

The Fourth Servant Poem

God:

52:13 Behold my servant will act with insight,
be exalted, raised up, and attain great heights.
52:14 Just as many were astonished at you¹
--so marred was his appearance beyond that of a human
and his form beyond that of common humanity--
52:15 so will many nations become agitated,²
kings will shut their mouths on account of him.
For what has never been told to them they have seen,
and what they have never heard they understand.

We:³

53:1 Who has believed what we have heard
and to whom has the arm of Yahweh been so revealed.
53:2 The servant grew up like a sapling before us,⁴
like a shoot from the parched earth.
There was in him no stately bearing⁵ to make us look at him,
nor physical appearance that would attract us to him.
53:3 He was despised, cut off from people,⁶
a person with pains, acquainted with⁷ illness.
As someone from whom one hides one's face,⁸
he was despised, and we did not give him a second thought.

A new point of view:

53:4 Surely he has carried our sicknesses and, as for our pains, he bore them.
But we considered him stricken, injured by God, and afflicted.
53:5 Yet he was wounded for our rebellions,
crushed for our iniquities.
The chastisement that would lead to our wholeness was on him,
in his wounds there was healing for us.

¹עלֵיךָ MT; or עליו "at him." Consistency would favor "at him."

²by emendation; MT יזה "so shall he sprinkle (or spatter) many nations."

³We = the many or the nations or kings.

⁴לפנינו; MT לפניו "him" = Yahweh.

⁵לא תאר...ולא הדר.

⁶והדל אישים. "frail among human beings." Cf. Ps 39:5(4): how fleeting my life is.

⁷or "known by" or "experienced in."

⁸Is Yahweh the one who hides the face? Or does this refer to someone so miserable that we can't bear looking at that person?

53:6 All we like sheep had wandered away,
Each one had turned to his or her own way.
But Yahweh caused to alight on him the iniquity of us all.

53:7 He was oppressed and he was afflicted,⁹
but he did not open his mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter,
and like a ewe before her shearers is silent,
he did not open his mouth.

53:8 After his arrest and trial¹⁰ he was taken away,¹¹
And who gave a thought about his fate¹²?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
beaten to death¹³ because of the rebellion of my people.¹⁴

53:9 Aye, he made his grave with the wicked,
his tomb with evildoers.¹⁵
Although he had done no violence,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.

53:10 Yahweh seemed to take pleasure in crushing him,
in making him sick.
Yet since his life was made¹⁶ a reparation offering¹⁷ for sin,
he shall see his descendants,
he shall prolong his life
and the good pleasure of Yahweh will prosper in his hand.¹⁸

53:11 After his great turmoil,
he will see light¹⁹ and be satisfied

⁹Or “he bowed down,” expressing the reaction of the servant.

¹⁰מעצר וממשפט. Others: “From oppression/imprisonment and judgment” or “by legal restraint.”

¹¹A euphemism for dying?

¹²Or: about his generation.

¹³נגע למות. MT נגע למו. a blow came to them/him. LXX ηχθη εις θανατον.

¹⁴Qumran עמו “his people.”

¹⁵ואת עשיר רע במתו. MT ואת עשיר במתו “and with the rich man in his deaths.”

¹⁶תשם; MT תשים “you make.” Cf. the 2nd person address to the servant in 52:14. Conjecture: ישם
If he makes his life....

¹⁷Traditionally: guilt offering. A reparation offering provides compensation when someone has infringed God’s rights, harmed God’s name, or otherwise wronged God.

¹⁸Through the servant’s ministry the people will grow and flourish, and thus Yahweh’s plan will be fulfilled. Goldingay.

¹⁹אור is added with LXX and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

God:

By his experiential union with a suffering, sinful people²⁰ the righteous one, my servant, will
cause many to be considered righteous,
he will bear their iniquities.

53:12 Therefore I will divide for him a portion with the many,
and he will share booty with the strong.

Because he poured himself out unto death,
was numbered with the rebels.

He carried the sin of the many,
and for the rebels he prayed.

Ralph W. Klein
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²⁰Paraphrase. MT קְדַעְתּוֹ By his knowledge. Some: By his humiliation.