

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 53:7-9, THE SUFFERING SERVANT, PART 8

In these three verses, the doctrine of substitutionary sacrifice is affirmed and the Suffering Servant's death is revealed. The fact of His sacrifice and His humble, voluntary acceptance of its reality (v. 7), the imposition of the death sentence and the substitutionary sacrificial aspect of His death (v. 8), and the fact of His burial (v. 9) are the subjects of each verse respectively.

Here, the simile comparing the Israelites to sheep continues, but now the simile moves from going astray like sheep to being slaughtered like sheep. The picture of a lamb is a picture of innocence. The sacrificial lamb meekly submits to its fate once it is restrained. The procedure is that the lamb, the innocent one, has its blood shed and loses its life on behalf of the guilty one who should be the one who has his blood shed and loses his life. There is tremendous theological significance in the typological picture the slaying of the sacrificial lamb has for the work of the Suffering Servant as He is led to His death on the cross. The emphasis here is on the submission of the Suffering Servant to the fate that He was facing, on His innocence and the fact that He is a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of Israel and the world, and on the injustice of the proceeding.

Isaiah 53:7 ⁷He was oppressed [נָגַשׁ] and He was afflicted [עָנָה], Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent [אָלֵם] before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Oppressed, נָגַשׁ, means to oppress, force, impel, or urge, to drive, or to exact payment referring to being oppressed or hard-pressed pertaining to experiencing hardship and trouble. The basic meaning of the word relates to the exertion of demanding oppressive pressure for payment or labor. “ngś connotes the exertion of cruel and dehumanizing pressure on another person by forced labor, tribute, or repayment of debt. Such action reduced people to an existence of slavery. The vb. ngś correlates with the negative meaning of kbś [make subservient, violate, subdue] and refers to the execution of power with the intention of harming and subduing individuals” [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. “נגשׁ,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 3:27]. It is a passive verb which means these things are being imposed upon the Suffering Servant by others, and therefore relates to the feeling of being hard-pressed or in distress.

Afflicted, עָנָה, means to be bowed down, humbled, or afflicted and oppressed. It can mean being oppressed, in a state of oppression, or it can mean to bow down and to be humbled. In Zechariah 9:9, the prophet revealed that the Messiah would come to them as a humble man riding on a donkey. In this verb form, which is likely to be reflexive in this context rather than passive, refers to humbling oneself pertaining to a state of unpretentious attitudes or behavior often implying that the humble one has a proper awareness of one's proper (lower) status before God or in society.

Jewish interpretations focus on the humility aspects of this word. Most translations, including the NET Bible, presume that the word is passive and translate it as “afflicted.” The

explanatory translation note in the NET Bible explains: “The translation [NET Bible] assumes the Niphal is passive [translated “afflicted”]; another option is to take the clause (note the subject + verb pattern) as concessive and the Niphal as reflexive, ‘though he humbled himself’” [NET Bible, 2nd ed., s.v. “Isaiah 53:7,” 1307, n. i].

Isaiah 53:7 ⁷He was tormented and he submitted himself ... [Victor Buksbazen, trans.] “Our translation differs from the KJV which reads: ‘He was oppressed and he was afflicted.’ We believe that our translation comes closer to the original text and is in agreement with many of the more recent translations. The whole sense of this sentence is the voluntary, humble and quiet submission of the ill-treated servant of God to his tormentors” [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 419]. I’m not sure what Buksbazen is referring to that allows him to say that the more recent translations agree with him because they all use “affliction,” but his understanding of the translation could be accurate. Two literal translations, YLT and LSV, translate the word as “answered.”

Other theologians also recognize the meaning as “submissive.”

Isaiah 53:7 ⁷He was maltreated, yet he was submissive ... [TANAKH]

Isaiah 53:7 ⁷Though mistreated, he was submissive ... [David H. Stern, trans., *Complete Jewish Bible*].

“The verbal form here (reflexive niphal), with an emphatic pronoun, means ‘but he for his part submitted himself’” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 336]. “The Niphal verb נִצְּבָה probably is a reflexive ‘he humbled himself’ ...” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Expositions of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 453]. “... and he (emphatic) was afflicted (lit., ‘bowed Himself,’ humbled and submitted Himself, the reflexive force of the nifal— ‘He suffered submissively,’ Symmachus and the Vulgate)” [Merrill F. Unger, “Isaiah” in *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1298].

“That point is made through the joining of the finite verb *he was oppressed* with the participle ‘he was being afflicted’ or, better, *he was humbling himself*. The construction gives a sense of contemporaneous action: he was oppressed, he was submissive....’ oppressed carries with it the idea of harsh physical treatment at the hands of others. But the Servant does not fight against this fate; rather, he gives himself willingly to it.... The Niphal stem has both the passive and reflexive connotations ...” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 391, 391 n. 20].

The emphasis is on the Suffering Servant and His humble, submissive demeanor in this situation. “He” is stressed making it an emphatic identification. This could be translated, “... and He, He was the One being submissive.” The independent personal pronoun הוּא is not necessary here because the masculine singular personal pronoun is already present within the construction of the verb. The fact that the independent personal pronoun is also present emphasizes the presence of the Suffering Servant.

I went through all of this grammar concerning this particular word because I think the word translated “afflicted” in the NASB and most other translations is more accurately

translated in this context as “submissive.” I wanted to show that there is a lot of support for that interpretation. We already know He was afflicted (v. 4) and oppressed (v. 7), but this word is reflecting the fact that He was voluntarily submitting to the abuse and to His personal substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of the Israelites and the many. Submission is an important element that is added to assist our understanding of the complete revelation being provided here: affliction, oppression, and submission.

The submissive demeanor of the Suffering Servant reveals His willing participation in the events taking place. It was in the parable of the Good Shepherd that the Messiah proclaimed His authority to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:1-18).

As part of the submissive role the Suffering Servant played, He never proclaimed His innocence even though He was entirely innocent. We noted earlier that people thought He was being punished for His own sins, which was the common way of thinking at that time (cf. John 9:2-3, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”). However, the Lord knew that He was doing the will of the Father the whole time, and, even though He wanted the cup of His suffering and His death to pass from Him, He was going to fulfill the plan that had been long ago decided upon within the Godhead (Mt. 26:39, 42). “In His human nature, He recoiled from the prospect and prayed for deliverance from it. But since God the Son came to do the will of God the Father, He obeyed His Father” [Michael Vanlaningham, “Matthew” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1508].

The submissive context of this verse continues when it is revealed that He will not open His mouth. There will be no protests and certainly no physical resistance from the Suffering Servant concerning His upcoming substitutionary sacrifice. Just as a lamb becomes totally submissive to its captor when it is grabbed from behind and its head held up, so the Suffering Servant stood before His accusers silent and submissive.

He did not speak when He appeared before Caiaphas (Mt. 26:62-63) until the High Priest “adjured” Him to answer which was a legal command that placed a person under oath. He did not answer the chief priests and the elders (Mt. 27:12), Pontius Pilate (Mt. 27:14), and Herod (Luke 23:9).

The Scriptures do reveal that the Lord spoke to some extent at the various inquisitions imposed upon Him, but silence was the primary characteristic of His demeanor while standing before the various authorities conducting His so-called “trials.” “The only times He spoke were to answer questions related to His identity (Tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God, [Mt. 26] v. 63; Are you the King of the Jews?, [Mt.] 27:11). For Him to remain silent on these questions would have been to deny Himself” [Michael G. Vanlaningham, “Matthew” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1509].

Sheep, of course, do not know that they are about to have their throat slit when they are led to slaughter. They are led to their death absent protest. The simile is extended to sheep that are silent when sheared. Sitting a sheep up on its rear end to be sheared influences the animal to simply sit there and have its fleece removed without protest [cf. <https://www.wikihow.com/Shear-a-Sheep>, accessed 22 Nov. 2021]. In contrast, the Suffering Servant knew full well that death on the cross was in His immediate future, and He still did not protest His fate.

Silent, אָלם, means to be silenced, or to be speechless referring to being unable to speak or talk; note: there may be the associative meaning of being humbled or piousness. The sense is to be dumb, that is, to be temporarily incapable of speaking. In this case, however, He is not speaking as a result of coercion as the passive sense of the verb might suggest, but instead, He made the decision to remain silent. This word also reflects the submissive nature of His demeanor we discussed earlier.

Verse 8 is a revelation of the Suffering Servant's death.

Isaiah 53:8 ⁸By [מִן] oppression [עֶצְרָה] and judgment [מִשְׁפָּט] He was taken [לְקָחָהּ] away; And as for His generation [דֹּר], who considered [שִׂיחָהּ] That He was cut off [גָּזַר] out of the land of the living [חַיִּים] For the transgression [פְּשָׁעֵינוּ] of my people, to whom the stroke [נִגְעָה] was due?

Oppression, עֶצְרָה, means restraint, coercion referring to a state of hardship and trouble for someone. It has the sense of an oppressive act that subjugates someone by cruelty. "It refers to any kind of pressure, maltreatment, or affliction that is put on someone or a people.... It refers to military, religious, political, social rejection, and oppression in the case of the Suffering Servant" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "עֶצְרָה," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 862]. Restrained is the better understanding of this word. The KJV and NKJV use the phrase "taken from prison," and the ISV uses "from detention."

Isaiah 53:8 ⁸He was taken by restraint of justice ... (LEB).

Isaiah 53:8 ⁸By restraint and by judgment he hath been taken ... (YLT).

Isaiah 53:8 ⁸By restraint and by judgment He has been taken ... (LSV).

Judgment, מִשְׁפָּט, means judgment, that is, the act of deciding a legal dispute or case. It relates to deciding a question of legal right or wrong, and therefore to determine guilt or innocence of the accused and then to determine the assignment of appropriate punishment or retribution. The problem in this case is that there was no justice; the proceedings were entirely corrupt with only one goal—the conviction and death of Jesus. He was what we might call today "railroaded" in which people are convicted without a fair trial or by means of false evidence [cf. *The Oxford American College Dictionary*, s.v. "railroad"], both of which were evident in these proceedings. No appropriate procedures for conducting a legal inquiry were followed.

The thought here is that the Suffering Servant goes from arrest and/or prison, which is restraint and subjugation, to the imposition of and the carrying out of His sentence, the judgment. Both the restraint and the judgment were unlawful. The preposition used here, מִן, usually translated "from," may be used to indicate cause; therefore, the translation "because of" instead of "by" would be quite appropriate [Ronald J. Williams, *William's Hebrew Syntax*, sec. 319, p. 121]. It is because of the restraint of being in custody and the unjust judgment that He is being subjected to death.

Take, לְקָחָהּ, means to be taken away referring to being removed from a certain place, environment, or mental or emotional state; it also involves transport into a new location

or state. This verb form refers to completed action, which, when written was a prophetic perfect because it had yet to occur, but was considered so certain that it is described as already completed. It is also passive meaning that the Suffering Servant was taken; He did not take Himself to His place of death. He could have done that, of course, but that is not what this is describing. The verb is intensive. When we realize the spiritual truth of what is taking place, we cannot imagine anything being more intense than what is going on at the time described here.

The unfairness of what happened to the Suffering Servant in terms of a miscarriage of justice must be tempered by the fact that He is voluntarily suffering this treatment, treatment that will result in His excruciating death, on behalf of those who truly do deserve to suffer it. The desired result was achieved no matter how it looked on the surface of things.

Generation, דור, means a group of people existing as contemporaries. The sense is that a generation is a reference to all the people living at the same time or of approximately the same age. Apparently, not a whole lot of people gave much notice to the death of the Suffering Servant. This seems a little puzzling since a huge crowd greeted Him during the Triumphal Entry (Mt. 21:8-11), many of them at least recognized Him as "the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee" (Mt. 21:11), and many people were in Jerusalem for the Passover. We also know that a crowd of some size was present when the Lord appeared before Pilate (Mt. 27:17, 20-26). Finally, we know that the leadership turned the people against Him (Mt. 23:37). That fact must have played a large role in the people's indifference to the significance of His death. They had apparently been persuaded that He was nothing more than an insurrectionist who deserved to die.

Dor can also mean lineage, generation, or family line referring to a group of persons related by birth; therefore, some people think this is a reference to the Suffering Servant's death absent children which was a disgrace. "If that is the meaning (or one of the meanings) of this word here, Isaiah may also have meant that no one would consider that the Servant died childless. Childlessness in His culture suggested a futile existence and a curse from God. People would conclude that He died cursed by God rather than as a substitute sacrifice" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:155].

"Isaiah used it to depict Christ's dying without children, that is, descendants. Isaiah's rhetorical question denoted that an absence of descendants was normally a shameful thing in the culture" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "שִׁיחַ," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1131].

I prefer the definition "generation." This part of the Suffering Servant song is now a recognition of His identity. We dealt with the concept that He suffered for His own sins in Isaiah 53:1-3. The text has moved beyond that thinking at this point.

No one around Him at the time was sympathetic to His plight. Considered, שִׁחַ, means to meditate, muse on, consider, or think on, that is, to ponder and so give serious consideration to information or a situation. The emphasis is on going over a matter in one's mind. The sense is to consider by deeming or reckoning to be. This verb form is active and intensive. Meditate is probably the best translation (YLT, LSV). "The verb implies meditation or giving serious thought to something. That the servant was cut off from the land of the

living did not form the object of meditation upon the part of his contemporaries. They should have considered, but did not" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:352].

Cut off, קָטַעַ, means to cut—cut down, cut off, cut in two—to divide, or to separate referring to being excluded, formally, to be cut off, i.e., no longer be in an association, with an implication that this severed state will cause life to be lost, as a figurative extension of the cutting off and removal of an object from its main root or foundation. The sense of the word means to be prevented from entering or kept out of somewhere, conceived of as being cut off. "When followed by the preposition *min* (from) it connotes a violent severance from a former way of life. The cutting off might be from ... life itself (Isa 53:8)" [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "קָטַעַ," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 158]. This is a passive verb form; He was cut off by the actions of other people. "Out of" could easily and correctly be replaced by "from."

Being "cut off out of the land of the living" is a clear reference to His death. There is no other way to understand these words apart from the fact of the Suffering Servant's death. To be completely removed from the land of the living must be the result of death. Anything short of death means the person is still in the land of the living. He voluntarily went to His death, but others took Him, judged Him, sentenced Him, carried out the death sentence by means of crucifixion as the "pierced through" reference in verse 5 implies, and buried Him as verse 9 reveals.

There is no doubt the Scripture is referring to His life. Living, חַיִּי, means alive, living or a living thing as a reference to having animate life and having absolute being. The word is used of man, animals, and vegetation in contrast to what is dead or dried up. The sense of the word pertains to living persons or beings, perhaps with respect to the God of Israel as having absolute being. This is apparent when Moses related life and death for the Israelites with their relationship to the Word of God; keeping God's commandments would result in life for the Israelites, and disobedience would result in their death (Dt. 30:15-20).

The concept of substitutionary atonement is once again clearly revealed in the final clause of this verse, "For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?" There is no reason for any denial of the concept of substitutionary sacrifice, but people still do it. "Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 171-72, 177, says that 'references to the Servant's vicarious suffering and death and resurrection are illusionary, partly due to a misunderstanding of the language of a particular kind of religious poetry and partly to the determination of Christian interpreters to find here a prefiguration of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ'" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 454, n. 393]. To this guy, we are either not smart enough to figure out the Hebrew language, or we are simply making up the doctrine of substitutionary sacrifice in order to justify our presuppositions concerning the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Messiah.

The preposition "for" beginning this verse is כִּי, which is causal in this context and is therefore properly rendered "because of" (CSB, NET Bible, LEB).

Transgression, פָּשַׁע, is a reference here to rebellion and revolt referring to rising up in clear defiance to authority, in this case, to God's authority. The sense is that of refusing to accept some authority or code or convention. The word is also a reference to crime, sin, offence, fault, or transgression referring to what is contrary to a standard, human or divine, with a focus on the rebellious nature of the sin. In this case, the sense is that of evil-doing which is the violation of a law or a duty or a moral principle. The sins are symptoms of the problem which is rebellion, a revolt against the God of Israel, and both meanings of this word end up emphasizing rebellion.

"My people" here is a reference to the Israelite speaking, the prophet Isaiah who identified with and was speaking on behalf of the Israelites, who is representing those who now recognize the identity of the Suffering Servant who is being cut off from the land of the living for the rebellion of the Israelites and, as the wider context reveals, mankind, the "many."

Stroke, נָגַע, means an assault referring to a blow or a strike that can cause a wound or trauma from physical impact. The blow or strike that causes an injury is inflicted by another person which is the context here. It is best understood as a blemish that has been created by touching or striking. It may also mean an infection or a sore relating to an isolated skin trauma on the body. In the majority of uses in the Bible it refers to a blemish on the skin which is the result of leprosy or another skin disease. Previously, in relation to verse 4, we discussed the fact that some Rabbis think the Messiah has leprosy. This word is from the word used in verse 4 to make that claim.

I favor the meaning that relates to the infliction of body blows that cause a wound. We know, by virtue of progressive revelation, that the Lord suffered serious injuries from the beatings and the scourging that He endured before the cross, and He was wounded from the insertion of the spikes nailed through His limbs to affix Him to the cross. The ultimate problem that the Suffering Servant resolved was sin; all the other problems facing mankind are the results of the Fall and the acquisition of the sin nature. "Hence for all their transgressions a blow should have fallen on the prophet's people, a blow that was much more than merely illness, or merely violence, or merely persecution, but would be a combination of all that is most terrible in all of those: that utter forsakenness by God (Ps. 22:2) that the NT calls 'the second death.' Instead, with complete injustice, it has fallen on the Servant" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 396].

Verse 9 relates to the fact that the Suffering Servant actually died. This verse presents some difficult grammatical problems, although the translations we have explain the meaning quite well.

Isaiah 53:9 ^וHis grave [קֶבֶר] was assigned [נָתַן] with wicked [רָשָׁעִים] men, Yet He was with a rich [עָשִׁיר] man in His death [מָוֶת], Because He had done no violence [הָמָס], Nor was there any deceit [מִרְמָה] in His mouth.

This verse leaves no doubt that the Suffering Servant died and was buried. He suffered death, and He had a grave implying that He was buried in that grave, which we know from progressive revelation actually happened.

Grave, קֶבֶר, means a grave, sepulcher, burial site or chamber, and tomb. This refers to the place where the dead are interred including both above-ground, rock-hewn sepulcher or tomb, or possibly a burial site below ground which is covered with dirt and rocks and has a marker of some kind. The sense of the word is simply the recognition that the grave is a place for the burial of a corpse.

We know that the Suffering Servant was buried in a sepulcher, a new tomb that Joseph of Arimathea had prepared for his own burial.

Matthew 27:59–60 ⁵⁹And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Death, מָוֶת, means death or dying referring to the cessation of physical life, that is, the event of dying or departure from life. In this verse, it refers to being in the state of death which refers to the absence of life. Death is properly thought of as separation rather than cessation. Our physical body ceases to live and the soul and spirit depart the dead body, but as individual human beings, we continue to exist as soul and spirit awaiting the resurrection and the glorified body we will have at that time. This is literally translated, “in deaths of Him” [בְּמָוֶתָיו]. “Of particular importance in this verse is בְּמָוֶתָיו, literally, ‘in his deaths,’ which would be an acceptable Semitic way of speaking of a particularly violent death for an individual” [Michael L. Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53” in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, 72]. In this verse, we are to understand that His physical body has died, and that it was subsequently placed in a tomb.

Some theologians believe the plural, deaths, is an error and the word should be singular. Others disagree. “Death, literally ‘deaths’, is to be understood as a plural of majesty, ‘his supreme, wondrous death’” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 337]. The plural use of the word does cause some Rabbis to understand this as a corporate reference to the nation Israel.

Some theologians do not think the preposition “in” begins this word and instead is part of a different word altogether. That word means a high place such as a mountain or a place of worship. In that case, the translation would read “his high places” (YLT, which is the only translation that translates the word this way). The word can also refer to a grave or to a burial mound, and some Rabbis understand it that way. “Ibn Ezra, however, suggests that the word may carry a different meaning, namely, a burial mound (with reference to Deut. 33:29). Literally, ‘the building erected over a grave’” [Michael L. Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53” in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, 72, 72 n. 26].

This option does not seem to make sense in the context; therefore, “death” seems to be the appropriate translation.

At the time, everyone thought that the Suffering Servant was a criminal who was being executed for His own crimes and therefore deserving of His fate. Their thinking would then be that His burial should be the burial of a criminal, that is, if He even deserved a burial at all. The Romans generally kept the dead bodies on the cross to decay and be eaten by animals and vultures. In this case, the Jewish religious authorities asked that the bodies be removed from the cross because of the Passover Sabbath in Jerusalem (John 19:31).

“Assigned” does not seem to be the best word to use in this verse. נָתַן means to give or to place. A better translation is “He made His grave with the wicked ...” Most translations change the pronoun to “they,” but the text is singular, not plural. The NET Bible translators explain the use of “they”: “Heb ‘one assigned his grave with criminals.’ The subject of the singular is impersonal; English typically uses ‘they’ in such constructions” [The NET Bible, s.v. “Isaiah 53:9,” 1307, n. o].

The “my people” of verse 8 are the ones for whom He substituted and who at the time of His death had yet to realize His true identity. For most of them that realization will come much later. It was two men of the believing remnant, a lesser included part of the “my people” group, who actually buried Him, identified as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19:38-42). Some believe that God is one who made His grave to be with the wicked, and certainly, in terms of His omniscience and omnipotence, He could have ensured that His plan was carried out by those two men, but that is something that is unstated in the text.

Wicked, רָשָׁע, means a wicked person, a criminal, or an unrighteous person, a transgressor pertaining to being evil with the focus on the guilt of violating a standard. This context suggests a class of persons who are evil. The Suffering Servant was thought to be a criminal, and, after all, surely only criminals were executed. He was hung alongside two condemned criminals (Mt. 27:38); therefore, it would not be unexpected to bury Him with criminals.

Instead, He ended up with a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea (Mt. 27:57) when He died. Rich, עָשִׁיר, means wealthy or rich which characterizes a person with considerable wealth. There is quite a contrast here between where most people thought He should be buried and where He was actually buried.

Constable referred to this situation as a paradox. “The final insult to the Servant would be that people would plan to bury Him among the wicked, implying His own wickedness. Likewise, burial among the rich—instead of among the humble—would cast doubt on His righteousness, since the rich were often oppressors of the poor. Yet, in another sense, since Jesus’ corpse received honorable treatment after His death, this suggested that He was unworthy of such an ignominious martyrdom. Isaiah seems to have meant that somehow wicked people and a rich man would be involved in the Servant’s burial. This is somewhat paradoxical” [Thomas L. Constable, “Isaiah” in *Thomas Constable’s Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:155].

Smith denies any connection between Joseph of Arimathea, the Lord’s burial in the rich man’s tomb, and this prophecy in Isaiah. “Jesus’ burial in the grave of the rich man Joseph of Arimathea (Matt 27:57) is sometimes associated with this prophecy, suggesting

that the people intended to bury him with the wicked because they thought he was a criminal, but in actuality he was buried in the grave of a rich man. It is very difficult to derive this understanding from this verse" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 456, n. 402].

It is true that we cannot find all these details in the Isaiah passage, but we are privileged to have the benefit of progressive revelation, which we cannot ignore. I fail to see how or why any literal hermeneutical standard is violated when the whole canon of Scripture is taken under consideration. Understanding Scripture with Scripture is a valid hermeneutical technique.

"Because Joseph is rich, he had the resources to purchase a newly hewn tomb, which becomes the fulfillment of the proper burial place for Jesus. Only Matthew mentions that Joseph was 'rich,' perhaps to intentionally note that Jesus' burial fulfills the prophecy of the Suffering Servant who undeservedly was associated with those who were wicked and had gained wealth inappropriately (Isa. 53:9). The wealthy Joseph's burial of Jesus' body in his own unused tomb provides one final allusion to the fate of Isaiah's Suffering Servant, who similarly was assigned a place 'with the rich' (Isa. 53:9)" [Michael J. Wilkins, "Isaiah 53 and the Message of Salvation in the Gospels" in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, 130].

"Because" begins the explanation that there was no merit for what happened to the Suffering Servant in the previous verses. He was not violent, and He was not deceitful.

Violence, *חַמַּדָּה*, means violence referring to a strong, fierce, destructive force resulting in acts that maim, destroy, kill and which often imply lawlessness, terror, and lack of moral restraint.

Deceit, *מַרְמָה*, means deceit, deception, dishonesty, and treachery relating to the state or condition of deliberately misleading causing someone to have a false view of something, to believe an untruth, in either words or actions.

"Violence is active hostility against people; deceit is a state of the heart; mouth specifies sins of speech. Together they affirm the sinlessness of the Servant in thought, word, and deed" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 337].