

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

David Linden, revised August 2021

The pattern of divine revelation is to announce, then act, and then explain. (See the notes on 43:12.) We see this in the awakening the disciples had after the death and resurrection of Christ. They saw the events, yet the sufferings of Christ had been announced well in advance in the Old Testament (Luke 24:25, 26). God had spoken in Old Testament texts, and then he acted in Christ. Afterwards he opened their understanding, and so the New Testament epistles followed. When the complex of the Lord's death and resurrection was history, the Holy Spirit gave additional revelation guiding the apostles in interpreting the things of Christ (John 14:25; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16).

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 is the greatest advance announcement God would make of the death of Christ. It preceded the cross by 700 years. No prophet of Israel gives more revelation of the meaning of the death and resurrection of the coming Messiah. Psalm 22 is noted for the visual detail it gives of the suffering of Christ and his words of anguish, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" It also highlights the Father's answer to his prayer and the joyful vindication of his trust. Yet it is this fourth Servant Song that stresses the accomplishment of the Lord Jesus in his sacrifice for sin and the many he would save thereby.

What precedes this song Many treat this familiar Scripture as an isolated text with little attention to the buildup that precedes it. No one can appreciate a solution unless there is a grasp of the problem, so Isaiah speaks first of the need for the sacrifice and the benefits that come from it. In 40:1, 2 the word of comfort includes payment for sin resulting in satisfaction; it does not elaborate; that awaits Isaiah 53. In the chapters that follow Isaiah 40, the deliverance from Babylon is explained, and then the emphasis turns to the problem of sin. God declares, "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake" (43:25). Peace is proclaimed in 52:7, but brought to us by the atoning death in 53:5. The cup of wrath is taken from the remnant in 51:22 and given to Christ in 53:5, 10. The condemnation on sin (43:24) is answered by justification (53:11). God's people are called "the ransomed of the Lord" (51:11); only in chapter 53 do we find that Jesus' payment with his life is the ransom. Without what Christ did on the cross, all mention of redemption and blessings promised, would be empty talk.

The first song in chapter 42 has Christ's success in bringing a saving message to the nations. It does not hint at suffering. Later in chapter 49 there is a mention of his being abhorred, and then in chapter 50 his suffering is magnified, but without an explanation for it. Finally in this last song, the purpose of the suffering is revealed.

This Servant Song has five stanzas. The first Song was the Father speaking of Christ (42:1-9); that is how this fourth one begins and ends. It helps very much to identify the speaker. This song begins and ends with the Father boasting of Christ, the same thing we do when we proclaim the gospel (Galatians 6:13, 14).

52:13-15 Stanza One In 52:6 the Lord announces his people would one day know him. That was stated with "See!", a marker that works like an asterisk. Now this stanza opens in Hebrew with "See!" to complete the link. It is through the death of Christ that we know the love of God (1 John 4:10; Romans 5:6-8). To see or behold Christ is to see the Lord God of Israel. It opens with a claim of success. He will act wisely, and thus he *knows* what he is doing and he *knows* what must be done for his people to be saved, and he will do it. (Note *knowledge* in 53:11.) He will act in the future. When Isaiah wrote, Christ had not yet come.

52:13 All three words in Hebrew describing the Servant are used elsewhere in Isaiah to describe the glory of God (raised, 57:15; lifted up, 6:1; & highly exalted, 5:16). Their use here reveals that Christ is the LORD God of Israel. ("Raised, lifted up and highly exalted" may be intended to portray the sequence of the resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Christ.) Yet in John 12:32 *lifted up* refers to Christ being lifted up on the cross. Yet that act of submission to the will of the Father does exalt Christ, for contrary to the horrid sight, it displays the glory of divine grace and love.

52:14 Without warning Isaiah switches immediately to many being appalled at Christ. He does not say yet what caused the humiliation. The text moves from the majesty of God to a situation where Christ became so degraded in appearance that he seemed less than human. No one in all of history has stepped down in rank and dignity to compare with Christ making himself nothing (Philippians 2:6-11). The Lord Jesus who humbled himself is the same Lord God of Israel that Isaiah saw exalted in the temple (6:1; John 12:41). In Isaiah 6, angels could not look at him. At his glory those angels covered their faces, yet in his humiliation, men would find his bloodied condition so despicable they would hide their faces in revulsion.

52:15 Another surprise. The second great reversal is that kings who were once shocked at him, would one day shut their mouths in awe and respect. The humiliation was terrible but temporary. His exalted position (Revelation 1:12-18) would eternally become known to the nations (1 Timothy 3:16).

Many The song begins and ends with “many”. Many appalled (52:14); many nations affected (52:15). He would bear the sins of many (53:12) and many would be justified (53:11). In this way, the image of nations responding as a group to the gospel in the first two songs is now balanced with mention of many individuals. This is important because we believe in Christ one by one.

That Christ will move from being a servant beneath kings to being worshipped by them (49:7) is repeated. No one can read and believe these verses without being given a great sense of confidence in the massive impact the gospel will make in the world. In our day we have seen already how much of this song has been fulfilled; we should believe the Lord to do the rest.

The Lord Jesus will *sprinkle* or *startle* many nations. It is not clear how this should be translated. If he sprinkles, that ritual carries the idea that as a priest he brings cleansing from sin. This fits in with the concept of sacrifice later in the song. Or it could be that he startles, because he was not known for his greatness, and then they learn who he is and are silent before him. This makes for a good contrast between being appalled at him and amazed at him. Because of the other stanzas I think “sprinkle” fits the context better.

Another mystery remains in this stanza. This Person that the nations reject is the One they come to understand, yet he is one they had not heard about. “*That which they have not heard they will understand.*” This is of a transformed view of Christ. (See also Romans 10:19, 20.) Isaiah does not tell how they find out. It would not fit any Scripture, such as Romans 10:14-18, to say they come to believe apart from all human communication. It means nations come to believe in him about whom they have had no knowledge in their tradition. This fits Isaiah’s theme that distant islands (42:4) completely oblivious to his prophecy, would become the loyal followers of the Lord Jesus when the message eventually came to them. This also fits the enigma that many with a heritage of the knowledge of the God of Israel would repudiate it, while those without the news would embrace it (Matthew 8:10-12). God would send his gospel to the Jews first (Romans 1:16), yet would bring mostly Gentiles to himself as in 52:15, before bringing back the descendants of Israel. Mysteries fill the marvelous ways of the Lord (Romans 11:33-36).

53:1-3 Stanza two There is a change in who is speaking. This has become a plural testimony of people who admit their early rejection of Christ and declare their transformed view of him later. This entire stanza reveals a terrible misunderstanding of the Servant, a false judgment about him. They were completely wrong about him. Without the Holy Spirit, the natural man cannot understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). The previous stanza tells that those without understanding will come to understand. This one takes up that theme from the standpoint of the people of Israel.

53:1 The true knowledge of the Servant comes by a message in words, a revelation from God. This stanza shows how impossible it is for man to know Christ by mere observation. How would one ever know that the carpenter’s son is the Son of God? Our eyes do not show us who Christ is; we must receive a message, but in v.1 the message given was not received. Man has another problem; since he is dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1), he cannot hear the message (John 8:42-47). Those who do not belong to God have only hostility for the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5-8), and they cannot come to Christ unless drawn by God himself (John 6:44). Yet faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). How then can anyone believe? In order to be saved, a man must believe a message his nature is unwilling to accept. All faith in Christ is the result of God bringing a person to believe. (Note how the Lord quoted 54:13 in John 6:43-45.) Did Israelites accept the good news? The answer is No (Romans 10:16). Did they understand? No, they did not. The ones speaking in this stanza speak first of their unbelief, and then of truth about Christ that God brought them to understand.

Christ appeared among his rejecting people (John 1:10, 11). A man with no extraordinary appearance lived in the region of Galilee, just as 9:1 said, yet their scholars said he could not be the Messiah because he was from Galilee!! (John 7:52) – born in Bethlehem, but raised in Galilee. The “Arm of the Lord” is the Lord (51:9; 52:10).

Christ was among his own but not recognized in spite of:

- 1) the powerful prophetic ministry of John the Baptist,
- 2) miracles,
- 3) casting out the powers of Satan,
- 4) teaching,
- 5) making legitimate claim,
- 6) the support of the Scriptures, and
- 7) his resurrection,

His people should have acknowledged him.¹ He was the Arm of the Lord; only the elect remnant believed in him. The others could not see or hear (Romans 11:1-10).

53:2 Just as a new and tender plant emerges from the ground, Jesus was as human as any other child of Adam. (Adam means “earth”.) Jesus came into a human family. He was once a baby and then a little boy. People assumed that such a person could never be the Lord himself, so very much a part of our life on earth (Luke 2:52). To observing eyes, he was not impressive; he lacked a grand appearance to make people gravitate to him. It does not fit when churches promote pomp and dazzling sights. The Christ we represent appeared in the world without beauty to the human eye, yet present among us was the very glory of God himself (John 1:14).

52:3 The Man of Sorrows Twice Isaiah says in v.3 that Jesus would be despised, deprived of due respect and association, a man scorned and mocked (50:6). The scorn heaped on Jesus was not limited to his crucifixion. Christians will not have a cross exactly like that of the Lord Jesus, but we shall always face scorn, and are blessed for accepting it cheerfully (Matthew 5:10-12). When Isaiah speaks of Jesus as a “man of sorrows” it is not a reference to a melancholy temperament but of his experience of suffering. The following verses will expand on the sufferings, giving their source and purpose. For what he endured, he was shunned and accounted a worthless man. The conventional wisdom was that he was nothing. They did not understand who he was or what he was here to do. These two things: who he is as a Person, and what his work was, are two areas of Christian doctrine under perpetual attack by the devil throughout history. As “the Arm of the Lord”, we know who he is. The rest of the song will dwell on his work.

How Evil is the Human Heart? In their emotions, they despised and hated him. In the reasoning of their minds, they thought of him as worthless. In their propaganda, they said he had a demon and that he operated under the power of the devil (Matthew 12:24). They were believing their own lies. With hands, designed and created by Christ the Lord, they crucified him. The world’s reaction to Christ shows the pervasiveness of sin in man’s feelings, will, mind, and hands. If we will not believe in Christ, and if we can only be saved if we do, how can anyone be saved? In the new birth God opens hearts, revives proper feelings, convinces the mind, and enables the will to embrace the Lord Jesus they would naturally continue to reject. Had the rulers of this age known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Stanza three 53:4-6 The observers of Jesus of Nazareth misunderstood him and what he was doing when he was here. Yet in a marvelous way (not described here), God gave his true people to understand the truth about Christ. Having stated their false impressions, they now declare what the Servant was doing and why. Here is one of the choice passages in the Bible to explain the death of Christ. The Lord gives those who were once so wrong about him the high privilege to state the reason for his horrible humiliation. Their words exude a very personal, grateful testimony in a new understanding of Christ and what he suffered he was doing for us!

¹ For the seven items above, see in order: 1) John 1:29-34; 5:33-35; 2) John 7:30; 10:25-39; 14:11; 3) Matthew 12:22-28; 4) Matthew 7:28,29; 13:54; John 2:22, 7:14,14, 46; 5) Matthew 16:13-20; John 4:25,26; 5:16-18; 9:35-37; plus all the I AM’s of the Gospel of John; 6) Mark 9:12; 14:21; Luke 4:17; 18:31; 24:44-49; John 5:39; 7) Matthew 12:38-40; John 2:18-22; Acts 1:3.

53:4 Everything changes! They have learned that the troubles Christ experienced and the infirmities he bore were not his own, but were for those he came to save – in spite of their initial disdain for him. *“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10). They thought his sorrows were what he deserved from God; they now understand that he lifted their sorrows off them. The death of Christ is not merely exemplary; it is substitutionary, set out repeatedly in a he-for-us series. They thought he was smitten by God (in one sense he was) but afflicted as evidence *that God was against him.*² They had no idea that God had sent him, and that the smiting from God was really directed at him on their behalf. In 51:22, the wrath of God was removed from his sinful people. In v.4, we see where that wrath for sin went when the Son was smitten by the Father because of the sins of those he represented. The following verses will make clear that sins were laid on him. V.4 speaks of sins’ results, the sorrows and infirmities that are the life of fallen man. His enduring our sorrows shows that in one sense Jesus suffered all his life for sinners by experiencing the miseries of human life.

53:5 Now Isaiah moves from consequences to the core of the problem. Sin is rebellion, therefore in justice God must respond accordingly. Two words are used in v.5 for sin; the first – transgressions – shows how much our sin is against God; the second – iniquities – how vile and ungodly sin makes us to be. God cannot maintain his glory if he is passive about our sin. He will either deal with the sinner directly, or else with one who represents that sinner. In his grace, he sent One willing and able to bear what our sins deserve. What happened physically in the body and experience of Christ was as real in history as the sin we have committed. There was a time and a place on this earth (Jerusalem in 30 AD), where the events foretold in v.5 really happened.

Isaiah writes in v.5 of the judicial response to sin. Under God’s judgment, sin has one uniform penalty – death! (Romans 5:12; 6:23; Genesis 2:17). It is not possible in dealing with sin to punish sin in the abstract; the object of God’s reaction to sin is the sinner who committed it! God does not send sins to hell; he sends sinners. And so Jesus was pierced; he is the one who was crushed, and God laid directly on him our punishment. The atoning death is not mere talk; it was the killing of a Man who had come under the wrath of God. “Pierced” is the verb in 51:9 for killing the dragon. It is hard to believe that a word showing an act of God against the enemy would be the word to show the act of God against his Son! “Crushed” is the idea of trampled. Jesus Christ on the cross satisfied the justice of God by enduring the death we deserved and his justice required.

Reconciliation A benefit of Christ’s offering is that peace with God has been obtained for us by Christ. God was alienated from us because of our sin, but has been reconciled to us by Christ (Romans 5:10, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:14-17; Colossians 1:19-21). The reconciliation of the sinner to God depends first on God being satisfied concerning sin. By such satisfaction, he has been reconciled to all for whom Christ made his offering, so that we may be reconciled to him. It is not possible for any reconciliation with the Holy God to happen until the offense of sin has been removed. The judicial precedes the experiential. Believing sinners enjoy forgiveness. They still experience death. Eternal life is their certain future, because the unrepeatable punishment of their sin has been finished in the past. Jesus died for us while we were still his enemies (Romans 5:10). Now as God’s enemies no longer, we have been brought into a covenant of peace (54:10) with no reparations remaining for us to pay. We never contribute the reason why God

² Undoubtedly, one reason the religious leaders wanted Jesus crucified rather than stoned was so they could refer to Deuteronomy 21:22, 23 as proof that he was cursed by God. In so doing they did not prove him a wicked man. They helped to make the gospel clearer, as in Galatians 3:13, 14: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a **curse** for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in Christ Jesus the **blessing** of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

can forgive; Jesus provided the reason on the cross. The alienation God has toward his elect has been removed through Christ's sacrifice. The alienation sinners have to him is removed one by one over time when sinners under the Holy Spirit's work, are brought to repentance and faith (Acts 11:18; 20:21; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Another way to state the gospel is: Be reconciled by accepting the reconciliation God has accomplished in Christ.

53:6 Here the remnant remember they were once ignorant sheep, oblivious to the danger their sins created, and unable to remedy it. Before they were aware of their need, Christ was doing something about it. Sin has its group dynamic, but Isaiah makes plain that we are individually responsible and guilty of individual sins – *“each one of us has turned to his own way.”* “The Lord laid on him.” does not mean that Christ was experiencing sin (1 Peter 2:22). It does not mean he simply felt its oppressive pressure. Jesus is not a Savior from sin because he entered into the life of humans, though the temptation to sin was real, he did not enter into sin at all. What God laid on him was the charge of our sin, i.e., our guilt. In a courtroom scenario, Jesus is not guilty of any wrong. We are the guilty ones. But while he could never take sin into his conduct, he could take the accusation of sin against us on himself. It is as if the Lord Jesus said, “Yes they did it, but I will accept the accusation of what they did and the penalty they deserve.” This is what happened in the death of Christ.

The Three Imputations V.5 says punishment was upon him; v.6 says the Lord laid sin on him. What was laid on Jesus was not sinfulness (the experience of sin), but the guilt and, therefore the execution of God's judicial decision (wrath and death) would follow. This could only happen if sin had been imputed to him. There are three imputations. In each case, the imputation is to a second person of what the first one did and the second did not do.

1) To us Adam sinned; we his children did not personally sin in the original transgression; his sin has been imputed to those he represented, i.e., the entire human family. In Adam we are accounted guilty and therefore we die. We did not sin in the Garden of Eden as if present and consciously participating in the transgression. Rather, we sinned in Adam, because of the solidarity of the human race in Adam our father.

2) To Christ We have sinned; Christ did not commit any sin; the sin of his people was imputed to him (2Corinthians 5:21) as in v.6, “The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” He could receive the penalty from the hand of God only because the guilt of our sin had been imputed to him. To save the sinner, he had to take on the sinner's sin.

3) To us Christ has obeyed; we have not. No other man has obeyed the law perfectly as God requires, so none of our righteousness is acceptable to God. When a sinner believes, the obedience of Jesus is imputed to the lawbreaker. God declares the ungodly righteous (Romans 4:5) and rewards him with life because of the obedience of Christ (Philippians 3:9; Romans 5:18, 19).

Sin was laid on Christ by the Father. There is a mysterious and wonderful fellowship the Father and Son share. Jesus was not here to overcome the reluctance of the Father to forgive us. They shared the same purpose. The Father provided him for us, “For God so loved the world that he [the Father] gave his only begotten Son...” (John 3:16). The grace found in Jesus is an accurate reflection of the same love found in the Father's heart because he is the exact likeness of his Father (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). The grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God cannot be separated. What Christ did on the cross was what the Father did by means of him as God reconciled himself to his people (2 Corinthians 5:18). He laid on our Mediator the sin that separated us from him, so he could show his favor forever. Isaiah does not say only that sin was laid on Jesus; he says it was the Lord who did it.

Stanza four 53:7-9 The previous stanza told what the purpose was for the death of Christ – that it was a benefit for his people, not a fate he deserved. The fourth stanza enters more into the historicity of the event itself. One can picture his being led away physically, and there is explicit reference to what kind of grave would be his. This stanza emphasizes that Christ was willing and sinless.

53:7 In the Old Testament, innocent animals were sacrificed for sinners. Attached to such sacrifices, God promised forgiveness (Leviticus 4:20). Not one of those animal victims had knowledge of what was happening to it; none died voluntarily. Here Isaiah shows the Lord Jesus going to the cross without resistance, fully aware of all that would happen (Matthew 16:21; Luke 12:50; John 12:23-33). Here we have a special obedience. Jesus was obedient to the law as a man born under it (Galatians 4:4), a duty common to all. However, this verse shows he was also obedient to the specific mission from his Father, that will of God being that he should be a sacrifice (Hebrews 10:5-7). It is not the plan of God that everyone should die willingly at the hands of violent men. It was a unique

unrepeatable mission of this Man that he should die this way, on this occasion (John 17:1), for the salvation of others.

53:8 He was taken away to die. He was “cut off” by death. His contemporaries (not his offspring) did not ponder or see why he would die. His disciples did not understand his crucifixion until after the resurrection (John 2:22; Matthew 16:22, 23). No one prayed with him in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42). The entire complex of events surrounding his death was his solitary work. We gave no assistance in his death; we provided only the sin to be punished. He had no human help, encouragement, or fellowship in prayer. Though it happened in public, he truly died alone. This reinforces the vital truth that he alone is Savior. The obedience and blood that saves sinners came only from Christ. Isaiah repeats *stricken* from v.4. He was struck for the transgression of my people. By saying “my people”, we note a different speaker, probably Isaiah. Later in vv.11, 12, there is no doubt that it is the Father speaking again.

53:9 His burial If one dies the death of a criminal, one does not expect the executioners to expend much in care of the corpse. The continuous trash-burning fire outside a city would be the ordinary place for a criminal’s body to be thrown. (Compare 66:24.) It would not receive a noble end. But this man did not deserve his death. Jesus was the only sinless man in history. At some point, the Lord would intervene with vigor to rescue him from wicked men in answer to his prayer in Psalm 22, and put an end to his humiliation. When his death was an established fact certain to men, surely made clear by the Roman spear in the side, then the Father acted to have his body treated properly. Only those who loved him touched him (John 19:38-42). His body was not thrown into a common grave; it was laid in a rich man’s unused tomb (Matthew 27:57-61). God’s people read this prophecy for centuries, and it must have puzzled them. When it happened as the Gospels record, it would make very clear that the Lord Jesus is the One Isaiah was writing about. (See Acts 8:30-35).

53:10-12 Stanza five This stanza must be read as the success that stanza one referred to (52:13-15). In Christ, God’s purpose will prosper. The setting moves from no one believing in v.1 to many who will. It moves from death to resurrection (v.11) and the reward Christ deserves for his obedience and effective service (v.12). What stanza three taught is repeated: his death was penal substitution, for the Lord who laid sin on Christ (v.6) is the Lord who made his life a guilt offering (v.10), when Jesus bore the iniquities of others. Some say that there is no definitive explanation in Scripture of the death of Christ. This Servant Song will not allow a loose interpretation of his sacrifice. It is God who provided his life as an offering – thus he represented God. Yet he is the One who poured out his life and made intercession for us sinners (v.12) – thus he represents us as the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ is the only way God can show any favor to us, and the only way we may approach the Father (John 14:6). Our entrance and acceptance is only by his blood (Hebrews 10; 19, 20).

53:10 It was the will of the Lord that he should die. This will of God is accomplished as it prospered in the activity of the Servant of the Lord. There is a pleasure of God here. His delight is not a sadism that enjoys suffering. The pleasure of God was that his grace would bring about salvation in the death of his Son. Christ is the provision and the Father is the cheerful provider. He was glad to employ this necessary means of rescuing sinners who otherwise could only be under his wrath. Only by God crushing Christ could we be saved. We sinned and could not redeem ourselves, but in Christ God paid reparations in the guilt offering. For Christ’s efforts, those who benefit from his sacrifice become his children or offspring. The will of the Lord cannot prosper in the hand of a dead man. To say his “days will be prolonged” is to prophecy that the One who died will live again.

53:11 The resurrection is a divine reward. Because of the submissive suffering of his life laid down, he will be given his life to take up again in exaltation. In his human flesh, he will see the light of physical life again. He will see his children; he will see his success and be satisfied with his accomplishments. He truly acted wisely (52:13). In the end, God will not allow him to be made the fool. The resurrection is his vindication. We must never forget that on Friday, he received what we deserved, but on Sunday, he received what he deserved.

The Servant has knowledge, accurate insight to what he needed to do so that he could bring justification. Justification has two sides; neither exists without the other: in the same judicial declaration of forgiveness, i.e., (a) “not guilty”, God also pronounces the believing sinner (b) “righteous”. The Servant knew he must bear the sin of

sinners in order for sinners to be justified. He did what he knew must be done. Jesus was sinless, (v.9); in v. 11 he is called “My righteous Servant”. He is righteous and what he is in the sight of God (righteous) is what we become when justified. When one is justified, he no longer has the status in God’s sight of sinner. God cannot pronounce condemnation on the justified person; no wrath can fall on him (Romans 5:10). Jesus Christ has brought us the verdict of “righteous” in the courtroom of God. Righteous living is a different aspect of salvation in which we become holy in conduct. Justification is strictly judicial, having to do with being accepted as righteous. An offering accepted means the one who offered it was accepted (Leviticus 22:17-21, 29). Justification is the announced word of God that we are accepted as righteous by God because of Christ.

53:12 It is sad that the opening of the verse has not been translated well. In fact as the NIV and ESV render this text, it suffers a note of anti-climax. It does not fit the opening stanza where kings shut their mouths in awe and wonder to think that Christ’s reward was merely “a portion among the great”. It is far better to render it, “*I will apportion to him the many, and the strong he will apportion as spoil...*”³ In other words, the Servant receives as his own all the ones he died to save. Christ gave himself up to make his church holy, so he would have her as his Bride (Ephesians 5:25-27). He will have all the people the Father has given him (John 6:37; 17:2). The kings of the earth (52:15) are his conquest, the strong over whom he reigns in majesty. Once he was in the hands of Pilate; now Pilate and all other rulers are in his hands.

Jesus said to them, “It is written: *‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’*; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.” Luke 22:37

V.12 ends with four statements which justify Christ’s exalted position: 1) his death was voluntary (John 10:18); 2) He was identified with the sinners he came to save; 3) He bore the sin of his own, the *many*, and shall always have our gratitude; 4) As Mediator, he has pleaded our cause before the High King of Heaven and won his favor for us by his sacrifice and intercession. A death alone will not save us; the One who offered himself must connect his sacrifice to those he intended to benefit from it.

Because of human sin and guilt, the death of Christ was a sacrifice. Because of God’s wrath against sin, it was propitiation. Because of God’s alienation toward sinners, it was reconciliation. Because of our slavery in sin, it is redemption. Because of the power of the Devil over us, it was a work of destruction of Satan and his kingdom.

³ The Jerusalem Bible has: “Hence I will grant whole hordes for his tribute, and he shall divide the spoil with the mighty...”