested and He was tried *seven* times, depending on who you read or how you count. They include the trial before Annas in John 18, which includes the details of the first Jewish trial of Christ. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. You can read that in John 18. Then there was the trial before Caiaphas, who was the high priest. All four Gospels record that trial: in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18, and Matthew offers the most detailed account. We're told that Caiaphas was the high priest that year and had predicted that one man should die on behalf of the people. In this second trial, the religious leaders gathered together, and that's when they brought the false witnesses against Jesus. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, sitting at the right hand of power, which is a clear reference to Himself as the Messiah. The high priest, Caiaphas, tore his clothes. He claimed Jesus had given evidence worthy of death by His own words, by saying that He was the Son of God.

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Then there was the trial before the Sanhedrin. All three synoptic Gospels record that third Jewish trial: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 22. That took place as soon as it was day, according to Luke 22. Jesus, again referred to Himself as the Son of Man. He was delivered then to the Roman leader, Pilate, for trial.

Then you have the trial before Pilate. All four Gospels record that trial: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18. John gives the extended account. Pilate, of course, found nothing worthy of death to condemn Him so he sent Jesus to Herod to gain points with Herod, and also to possibly kind of throw the condemnation over on him. Herod was actually very curious about Jesus and that was part of why Pilate sent Jesus to Herod because he was trying to garner favor with Herod. Herod did the same thing with Pilate before sending Him back.

The trial before Herod is only recorded in Luke 23. Herod wanted to see a miracle. Jesus didn't answer any of the charges against Him there. So, Herod and all of his men mocked Him and sent Him back to Pilate. They put that kingly robe on Him.

Then there was a second trial before Pilate. All four Gospels record that trial: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18. In the end, that's when Pilate claimed to have nothing to do with His condemnation. He left the fate of Jesus to the crowd in allowing them to choose either freedom for Jesus or Barabbas. He washed his hands, remember?

Then there's the trial of the Jewish people. So, the Jews who had gathered for Passover, they have previously thrown down their palm branches in the street and yelled, "Hosanna!" And yet, here they're screaming, "Crucify! Crucify!" And they chose Barabbas over Jesus. Then Jesus was sentenced to the Roman crucifixion.

In total, there were three Jewish trials that took place, followed by three Roman trials. That all ended with an appeal to the Jewish people, then the consent of Pilate to the Jewish people's decision. Both the Jews and the Gentiles were responsible for the call to crucify Christ. There were so many laws broken in that process of all these trials. I'm gonna recount them. The trial before Annas, the trial before Caiaphas, the trial before the Sanhedrin, the trial before Pilate, the trial before Herod, the second trial before Pilate, and then the trial of the Jewish people. All of this took place in the middle of the night.

The laws that were broken - there was no trial supposed to be held during the Passover week; each member was supposed to vote individually, and yet the Jews voted as a group; the Jews had no authority to execute somebody, and yet Pilate consented based on the fact that they wanted Him dead and he was trying to garner favor with them; there were no trials that were supposed to be held at night, and yet He was both arrested and tried at night; and a representative, or a witness, was supposed to be given to the condemned, and Jesus had nobody to represent Him at all, instead there was just one after the other of false witnesses.

So, ultimately, the trials and the death of Jesus were completely illegal according to the law. Both the Jewish law and the Roman law. It was a complete mockery of the perfect, sinless Messiah. And yet, it was all prophesied here in Isaiah 53. Jesus had no defender. It says in Deuteronomy 17 that, "On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but he shall not be executed on the testimony of a lone witness." Yet, Jesus had no defenders.

There is a historical writing that says, "If none of the judges defend the culprit, all pronounce him guilty, having no defender in the court. The verdict of 'guilty' was invalid and the sentence of death could not be executed." And yet they did that very thing.

Had Jesus been tried and convicted, He would have been stoned and not crucified, and yet He was crucified under Roman capital punishment, not Jewish. That was another break of the law there. The Jewish trial, any Jewish trial, of capital offenses was supposed to last at least two days - one day for the prosecutor and another day for the defense. But they were in a hurry because they were so concerned about this Passover, which was just a shadow of what was about to occur, where the true Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, was about to be sacrificed for the very people who were putting Him to death.

Then we have the rest of this chapter. It says in verse 9, "He made His grave with the wicked," meaning He died, like all men die, "but with the rich at His death," and that's a reference to Nicodemus' tomb where they laid Him. He had to borrow it. Nicodemus gave it to him, he donated it. "He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief. When you make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days."

Now we're starting to come to this exaltation that both began the last Servant Song and ends the last Servant Song. Now we're gonna see His reward because "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief, but He has made His soul an offering for sin. And He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days." That's a reference to the Resurrection and all of those who would be born spiritually through the sacrifice of this Suffering Servant. The last Servant Song of Isaiah begins with victory the same way it ends with victory, just like ours does. God said, "Behold, My Servant."

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I hope you have done that in this series. I hope you have fixed your eyes upon Jesus. I hope you have seen Him in a fresh and new way, especially as we move forward to our quarantined COVID Easter, however that's gonna work out. For those of you who want more, if you are a friend of the show, you'll get the last installment of this last Servant Song. I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Bible Study Evangelista.

Our next series will be *A Biblical Walk Through the Sacraments*. I hope you'll join me.

