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The Servant of Jehovah



Isaiah: A Topical Look At Isaiah - Steve Gregg

In "The Servant of Jehovah," Steve Gregg discusses how the book of Isaiah uniquely portrays the theme of the servant of God. Isaiah's first section, Comfort chapters 40-66, emphasizes the servant's job and witness. Gregg points out that in John 8, Jesus takes upon himself the divine name of Jehovah, which is later affirmed in Isaiah. Gregg also analyzes how the suffering servant passages, including Isaiah 53, ultimately harmonize with the idea of the Messiah as both a suffering servant and a conquering ruler.

Transcript

I mentioned in an earlier lecture, I think it was in our introductory lectures, that in Isaiah there is a theme pretty much unique to Isaiah that scholars frequently talk about, that is Old Testament scholars frequently talk about, and that is the theme of the servant of Jehovah. There have been monographs written about this. There have been books written about it.

Many times when I talk to people who teach the Old Testament, one of the first things they ask me is, what do you think about the servant of Jehovah passages? Now, I already, I think, in that earlier lecture mentioned what some of the problems are in the interpretation of these passages, and that is that in some passages it seems clear that Israel is the servant of Jehovah. It's stated so. Other times it looks as if, very obviously, the Messiah is.

Now, the problem is harmonizing the various passages and seeing how the thought develops, like some of these other things we've been talking about, if you follow through everything that is said on the subject, a fairly neat development of thought emerges. The earliest, one of the things that makes it difficult, is that some of the earliest passages about the servant are about the Messiah, though most of the early ones, the servant is Israel. I have divided the material into three parts, and that is the verses that portray Israel as the servant and the witness of Jehovah, the one that he has appointed to bear witness of him to the nations.

Then the second would be those passages which describe Israel's failure in that role, and

God's choice of a new servant to replace Israel, and that new servant we would identify as Jesus. And then thirdly, those descriptive passages that describe the suffering servant, and that will lead us right up in the final one, is Isaiah 53, which we will look at, which is one of the favorite passages in Isaiah. So we'll look first at those passages where the servant of Jehovah is introduced and is Israel, initially.

In Isaiah 41, all of these passages are found in the first half of the Book of Comfort. The Book of Comfort is chapters 40 through 66, the halfway point is Isaiah 53, and that is where we find the last of the servant passages, Isaiah 53, so the first half of the Book of Comfort contains all of the entire series of references to the servant. In Isaiah 41, verses 8 and 9, God says, But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, my friend, you whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from the farthest regions, and said to you, You are my servant, I have chosen you, and have not cast you away.

Now, in the context here, it would appear to be a reference to the Jews who have returned from the exile in Babylon. Remember, Isaiah did not live to see this, he talks as if it's a reality, but that's because of his prophetic vision being so vivid. He's using the imagery that the prophets often do of something that has happened, but really, from the prophet's own perspective, it hasn't happened, it's going to happen later.

When he says that I have taken you, verse 9, from the ends of the earth and called you from the farthest regions, it seems to be a reference to his calling them back from the Babylonian exile, that he has returned them. And that would agree, I believe, with the context of the chapter in general, because back in verse 2, God describes himself as, well, he says, Who raised up one from the east, the one from the east is a reference to Cyrus. Who in righteousness called him to his feet, who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings, who gave them as the dust of his sword, as driven stubble to his bow, who pursued them and passed safely by the way that he had not gone with his feet, who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning, I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last, I am he.

Now this reference to raising up the one from the east and giving the nations to him is a reference to Cyrus. It's the first of many in this section. Cyrus is mentioned sometimes by name and sometimes only by allusion in this section between here and chapter 48, and that's one of them.

Now Cyrus is the one who liberated the Jews from their captivity, therefore the context of this chapter seems to be the return of the exiles from the captivity, and in chapter 41, verse 9, where he says, I have called you from the farthest regions of the earth and gathered you, it's quite clear that he means the Jews returning from Babylon. But that, of course, does not eliminate the possibility that there may be a spiritual application as well. But I think what we should understand here is this principally is speaking to natural

Israel, natural Jacob, whom God has delivered out of Babylon and demonstrated his sovereign power because he proved it that he was God by doing so.

Not that the Jews were the only people who ever came out of Babylon. When Cyrus conquered the Babylonians, he let many ethnic groups, including the Jews, go back to their lands. There were many expatriates that the Babylonians had taken into captivity.

It was a normal policy of Cyrus to allow all the nations, all the people from different nationalities, to go back, if they wished, to their homelands. It was sort of a policy to endear them to his rule, and it worked. And therefore, one might say, well, the fact that God delivered the Jews from Babylon doesn't itself prove that God is the real God, because after all these other nations that worshipped other gods, they could say their God did it.

So that doesn't prove anything about Jehovah. But it does, because Jehovah predicted it, and the other gods didn't. Basically, in Isaiah's day, 200 years before it happened, he gives in detail what he's going to do, and then when it happened, it proved that he was in fact the true God, because he not only delivered his people, but 200 years in advance said he was going to, and in precisely that way.

Now what I'd point out to you here is that God calls upon those exiles who have returned from Babylon. In chapter 41, verse 8 and 9, it says, listen, you have a special message. You're a witness for me.

I've chosen you to be my servant, and therefore, you are, you know, because of my deliverance of you, you know me in a way that other people do not. You've seen my sovereign power demonstrated. He says it more clearly, emphasizing the witness aspect of the servant's job description in chapter 43.

In chapter 43, verses 10 and 11, he says, you are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Savior.

Now, here we see again, you are my servant, and he's talking to a plurality of people. Verse 10, you are my witnesses. He's not talking to the Messiah.

He's talking to the Jews. They, plural, are his servant and his witness. So corporately, the nation of Israel is seen as God's chosen instrument to bear witness to the nations that he is the true God.

There are no other gods, and he is the sovereign one. God therefore seems to have intended that through Israel, the nation, the knowledge of him should have been spread to the Gentiles. As we shall see, it never happened.

Not through them. In chapter 44, verses 1 and 2, he says, yet hear now, O Jacob, my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you.

Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. Jeshurun is actually a poetic name for Israel, which is, it literally means, my little righteous one. And it comes actually from Deuteronomy, the song that Moses sang, I think, I don't remember, Deuteronomy chapter 30 or so, or 31, somewhere around there.

Moses referred to Israel as Jeshurun. But anyway, here again, it makes reference to Israel, Jacob is my servant, my servant, he repeatedly calls him. And in the same chapter, verse 21, he says, remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant.

I have formed you. You are my servant. Now, there's no ambiguity here at all in these passages.

Again and again, the nation of Israel is called Jehovah's servant. Now as we shall see, later on, Jesus is Jehovah's servant. And one might wonder, you know, is it possible that this is so here that Israel is a picture of Christ or whatever? No, I think not.

One of the reasons is, if you look back at 43.10 again, which we looked at a moment ago, there is a contrast between the one whose servant they are and the one, and the servants themselves. It says, you are my servant whom I have chosen that you may know and believe me, this is 43.10, and understand that I am he. Now, this expression, I am he, as you may have noticed, also occurred back in the earlier reference in chapter 41, in verses 8 and 9, it also said, I am he.

No, it wasn't there. Where was it? Oh, earlier in verse 4, yeah, 41.4. Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning, I the Lord, and with the last, I am he. Now, here we have God saying, I am he, in chapter 41, verse 4. He says it again, as we see, in chapter 43.10, I am he.

Also, in 43.13, chapter 43.13, it says, indeed, before the day was, I am he. And even in the same chapter, 43.25, he says, I, even I am he, who blots out. In chapter 46, in verse 4, he says, even to your old age, I am he.

And in chapter 48, in verse 12, he says, listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel my called, I am he, I am the first and I am the last. Now, I have pointed out to you all the times where Jehovah says, I am he. There's a reason I wanted you to note these things.

Because there is a passage in the New Testament, it's in John chapter 8, where I believe Jesus takes that same name upon himself, the I am he. Now, many Christians understand this passage as referring back to a different divine name in the Old Testament. Let me show you what I'm talking about.

In John 8, verse 56 through 59, the last four verses of John 8, Jesus said, your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and saw it, and he was glad. Then the Jews said to him, you are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. Then they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Now, notice Jesus said in verse 58, before Abraham was, I am. In the New King James, they've actually capitalized the I and the AM, I am, as if to make that a divine name. And I believe it is a divine name, but I think that you'll find a wrong cross-referencing there.

Not necessarily in here, but by most teachers. Because most teachers say he's referring back to the burning bush incident. That when Moses met God in the burning bush, Moses said, what is your name? The people are going to ask me what the name of the God that sent me, what is your name? What should I tell them? And God says, I am that I am.

When you go talk to the children, you'll tell them, I am has sent you. And, of course, God identified his name as I am. And so many people feel that Jesus, when he said before Abraham was, I am, he's alluding back to the name of Jehovah given at the burning bush to Moses.

Now, if so, it's very clear that Jesus is claiming to be Jehovah. This idea that Jesus is Jehovah is repugnant to some cults. Jehovah's Witnesses, of course, are notable for finding this repulsive idea, and they have fought very fiercely against the idea of Jesus being Jehovah.

And in their own Bible, they've had to radically change this verse, where Jesus says, before Abraham was, I am. They actually have it, before Abraham was, I have been. And in a footnote, they explain that Jesus did not use the name I am.

He did not take the divine name here upon himself. And here's how they explain it. Because here, in John 8, 58, the words I am in the Greek are ego, ami.

Ego is like ego, E-G-O. And ami is spelled E-I-M-I. Those are, of course, the English characters.

It's actually in Greek characters in the original. But ego, ami, the second word being spelled E-I-M-I. Now, ego, ami, means I, I am.

Because ami, that second word by itself means I am. But ego means I. And so it's like I, I am. But it's simply in the Greek, the way of the Greek language, it's just emphatic.

I am. Without the ego, it would still mean I am. Ami means I am.

But ego, ami, emphasizes the I am. Now, here, Jesus said before Abraham was ego, ami,

I am. Now, what the Jehovah's Witnesses point out is he can't be referring back to the burning bush incident.

Because the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which is the Greek Old Testament, does not use the words ego, ami. In Exodus, chapter 3, where God in the burning bush says I am. Tell them that I am is not you.

There's a different Greek couple of words there. They also mean I am. But what the Jehovah's Witnesses say is that if Jesus was in fact trying to allude back to that, then the Greek words he used would be the same as the Greek words in the Septuagint.

Because it would call to mind that passage. And he'd be deliberately trying to... So when Jesus said ego, ami, you would expect, if he was alluding to Exodus 3, that you'd find ego, ami in that place. But you don't.

You find different Greek words. And if Jesus was in fact trying to allude back to that Old Testament reference, he would have used the Greek words that are found in the passage rather than ego, ami. Well, all of this is probably a point since Jesus didn't even speak Greek.

Jesus spoke in Aramaic. And what we have, the ego, ami in John's Gospel, is actually John's translation into Greek. And... But it still follows.

It still follows that if John himself saw Jesus' words as an echo of God's words at the burning bush, then in translating Jesus' words into Greek, he probably would have chosen the same Greek words that are found at the burning bush to make the same statement, I am. And John did not do so. And therefore, the Jehovah's Witnesses say, see, Jesus was not here taking on himself a divine name.

He was simply saying that he existed before Abraham did. Even the Jehovah's Witnesses believe that. They believe he was the first created being in the universe.

And so, they feel that supports them. Just the fact that he used the term ego, ami, and the Septuagint didn't use the term ego, ami in Exodus 3. Now, what they have a problem with, though, is that they translate it, before Abraham was, I have been. Now, have been is very clearly a past perfect.

Or a present perfect. It's a present perfect. Had been would be past perfect.

But, have been. Is that what they translate? Have been or had been? I think they translate it, have been. Anyway, they translate it in a perfect tense.

Either past or present perfect tense. Whereas, in the Greek, ego, ami is in the present tense. I am is very truly the correct interpretation.

Or, sometimes implied he. I am he. If you look back, or if you look at John chapter 9, and

the story of the man who was born blind, and how he got healed, you know the story? Well, when he got healed, a lot of people didn't know if it was really the same guy or not.

And, in verse 9, John 9, 9, it says, Some said, This is he. Others said, He is like him. He said, I am he.

Now, you'll notice the he is in italics, because it's not there. Actually, in the Greek, the blind man said, ego, ami. The very same words that Jesus said in John 8, 58.

And, by the way, the term ego, ami is found frequently in the Bible, where an ordinary person is just saying, I am he. Ego, ami literally means, I am. But, in Greek usage, it can imply, I am he.

And, that's what we have in the case of the blind man healed. It says, ego, ami, I am he. It is implied.

In which case, Jesus' words can also be translated, I am he. They aren't in our Bible, but they could be as easily. Ego, ami, in John 9, 9 is translated, I am he, and quite properly so.

It could be as proper in John 8, 58 to translate them, I am he. Now, what does that help? It helps a great deal. If you'll look again at John 8, 58, the construction of the sentence is awkward.

If it's translated, before Abram was, I am he, you'd expect him to say, I was he, because before Abram was, that's a past tense, you'd expect the second member of the sentence, the next clause would be past tense, but it's unexpectedly present tense. I am he. It's as if he's not just saying, I was around before Abram.

He could have said that. He could have said, before Abram was, I was. That would be easy enough.

There's Greek words for that and Aramaic words for that, but that's not the words he used. He said, before Abram was, I am, or possibly, I am he. Now, the very departure from the normal rules of grammar, having a past tense in the first part of the sentence, but a present tense in the second, suggests the possibility that he is, in fact, using a technical term.

That he is possibly using a title, when he says, I am he. But that title may not be harking back to the burning bush. But in Isaiah, repeatedly, God says, I am he, and including in sentences, where you would expect there to be a different tense of the word.

I mentioned already, Isaiah 43.13. In Isaiah 43.13, God says, indeed, before the day was, He doesn't say, I was. He says, I am he. It's very much like, before Abraham was, I am he.

Before the day was, I am he. You've got the same strange construction. A past tense, which would seem to call for a past tense, but God departs from it and just does the I am he thing.

And you can see that the I am he is repeatedly used by God as a personal title of himself. And also, in chapter 46.4 of Isaiah, where it says, even to your old age, I am he. Even to your gray hairs, I will carry you.

Notice, to your old age, to your gray hairs, you expect a future. I will be he. I will carry you.

He says, I will carry you. But he doesn't say, I will be there. He says, I am he.

Now, here you've got, in chapter 43.13, a case where you'd expect a past tense, but you get a present tense. In chapter 46.4, you'd expect a future tense, but you get a present tense. It's almost as if the phrase itself is locked into a present tense, no matter what the construction of the sentence around it would seem to call for.

As if the I am he is a title, a name, an unalterable. Regardless of what the rest of the sentence may seem to call for, you're stuck with it like this, because that's the title he's giving himself. I am he.

Now, one thing that is interesting and important is that in the Septuagint, in Isaiah, all of these cases are ego eimi. All the places I showed you in Isaiah where God says, I am he, I am he, I am he, the Septuagint translates ego eimi. The same words Jesus used.

Now, there's no question, but that in these cases in Isaiah, it is Jehovah speaking. No question whatsoever. I mean, look at Isaiah 43.10. You are my witnesses, says Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.

Who's speaking? Jehovah is the I am he. In the Septuagint, the ego eimi. And the ego eimi is a divine title in Isaiah.

And Jesus' use of the term, you know, before Abram was ego eimi, I am he, is a deliberate, I mean, I don't see how to avoid this conclusion, it's a deliberate choice of the divine name that Jehovah took upon himself in Isaiah. And making the claim that he is it. So even though we may be stripped of any argument that this harks back to the burning bush, we still have Jehovah using this very title, the very words that Jesus used.

As far as we know, I mean, that the translation gives of his usage. As very clearly a divine title of Jehovah. One other thing I'd point out on this, the I am he business, is in the final occurrence of it, which is Isaiah 48, 12, which we saw.

He says, listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel my called. I am he, I am the first, I am also the

last. You know, I'm sure very well that in the book of Revelation, Jesus calls himself the first and the last.

Which is Jehovah speaking, saying I am the first and the last in Isaiah. Very clearly, Jesus picked up on purpose, the divine titles from Isaiah for himself. And those things that Jehovah said about himself, Jesus said about himself.

In Revelation chapter 1, for example, let me show you something real quick here. Isaiah 1, 8 says, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord, who is and was, and who is to come, the Almighty. Jehovah's Witnesses say, well, Jesus is the Mighty God of Isaiah 9, 6, but he's not the Almighty God.

If you talk to the Jehovah's Witnesses and you bring up Isaiah 9, 6, his name should be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, you say, well, there it is, Jesus is the Mighty God, he's Jehovah. They'll say, uh-uh, it doesn't say the Almighty God. They'd say he is a Mighty God.

He is a God created by Jehovah God. But he is only a Mighty God, he's not the Almighty God. They emphasize that.

There's only one Almighty God, and that's Jehovah. Well, you can guess then, that at Revelation 1, 8, where it says, I am the Almighty, the word Lord there is not attributed to Jesus, but Jehovah. In fact, they actually say, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end says Jehovah.

Although it's not in the Greek, certainly the name Jehovah, it doesn't appear anywhere in the Greek New Testament. It's a Hebrew word, and it's never found in the Greek New Testament. But they translated Jehovah.

Why? Because whoever is speaking says, I am the Almighty. And that is a title reserved for Jehovah Shaddai. El Shaddai, actually, Jehovah.

Another name for him is El Shaddai, the Almighty God. But, if you look a little later, in Revelation 1, at verse 17 and 18, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead, but he said, he laid his right hand on me, saying to me, do not be afraid, I am the first and the last. I am he who lives, and who was dead.

Now, the person speaking is said to be the first and the last, and is said to have been dead. Now, if this is a toss-up between Jehovah and Jesus, I'd say that I was dead and I'm now alive again, weighs very heavily on the side of Jesus being the speaker. Because when was Jehovah ever dead, if not in the person of Jesus? But what's interesting there, is while in Revelation 1.8, the name Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, are used, in 1.17, first and last is used.

Now, these are equivalent terms. But Jesus calls himself the first and the last in

Revelation 1.17. Well, the I am he, in Isaiah 48.12, is also the first and the last. Isaiah 48.12, listen to me, O Jacob, in Israel am I called, I am he, I am the first, and I am also the last.

Jehovah is the I am he, Jesus used that label himself, Jehovah is the first and last. By the way, turn to Revelation chapter 22, just as one final reference here. Revelation 22, verse 13, somebody is speaking, and says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, those are the labels we found in Revelation 1.8. Then it says, the first and the last, which is the title in Revelation 1.17. The first two titles are found in Revelation 1.8, the last title is found in Revelation 1.17, clearly the same person is all three.

Now, what's interesting is in Revelation 1.8, the person who is the Alpha and the Omega, and the beginning and the end, is also the Almighty, Jehovah, very clearly. And the person in Revelation 1.17, the first and last, has been dead and lived, and yet they are all the same person. All the labels belong to the same individual.

Furthermore, only a few verses later in Revelation 22, verse 16 says, I, Jesus, have sent my angel. The speaker is Jesus. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, and according to Revelation 1.8, the Almighty.

He is Jehovah God, in the flesh. And he deliberately takes those labels and titles that belong to Jehovah, and applies them to himself. Before Abram was, I am he, ego am I. I don't know, I'm not sure, because he actually says he is the first and the last in 48.12. And you're right, in 41.4, the first instance, he says I am the first and I'm with the last.

But since he says I am the first and I am the last, later on, I've always wondered about that too. I don't know what the significance is with the last. So I don't know.

But possibly it's because the word was God and the word was with God. You know, I mean, one or the other speaking as being with each other. John 1.1, yes.

Okay, so we've kind of looked through these Isaiah passages that talk about I am he, and we see him connected many times with the servant of Jehovah, but the I am he is not the servant, but is the one speaking to the servant. Isaiah 43.10 being an example. The one who is the I am he is not the servant, but is the one addressing the servant.

The servant is Israel. The I am he is someone else. Later on, the I am he is the servant.

Though not necessarily in Isaiah, it doesn't necessarily use the term I am he in connection with the servant later on, but we see in the New Testament, Jesus is the I am he, and he is also the servant. Well, let's look at a couple of passages in Isaiah which point out that the servant, Israel, fails and needs to be replaced. In Isaiah 42, verse, I have this listed strangely, but for some reason, verse 19, Isaiah 42.19, 42.19, excuse me, God says, who is blind but my servant? Or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect and blind as the Lord's servant? Now, being blind is not

good.

Verse 20 says, seeing many things, but you do not observe. Opening the ears, but he does not hear. The servant himself, who is supposed to open people's eyes, doesn't himself see and observe.

He's blind. The servant who is supposed to open the ears of others and be a witness, himself doesn't hear. Doesn't know.

He doesn't get the message. So, this certainly must be a reference to the servant, Israel. Although, even prior to this, in the same chapter, Jesus is the servant.

But this verse must be given in order to explain why Jesus had to be the servant. Because the original servant was blind. So, you'll find in verses 1 through 7 of this same chapter, Jesus is the servant.

And there's no question about that that he quotes these verses as applying to Jesus. In Isaiah 42, 1 says, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my elect one, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him.

He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise his voice, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and as smoking flax he will not quench.

He will not be discouraged until he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands shall wait for his law. This entire passage that I just read is quoted in Matthew 12 and applied to Jesus. Then it goes on in verse 5, Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and the spirit to those who walk on it.

I will hold your hand and keep you and give you as a covenant to the people and as a light to the Gentiles to open blind eyes to bring out prisoners from the prison who sit in darkness from that prison house. Now, this chapter begins with the description of Jesus as the servant opening blind eyes and being a witness to the Gentiles. But later in verse 19 it talks about the blind and the deaf servant which must be a later reference to why the servant has changed.

In chapter 41 Israel in chapter 42 verses 1-7 it's the Messiah. Well, why has the servant changed? Well, verse 19 tells us because the first servant was blind and deaf supposed to be opening people's eyes but himself blind supposed to be opening people's ears but himself deaf. Israel had to be replaced.

We see this also in chapter 49 verses 1-12 there is a shifting here of the servant too verse 1-12 Listen, O Coastlands, to me and take heed, you peoples from afar the Lord has called me from the womb from the matrix of my mother he has made mention of my

name and he has made my mouth like a sharp sword in the shadow of his hand he has hidden me and made me a polished shaft in his quiver he has hidden me and he said to me you are my servant, O Israel in whom I will be glorified then I said I have labored in vain I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain yet surely my just reward is with the Lord and my work is with my God and now the Lord says who formed me from the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him so that Israel is gathered to him for I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord and my God shall be my strength indeed he says it is too small a thing that you should be my servant and to restore the preserved ones of Israel I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth thus says the Lord the Redeemer of Israel their Holy One to him whom man despises to him whom the nation abhors to the servant of rulers actually I should stop there because that gets into the suffering servant part but let me say this in the first six verses especially we see the transition from the old servant to the new in verse 3 he said to me you are my servant O Israel in whom I will be glorified then I apparently speaking as the servant Israel said I have labored in vain I have spent my strength for nothing it's like back in chapter 26 when it said we were in labor but we produced wind I've spent my strength and got nothing for it and then in verse 5 you've got the servant as someone else not Israel how do we know that? because in verse 5 the servant is chosen to bring Jacob back to God and to bring Israel back it can't be Israel if the servant is bringing Israel furthermore in verse 6 of this second servant it says it's a small thing for you to be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved ones of Israel I'm going to give you as light to the Gentiles now it is something less smaller than Israel something other than Israel but it is and we know that servant to be Jesus so what we have here it's actually sort of in keeping with what I was talking about in the last session about the restoration really being a replacement but it's talked about like a restoration of the old that the old city is broken down and a new city is built in a sense there is a continuum a continuity between the old and the new in principle the Jerusalem is built and the Jerusalem is broken down but the Jerusalem broken down is physical the one that is built is spiritual it's as if there is some concept that continues though the mode changes the servant is always God's servant but when one mode fails another one is you know like the another stage of the rocket you know the rocket goes up and one burns out and falls off but the rocket keeps going and it takes on new identity as it were it's not a perfect analogy but I'm trying to convey what I'm thinking that the idea of the servant is that God has decreed that he has a servant and a witness to the Gentiles that will bring his law to the Gentiles bring his light to the Gentiles Israel was originally called to be that servant as a nation they failed but some not entirely because in Israel as the nation kind of fell away the program kept going forward the servant continued but now it was an individual who now had to bring back Israel and Jacob to God because the original servant fell away and it's a strange concept which is why I mentioned Old Testament scholars wrestle with this it's a peculiar idea and especially a passage like Isaiah 49 where in verse 3 it says you are my servant oh Israel but in verse 5 the servant is now to bring Israel back there's been some transition there unmentioned it's almost

like it's a continuation of the same servant but the servant is now in a different form in the first form it's the nation Israel in the second form it's a person who has got a ministry to Israel and to the nations too this is the peculiar transition that confuses scholars so much now the final stage of this development of the thought of the servant of Jehovah is that once we are introduced to the concept of the Messiah servant we are introduced to the concept of the Messiah's suffering this is something the Jews had some real problems with because as we will see in a later lecture the Messiah was to be a king the Messiah was to be a conqueror the Messiah was to inaugurate the glorious age of Israel like David did the idea of the Messiah's suffering didn't quite fit didn't harmonize well with these other pictures of the Messiah being a ruler and conqueror and so forth and so even in the days of Jesus the rabbis had various theories about the Messiah there were actually some who had believed there were two Messiahs in Isaiah and then another man Messiah Ben David who would be the reigning Messiah the rabbis actually talked about two Messiahs at some times trying to wrestle with this issue that you've got a reigning and conquering Messiah in some of these passages but apparently a suffering Messiah in these others now to resort to two Messiahs seems like a desperate measure but it's just the way the Jews some of them some of the rabbis settled it I think more commonly the Jews have denied that the suffering servant passages are about the Messiah if you read Isaiah 53 about the suffering servant there or any of these passages about the suffering servant they would say well that's a personification of Israel Israel suffered Israel has suffered at the hands of the Gentiles and so forth and so they would say the servant of Jehovah and there are some passages which make that an impossibility including the one we just mentioned but let's move on to those passages there are a few of them but they are the more significant ones in the book on the servant that point to his suffering the first instance the first case where we discover that the servant may not be altogether popular is in this chapter 49 where in verse 7 it says thus says the Lord the Redeemer of Israel their Holy One despises to him whom the nation this would be the nation Israel doesn't say nations plural as if Gentiles but nation Israel abhors now here God is speaking to the servant but he calls him the one that man despises and whom the nation abhors now earlier in verses 5 and 6 the servant was to bring the nation to God to bring Israel and Jacob to God and to bring the nation is abhorrence and hatred there is no description in this passage about his suffering only about their negative reaction to him but in the next chapter which has another one of the servant songs beginning at verse 4 chapter 50 verses 4 through 11 are considered to be the third servant song there are 4 altogether Isaiah 50 verses 4 I don't know what the first 2 are that would be a sensible thing for me to tell you if I can find them I think 42 verses 1 through 9 are considered to be the first servant song of the Messiah's servant and I'm trying to remember which is considered to be the second one I know that Isaiah 50 verses 4 through 11 are considered to be the third one maybe what we are looking at in chapter 49 there maybe that's the second one I don't have it marked in my bible I should I'm not sure why I overlooked that in any case in Isaiah 50 verses 4 through 11 we do have again the servant being the Messiah and reference to his suffering Isaiah 50 verse 4 says the Lord

God has given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word and he has given me morning by morning he awakens my ear to hear as the learned the Lord God has opened my ear and I was not rebellious I did not turn away I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who plucked out the beard I did not hide my face from shame and spitting for the Lord God will help me therefore I will not be disgraced therefore I have set my face like a flint and I know that I will not be ashamed who will contend with me let us stand together who is my adversary let him come near to me surely the Lord God will help me who is he who will condemn me indeed they will all grow old like a garment the moth will eat them up now these verses in particular are they apply to Jesus and God will help him that is though he will die God will raise him from the dead God will stand for him because we are in Christ we are members of his body that statement in verse 9 surely the Lord God will help me who is he who will condemn me is echoed not quoted but echoed in Romans 8 verses 33 and 34 where Paul says if God be for us who can be against us it is God who justifies who condemns who can lay anything to the charge if God is on our side who is going to condemn us that certainly echoes the thought of Isaiah 50 verse 9 surely the Lord God will help me who is he who will condemn me but this is first true of Christ and only by extension to those of us who are his body and found in him but the obvious focus of this section I just read that gives us new information about the Messiah's servant is verse Isaiah 50 and verse 6 I gave my back to those who struck me I gave my cheeks to those who plucked out the beard and I did not hide my face from shame and spitting we know that Jesus endured this kind of treatment according to the New Testament now that's a development over the first hint of the rejection of the Messiah which was as we saw back in chapter 49 verse 7 there it only said that he was hated it doesn't say he was mistreated just hated and abhorred violently and they beat him up they strike him they spit on him but it's not until the final servant song that we read the extent of the abuse that he is to take the fourth and final song of the servant as scholars call them begins at Isaiah 52 verse 13 it continues through those last three verses of chapter 52 and chapter 53 which is verses 1-12 the chapter division is unnatural here chapter 53 should have begun three verses earlier because that is the beginning of the depiction of the servant and there is no break whatsoever between the end of chapter 52 and 53 as we have it so what we have here is 15 verses essentially 12 of them in chapter 53 and 3 of them in chapter 52 and 3 of them at the end of chapter 52 15 verses and quite interestingly this passage divides into 5 stanzas of equal length 3 verses each not the same number of words but the same number of verses the last 3 verses of Isaiah 52 are one stanza of this song then chapter 53 verses 1-3 are another stanza then chapter 53 verses 4-6 are another then 7-9 are another and then 10-12 are another each of these 5 stanzas are of equal length 3 verses that is not all too significant perhaps it is just an observation but it helps us to divide the thing so as to see the progression of thought let me read it first and then I will summarize for you what each section means and then I will give you a graphic description of the sufferings he would endure which were only hinted at a couple of times earlier chapter 52 verse 13 says behold my servant shall deal prudently he should

be exalted and extolled very high just as many were astonished at you so his visage was marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men so shall he sprinkle many nations and what they had not heard they shall consider who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed 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 they 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 he was despised and we did not esteem him surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement for our peace was upon him and with his stripes or by his stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the glory of us all 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 it sure is his silence so he opened not his mouth he was taken from prison and from judgment and who will declare his generation for he was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people he was stricken and they made his grave with the wicked and he died he had no mercy at his death because 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 and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand he shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied by his knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many for he shall bear their iniquities therefore I will divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his soul into death and he was numbered with the transgressors and he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors now as we have seen previously the very next chapter begins sing O barren you who have not born break forth in singing cry aloud et cetera it talks about the Gentiles coming in this chapter 54 and 55 is about the church age but that is the product in the upshot of chapter 53 which is the death of Jesus now this passage is so clearly about Jesus that almost anybody who knows anything about Jesus can recognize it as such even if they don't believe in Jesus a friend of mine was witnessing to a Jewish girl and in order to convince her that Jesus was the Messiah he opened without telling her he opened Isaiah 53 and he read this chapter to her and he said to her now who do you think that's talking about and she said well that's obviously talking about Jesus but we Jews don't accept the New Testament she didn't even know it was in her Bible she didn't know it was in the Old Testament but it was there was no question in her mind but this was a picture of Jesus how could one miss it when Philip was taken out into the desert where he saw the Ethiopian eunuch and he was carrying his chariot the Bible says the Ethiopian eunuch was reading this passage from the book of Isaiah and Philip ran up next to him and said do you understand what you are reading and the man said how can I understand without someone to explain it to me to expound it to me so Philip got up in the chariot with him and said beginning with this passage he preached to him Jesus actually there are many ways in the New

Testament that this passage is brought up that Isaiah 53 verse 5 and 6 and 9 are quoted or alluded to strongly in 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 22 through 24 or 5 and there are quite a number of times when it is quoted or alluded to actually this statement in chapter 53 verse 1 who is believed our report is quoted twice in the New Testament in John 12 verse 38 it is quoted to show that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews was predicted and it quotes as it is written who is believed our report it's a rhetorical question the implication is not many mostly people don't the report of the gospel has not been believed very widely by the Jews and Paul also quotes it in Romans 10 16 so both John and Paul quote Isaiah 53 1 as pointing out that the Jews in general it was predicted that they mostly wouldn't believe in the Messiah by the way the last verse in chapter 52 is quoted by Paul as sort of like a life text for him he explains why he has made it his goal in ministry not to preach where other men have preached but to focus his efforts on those who have never heard the gospel in Romans 15 21 where he says that that is his policy that he avoids preaching where others have preached he says as it is written and then he quotes Isaiah 52 15 what had not been told them they shall see and what they had not heard they shall consider he takes that to be a reference to the gospel and it should go to those who have not heard the gospel and it should be declared to them so he takes that verse quotes it as the rationale for his own ministry policy of going only if possible to those who have not heard the gospel first to those who have not heard because it says in Isaiah that he should be declared to those who have not heard so we can see how many different ways let's first of all look at the whole passage as a whole then break it down into parts and talk about a few of the verses we have a little time to do that I pointed out that the whole song is in five stanzas of about equal length the first three verses in it are Isaiah 52 13 through 15 this starts out at the end of the story it's sort of like it gives you the result and then it goes back to the end of the story the final end of the story is my servant shall deal prudently he shall be exalted and be very high now this is because he was he suffered and verse 14 says just as many were astonished at you his visage was marred more than any man and his form more than any man he was heated up and had the crown of thorns on him and was whipped and had beard chunks torn out that he hardly even looked human you ever heard a preacher say that he was hardly recognizable as a man they're basing it on this verse this is the only verse in the bible that they base that on and it doesn't quite say that I think they're going a little too far when they say he didn't even look human it just says yes his face was badly marred but it doesn't say he didn't look human it's just saying that more than any man other than him he was beat up yes I don't think so I don't think so I've heard the preachers make the point and in every case they use this verse you might if you do find a verse I'm not aware of I'd be glad to know but I just don't think there is one but what we have here the progress of thought verses 13-15 are sort of like an introduction to the whole song and then it goes into detail about his suffering after that but you see it starts out by saying my servant shall be highly exalted just as he was very low he was beat up people were astonished at how beat up he was now it talks about he was very low but ultimately he is very high Paul said in Ephesians chapter 4 that let me just give this to you I can't quite

quote it here Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 8-10 says therefore he says when he ascended on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men now this he ascended what does it mean but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth now he who descended is also the one who ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things now Paul says Jesus ascended into heaven but previous to that he had to descend to the lower parts of the earth his ascent to the highest position is contrasted with his descent to the lowest position now in Philippians the next book in our New Testament after Ephesians it says abbreviating the passage in Philippians 2-8 and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even the death of the cross therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name now both passages contrast that with the fact that he was brought very low first because his suffering he humbled himself to the point of death because he so lowered himself and subjected himself to such suffering therefore God has exalted him very high these thoughts are joined also in Isaiah 52 verses 13 and 14 first mentioning he is exalted very high but that exaltation very high he is just as high as low as he allowed himself to go just as people were astonished at him because he was so beat up so high is he now he went extremely low and that has resulted in him being exalted very high and the result of his going low and going high the result of his dying and then ascending is verse 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations with what with his blood many nations now this is very important remember this is in the Old Testament it's in the Old Testament it talks about many nations not just Israel being sprinkled by the Messiah if you look over at 1st Peter chapter 1 1st Peter 1 verses 1 and 2 says Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia and Bithynia that's many nations elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father and sanctification of the Spirit for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ these many nations have been sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ there's more in Hebrews also we won't turn there now but both in Hebrews 9 and Hebrews 10 there are verses that talk about being sprinkled by the blood of Jesus and having that cleanse us from our sins so Jesus as a result of his death resurrection and ascension to the high place is now in the position to sprinkle many nations to save to forgive many nations through the efficacy of the blood that he shed there it says there in verse 15 kings shall shut their mouths at him and it's hard to know exactly how that's to be understood but there is reverence being shown to him by kings kings are among those who are sprinkled kings are among those who become his admirers for what had not been told them they shall see and what they had not heard they shall consider one can hardly wonder that Paul saw this such a compelling reason to go to the Gentiles and to preach to those who had not heard because they will be told they who had never heard will be told Paul preached to kings he preached to governors and kings he preached to Festus he preached to Sergius Paul he preached to Felix he probably preached to Nero we know he stood before Nero and I wouldn't be surprised if he did some preaching there too he preached to King Agrippa however after saying that many nations would be sprinkled and many nations would be saved it goes on to say that Israel won't be among them or

at least the majority of Israel some Jews would be the remnant but chapter 53 goes on to say well you know you may get the impression that this Messiah he's just everybody's favorite kings admire him reject him and kill him it says who has believed our report I mentioned that both John and Paul quote this verse as a statement saying that the Jews mostly wouldn't that this is a this verse implies that although many nations would be sprinkled the Jews would mostly not believe the report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed if Jesus is the arm of the Lord those to whom he was revealed were the Jews he lived and walked visibly among them and revealed his glory among them for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant as a root out of a dry ground now the transformation of a desert wilderness into a forest or a field or whatever begins with a single plant the first mark that that wilderness is about to be restored is a single shoot coming up and that first shoot was Jesus the appearance of Jesus on the earth was the harbinger of the fulfillment of all these prophecies that talked about the desert blossoming and blooming he was the first he was the inaugurator of the fulfillment of these prophecies the dry desert ground spiritually speaking is broken through by the invasion of new life the intrusion of the Messiah that dry ground of course is Israel he grew up there he has no form or comeliness and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him now this may speak of his actual physical appearance many people have felt that it does and many have felt that pictures and portraits of Jesus have really fallen short in this respect because although not always because many times pictures of Jesus make him attractive handsome or at least pleasant enough very few of them make him ugly and repulsive I mean the medieval pictures of him he is pretty ugly by our standards but then so were the beautiful women in those paintings ugly by our standards I think they just had different tastes for what's attractive and what's not than we do I mean it's several centuries and a continent removed from us I think there are different ideas but I think most Christians at least in their art have tried to portray Christ as a handsome or attractive or at least not a repulsive ugly person and some have felt that we fall way short in that because he was not attractive he had no beauty or comeliness that when we see him we would desire him and this may be a true complaint that maybe he was but I don't know that this verse is intended to say quite that it may be saying that he didn't come as the attractive person that they thought that is he came in a way that did not attract them they were looking for a hero they were looking for a conqueror they were looking for a deliverer and he didn't deliver the goods he didn't deliver on what they wanted it's not that he wouldn't be attractive to those who wanted to the Jews as a whole who rejected him and despised him he was not the messiah that they would find attractive not necessarily maybe a reference to his physical appearance but his career as a whole and his basic program was not that which pleased them or what they were looking for there is a messianic prophecy that seems to give the impression that Jesus was attractive but that too could be taken figuratively in Psalm 45 a psalm that is quoted in the New Testament and applied to Christ Hebrews chapter 1 quotes this passage in Hebrews 1 7 or 8 it quotes from Psalm 45 well in verses 1 and 2 it says my heart is overflowing with a good theme I recite my composition concerning the

king this king is Jesus my tongue is the pen grace is poured upon your lips therefore God has blessed you forever gird on your sword on your thigh oh mighty one and your glory and your majesty with your glory and your majesty down in verse 7 or verse 6 it says your throne oh God is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom you love righteousness and hate wickedness therefore God your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions these verses are the ones that are quoted in Hebrews chapter 1 verses 8 and 9 and applied to Christ the king in this is Jesus and it says in verse 2 you are fairer than the sons of men which in its literal meaning would mean he is handsomer more physically attractive than most but as I said just as Isaiah 53 saying he had no beauty or comeliness might be figurative not a reference to his physical appearance so this too may not be the attractiveness of Christ to us is not in his physical appearance we don't even know what he looked like 1 Peter 1 verse 8 says having not seen yet you love we haven't seen him yet but we love him already the attractiveness of Christ is not in his appearance he is fairer than the sons of men may not be any more a reference to his physical appearance than Isaiah 53 too in the final analysis we don't know what Jesus looked like we don't know if he was ugly or attractive I will say this that many of the great men of God in the Bible were attractive physically attractive some were probably not but Joseph was distinctly said to be attractive handsome David was said to be handsome Moses is said to have been a beautiful child a beautiful baby it specifically says that that is why his parents resolved to save him and defy pharaohs because he was a beautiful child and they presumably took that as an omen that he had special grace upon him it would not be I think safe or correct to argue that physical attractiveness corresponds with spiritual value many of the godly people are said to have been physically attractive as well we certainly couldn't suggest that all of them were but the ones that weren't we're not told that they weren't the only ones that we know anything about their appearance are the ones who were attractive and quite a number of Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel were all said to be physically attractive Abigail was said to be physically attractive so the bible makes mention of physical attractiveness I'm thinking particularly about Moses as a baby that it says he was a beautiful baby and I think they understood that he had a divine call on his life in some sense however I've seen some pretty physically unattractive people who had mighty ministries and mighty call on their life and I've seen some beautiful people who were not only not only not anointed but not even saved so obviously physical attractiveness does not necessarily correspond but there might be grounds for thinking Jesus was an attractive man physically if he like David and Joseph and others, Moses the physical attractiveness being an emblem of God's grace upon him but we don't know even if he was physically attractive as a race because he didn't have what they wanted or he didn't deliver what they were demanding Isaiah 53 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 now let me tell you how these different stanzas of the song break down the first stanza which was the closing verses of chapter 52 described basically it's sort of a summary of the whole story it starts with him in his

exalted state it looks back at his suffering state and ends up talking about the results of his suffering and exaltation being to sprinkle all nations sort of a nutshell you know summary of his whole career and its significance but in the second stanza chapter 53 verses 1-3 which talks about Israel's rejection of him Israel would not believe the report Israel didn't find him attractive he was despised and rejected by men these men were Israel the people among whom he ministered verses 4-6 the next stanza talk about the fact that his death was not just a tragic thing where he just was on the wrong side of the authorities and they got him but his death had a significance that they never understood and that was an atoning significance that his death wasn't just like any other martyr's death his death was a sacrifice offered on behalf of sins the fourth stanza is verses 7-9 and it goes into the specifics of his suffering now he was rejected in verses 1-3 but his suffering is not described really much until verses 7-9 it talks about the specifics of his suffering and the last stanza verses 10-12 talk about how God's purposes will be fulfilled through him and the satisfaction God has with this fulfillment of his purpose through his servant if you wanted to give summary titles to each of these stanzas I would give them as follows the first stanza the servant exalted the second stanza the servant rejected the third stanza would be the servant atoning and the final stanza would be the servant satisfied now we don't have time to give detailed analysis of each of these verses particularly you know verses 7-9 describe the sufferings of the servant which in terms that are familiar to us because we know the gospels he did not open his mouth in his own defense he was like a sheep led to the slaughter and it says he was cut off from the land of the living that means he died actually refers to him being murdered killed but it says it wasn't for his own crimes that he did this but for the transgression of my people now here's one place that makes it clear the Messiah is in view not Israel see the modern Jew will probably say this chapter is about Israel the servant is Israel suffering the servant is not cut off for his own transgressions because it says at the end of verse 9 there was no deceit in his mouth he had done no violence he was not slain for his own crimes but the crimes of his people it said something like that in verse 6 also all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of his soul the reference here is to an atoning sacrifice an innocent victim of the punishment for the crimes of his people now let me deal with verse 4 for a moment if I could 4 and 5 in our last session we dealt with verse 5 where it says with his stripes or by his stripes we were healed that together with verse 4 provide the principle arguments for healing of sickness being in the atonement a doctrine which I personally reject but which is taught by many full gospel people in fact many Christians believe that these verses teach that healing of our physical sicknesses is accomplished through the atonement verse 4 and verse 5 contribute individually different ways to this doctrine we saw that in verse 5 with his stripes we are healed is understood by these people to mean that when Jesus was on the whipping post and got stripes laid across his back that that purchased our healing and the blood shed there purchased our forgiveness so that God has provided in this dual suffering of Christ his beating and his crucifixion a remedy for sin and sickness now I pointed out in our last lecture I don't have time to go over it again

that by his stripes we were healed is a figurative expression agreeable with similar expressions throughout Isaiah and Jeremiah and Hosea which are all speaking of the nation as a sick nation not with organic sicknesses and the healing they need and the healing they receive from God is likewise not a physical healing the nation is personified as one man a very sick man and God is the healer through the Messiah we talked about this in the last session anyone who missed that we will recommend that tape but what I pointed out is that verse 5 does not talk about physical healing when it says by his stripes we are healed the chastisement for our peace was upon him chastisement and stripes are the same thing the healing and our peace the restoration of peace with God are identical parallel concepts now verse 4 contributes to the doctrine of healing in the atonement in yet another way it says surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows that statement can be translated surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sicknesses and carried our pains these Hebrew words griefs and sorrows can be translated that way as a margin of your Bible will probably say now if he carried our sicknesses and bore our pains why should we have to bear them after all he bore our sins upon himself and that results in us not having to bear our sins then does that not mean he took them from us just as on the cross he bore our sins in his body so that we no longer have to bear the guilt of them and the punishment of them wouldn't it mean if he bore our sicknesses and our pains that he also on the cross took those as well as our sins that our sicknesses as well as our sins were borne by Christ then his sickness should be as readily available as forgiveness of sin this is what is implied by these people now first of all let me say that the term griefs and sorrows I agree can be translated sickness and pains but it doesn't have to be the same two words I found in verse 3 where it says he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief same words and does that mean I have no objection to translating these things as sickness and pains but we have to understand what the fulfillment of it is he does not take them on the cross the only place in the New Testament that quotes this verse Isaiah 53-4 is Matthew 8-17 and from the way that Matthew quotes it we can derive the meaning of the verse in Matthew chapter 8 verses 16 and 17 says when the evening had come they brought to him many who were demon possessed and he cast out spirits with the word and healed all who were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying he himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses now you can see that Matthew favors that translation not griefs and sorrows but infirmities and sicknesses so that justifies that translation Jesus took them but in what sense do we find him taking them on the cross not according to Matthew there is nothing about the atonement here because he used it in the Hebrew but not in the Greek good point if we had the exact same words in both passages then the translator's preference would be what we are seeing not Matthews I think in the Hebrew they are flexible the Greek words Matthews mean actually infirmities and sicknesses which justifies that translation from the Hebrew and obviously in the context he is talking about healing people's sicknesses that it might be fulfilled what Isaiah said about him taking our infirmities and sicknesses but if you will notice how Matthews he applies it not to anything Jesus accomplished at the whipping post not to

anything Jesus accomplished not to the atonement at all but to what the active healing ministry of Jesus during his lifetime fulfilled that prophecy now I have no problem recognizing this as a reference to physical sicknesses Matthew clearly applies it to physical sicknesses but he doesn't say that Jesus took them on the cross or took them on the whipping post as if to bear them as a substitute but rather he took them from the sick people the sick person takes their sickness from them he heals them of it he lifts it actually the word carries not here but in the Isaiah passage he carried our sorrows or carried our sicknesses it actually means lifted he lifted them it doesn't necessarily mean he vicariously became sick for us yes yes when Paul in Philippians 3.10 refers to Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings is that talking spiritually no I think that's talking about persecution I think the sufferings of Christ he refers to probably there is a reference to the rejection of men and persecution and so forth which Paul was it was fellowshiping with the men were you wondering if that related to sicknesses or spiritual things I think it relates to physical suffering that's caused by persecution simply because we don't know of any other suffering Jesus endured we don't know that Jesus ever was sick he may have been but we don't ever read of it we don't know of him ever being injured or breaking a bone though it may have happened we never read of it so the only suffering we really know of Christ is the suffering of rejection and persecution and I think that's pretty much what Paul is saying he too is getting to know Jesus in that environment of rejection and persecution for his stand for Christ what Isaiah is saying is that Jesus would actually be a healer but that's not the same thing as saying he would purchase healing now let me point out what the difference is very big difference let's take the healing in the atonement idea which isn't taught in the scripture but which is thought to be taught in these verses if healing is in the atonement just like forgiveness of sins is that means that what Jesus accomplished is accessible to us instantly we would assume I mean how long do I have to wait for the forgiveness of sins if I come to God on his terms on the basis of the shed blood of Christ how quickly can I expect to be forgiven instantly as near as I can tell the Bible doesn't indicate I've got to beg for it or wait or tarry or do penance I just have to ask if we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness why is that a matter of faithfulness on his part he's faithful to forgive us why not merciful because he in a sense owes it to us now that may sound blasphemous but he owes it to us because it's paid for on our account by Jesus Jesus purchased the forgiveness of sins for Jesus to pay the ransom and for the prisoner not to go free would be an injustice for Jesus to pay the penalty and God to withhold the forgiveness would be an injustice because Jesus has in fact purchased our forgiveness and justice he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins when we repent but if he also purchased our healing it would likewise be a matter of God's justice and faithfulness that he must heal us when we trust him for that yet how many people have there been who have trusted God for healing who have not been healed a great number I dare say and then that would impugn God's justice actually there's one case a man named Aaron Epaphras who was sick he says he almost died but God was merciful to him referring to the healing of Epaphras was an act of God's mercy not justice God didn't owe it God

didn't owe anyone a healing it was God's mercy it was an undeserved favor that God did by healing this Christian man now there's a big difference between justice and mercy mercy is doing something beyond what they deserve and what they can claim Paul speaks of a healing for a Christian as God showing mercy John speaks of forgiveness of sins as God being just why? because Jesus has purchased our forgiveness he apparently has not purchased our healing or else it would also be a matter of justice for God to give us our healing now I dare say that because I've asked for healing of sickness I've gotten it now how do I explain that if God purchased my healing and it's available to me on the terms of the atonement on the same basis as the forgiveness of sins there's only two possible things one is that God has failed to keep his promise because I believed in him for healing and he didn't give it to me or I failed to have enough faith and this is what the word faith people would say how do I receive the forgiveness of sins by faith they say I also receive my healing by faith presumably since both are purchased at the same time both available on the same terms the same kind of faith would be necessary to get a healing as to receive the forgiveness of sins since both are there on this contractual basis all you have to do is have faith now the problem is if my failure to get a healing then what assurance could I possibly have that I had enough faith to be forgiven of my sins if God has freely dispensed this healing as forgiveness of sins to those who have faith and I can't get the healing on what grounds do I have any basis for believing I got my forgiveness of sins either that's unseen I know whether I've been healed or not by whether I have symptoms the forgiveness of sins is something I take by faith if it includes healing I didn't get that if it's a package deal this is something that is unavoidable if Jesus has purchased healing and forgiveness through the atonement then both would be available to the same parties who have faith either God when a Christian is not healed either God is breaking a promise cheating defaulting on an obligation doesn't have enough faith in which case his whole salvation is in question or third God never promised healing on the same basis that he promised salvation and that is what I believe the scripture shows that God didn't promise healing just because it says he took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses doesn't mean he did on the cross like he took our sins it means that in his active healing in his acts of individual mercy he lifted the burden of sickness off of many people and still does so today I believe God is as much in the business of healing today as he was when he walked the earth but on the same basis not a contractual basis we can't take it to the bank and say I believe I got a healing on deposit here in my name I'll take it now write the check sign the name I get it because I claim it you don't claim it it's not yours it's God's and if he gives it to you it's an act of mercy it was when Jesus walked the earth he didn't heal everyone he saw there are a whole bunch of sick folks at the pool of Bethesda but he only healed one man and so healing when it happens is an individual mercy of God dispensed according to his sovereign will in the situation forgiveness of sins is a purchased right to the children of God to claim on the basis of genuine repentance and confession it's a matter of God's justice to dispense forgiveness it's a matter of his mercy when he so deems desirable to dispense healing he does but he did it in the old testament he did it when Jesus was on

the earth he did it in the days of the apostles he does it now all on the same basis not that we can claim it but that we can ask for that mercy and God may give it but he doesn't need to well the rest of Isaiah 53 I think is familiar enough everything about it is pretty self explanatory once you know that it's talking about Jesus you can see in the new testament all the ways that it came true in Jesus we're out of time so we'll stop there and move in another direction next session