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The "Warrior Messiah" in the Servant Song of Isaiah 52:13-53:12

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By criteria studied, the Servant in the "Servant Song" of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 was identified as the messianic future redeemer figure. The Song was illustrated to be also "warrior messianic." The language of war such as "arm of the Lord," "to divide" (חלק), and "spoil" (שׁלל), puts the Servant to be in the role of a warrior, ar the Song's whole context as that of a war. The method of the Servant's conducting a war surfaced; namely, that the war would be through his suffering, humiliation, and death. The essence is brought out that he achieves his triumphal purposes as messianic redeemer against the power of evil by being the sin-bearing sacrifice. This sublime nature of the Servant excludes any analogy of the text to the Baal myth and rather connects the jargon to Daniel 9.

Keywords: *Warrior Messiah, Servant Song, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Daniel 9, Baal myth*

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Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is allocated by scholars as one of the "Servant Songs," that is, the fourth one among Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12.[1] It was traditionally considered among Christian denominations as messianic, which rests on the question as to who the identity of the Servant is. Considering the identity of the Servant, there are basically two major views: the group, or collective view that sees the Servant as personified or idealized Israel, or the remnant of Israel; and the singular, or individual view in which the Servant is the foreseen messianic figure as an individual.[2] Various authors of the New Testament found satisfaction in this pericope of Isaiah to use it in application for the suffering aspect unto salvation but also unto atonement (Mark 10:33, 34; Hebrews 9:28; Acts 8:32; Revelation 5:6). Many scholars have studied the connections between Isaiah and the Gospels with this text in mind.[3]

To talk about the salvation and atonement roles of the Servant, is fine but what has not been paid attention to by scholars here, is the nature of the Servant particularly as a warrior. Scholars described the triumphal victory of the Servant, yet the nature of the Servant as a warrior had not been clearly recognized.[4] This militant aspect of the Servant in the "Suffering Servant Song" of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 will be looked at in detail and the method of war described in more detail by this study, namely, the clear battle metaphors and warrior language specifically shown in the first and last part of Isaiah 53. If our study reveals this Servant to be a warrior who dies and gets the spoil, the findings will support and give light to the Great Controversy theme between Christ and the power of Evil spelled out throughout the Scriptures.[5] It is necessary to focus first on the messianic nature of the Servant, and then to outline the Servant's warrior aspect.

1) Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia: übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892). See also G. W. Grogan, "Isaiah," *The Expositor's Bible* Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 6:7; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 15.

2) Motyer, *Isaiah*, 14.

3) Among many, two edited works are listed here: William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer, ed., *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998); Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, ed., *The Gospel according to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013).

4) See Grogan, "Isaiah," 305; John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, Anchor Bible, vol. 20 (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 136; Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 256; John W. Olley, "'The Many': How Is Isa 53,12a to Be Understood?" *Biblica* 68 (1987): 351-56; and E. Young, "The Origin of the Suffering Servant Idea," *Westminster Theological Journal* 13 (1950): 31; and F. Duane Lindsey, "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant Part 4: The Career of the Servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (1982): 312.

5) The warrior messianic aspect of the Song has been studied in the previous work, Kim, *The Warrior Messiah,* 78-85. This aspect, however, is reconsidered in the frame of the great conflict theme between Christ (Messiah) and his opponent power by this study with the updated material and implications.

The Servant as the Messianic Figure

It is a Servant Song but how does one know that it is messianic? It will become clearer if one keeps in mind the following criteria.[6)]

Future Redeemer Figure in Line with the Individual View

The Servant in Isaiah 53 points to an individual figure who functions as a redeemer and as the agent of God who (singular) will suffer and die as the "sin offering" for "many." It is the identity of the Servant here that Isaiah had in view. Contrastingly, in the collective view, the Servant is considered as personified or idealized Israel as a whole, or the pious remnant group of Israel who would suffer for Israel.[7)] Admittedly, Israel was called the servant of the Lord, for example, in Isaiah 49:3. However, the main issue here is one of application. Can one use Isaiah 49:3 as a blanket statement to be cast over all the other Servant periscopes? Especially the fourth one covered in Isaiah 52 until 53?

Reasons have been suggested why the collective view cannot be applied to Isaiah 53, but presenting a few supporting the individual view will help to contrast this view with the collective view. First of all, perfection is attributed to the Servant (singular), for he would be the "sin offering" which had to be blameless. Already Israel is going to find themselves at odds that they were never blameless in their whole history. In contrast, Israel (collectively) is classified unfaithful in many places of the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets.[8)] Also, in Isaiah 49:5 it says, God commissioned the Servant to be an agent to bring Israel back to him. If he is called to restore Israel back to God, this agent cannot be identical with Israel herself. Moreover, if he is identical with Israel, Israel suffering for Israel does not sound reasonable, and there is no division between faithful and unfaithful Israel in the text.[9)] The collective view

6) These four criteria are also utilized to identify messianic passages of the OT by Kim, *The Warrior Messiah.* See page 9.

7) Gordon D. Kirchhevel is one of those who have the collective view on this passage, though he portrayed the Servant from the socialistic viewpoint. In his view, the Servant was Israel who suffered and oppressed with forced labor by and for the heathen kings, including Babylonian. See his "Who's Who and What's What in Isaiah 53," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13 (2003): 127-131.

8) For example, Isa 9:8-21; Jer 2:1-3:25; Ezek 8:14-18; and Hosea 5:1-7, etc.

9) Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., also included these elements as he listed reasons why the nation Israel could not be the Servant of this passage. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Identity and Mission of the 'Servant of the Lord,'" in *The Gospel according to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology,* ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 89-92. He concluded that Jesus (Yeshua) was prefigured by this Servant Song. Kaiser, "The Identity and Mission," 107. This position was also supported by 황선우, "이사야 52:13-53:12의 '종'의 정체," (Sun-woo Hwang, "The Identity of the 'Servant' in Isaiah 52:13-53:12.") 신학지남 (*Shinhak Jinam*) 313 (2012): 77-83.

has to make way for the individual view.

Added to the instrumental role of bringing Israel back to Himself, the text portrays him as a "royal" figure in this Song since he is engaged in a war.[10] It is particularly this aspect of the kingly role that is directly related to the current study, and will be further examined below. As a redeemer of his people, he succeeds in his conflict through his humiliation and death. This combination of the conflict with the redeeming aspect and the suffering in one person of the messianic figure, has received attention with the writers of the Old Testament, the intertestamental writings, and also the New Testament.

Inter-textual Supports in the Old Testament Messianic Parallels

There are inter-textual supports in the Old Testament with parallels which are known as clearly messianic. Genesis 3:15 refers to the bruise of the messianic "seed" which he received as he crushed the head of the serpent, prefiguring the suffering and death of the Messiah and the ultimate victory of him. This text is known to be summarizing the great conflict between the messianic figure and his opponents in a single verse.[11] In Daniel 7, a cosmic conflict is described in which the future redeemer called the "son of man" triumphs over the beasts from the sea, which represent the evil power of Satan and his agents.

One of the prominent examples is Daniel 9:24-26 where, according to Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "the messianic ideology" is found the first time in the Old Testament texts.[12] Not only do the two pericopes of Isaiah 53 and Daniel 9 show the verbal connection with the same vocabulary used, the thematic connection of the atonement aspect is noticeable between them in relation with the sin-bearing sacrificial acts.[13] Aspects of redemption, conflict,

10) In the ancient times, it was the role of a king to be the chief commander for the wars. See 1 Samuel 8:19-20.

11) This text, which is also called "Proto-evangelium," is known to be the first messianic prediction in the Old Testament which describes the conflict between the messianic redeemer and his counterpart and his ultimate victory in a nutshell. Douglas McC. L. Judisch, "The Protoevangelium and Concordia Theological Seminary," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 (1996): 75; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 37; Kim, *The Warrior Messiah*, 26-30, 252-53; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 80-81; Walter Wifall, "Gen 3:15—Protevangelium?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974): 361.

12) Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Fitzmyer argues that the messianic ideology in the narrow, technical sense is not found in any of the OT texts prior to Daniel 9:25-26. To him, Daniel 9 is the first one which utilizes the term "Messiah" for the future, eschatological redeemer figure. See his chap. 5 for this. Fitzmyer's view stands under re-evaluation in this writing. It will depend on what "Old Testament form" Fitzmyer is mentioning here. He would have to make Genesis 3:15 to post-date the book of Daniel, following Higher Critical Methods for example, which argues for the post-excillic dating of the Pentateuch including Genesis and this is probably the sense in which Fitzmyer is trying to explain it but his view is not the final and only word on these matters.

13) This aspect will be further discussed in the section "Sin-Bearing Sacrifice."

or atoning death are found in these passages strongly interwoven by shared vocabulary and jargon supporting the same conceptual cluster. Thus, with the strong support from the Old Testament texts, it is necessary for one to look at the intertestamental writings.

Supports from the Intertestamental Writings

The textual pericope of Isaiah 53 was identified as messianic in later intertestamental literature. Both Targums and the Septuagint took the passage messianically. This is a later reflection in Judaism of what the content of Isaiah 53 is trying to convey. However, both these sets of sources show a great degree of reinterpretation and rewriting of the text, which at times obviously deviate from the Hebrew reading of the consonantal Masoretic text. They were operating with a heavy baggage on their shoulders that weighed heavily on the manner they described in their translations. The Targumist completely rewrote the text and eliminated anything which concerns the suffering of the servant, so that the text is seriously twisted with almost the opposite meaning. The Messiah portrayed is a glorious one rather than one who suffers.[14] It is similar in the case of the Septuagint too. The Septuagint translation suggests the impression that the servant did not actually die but was somehow led to the possibility.[15]

Even though the original Masoretic Text of Isaiah 53 explains that the suffering would be unto death, it appears that it was hard for the contributors of these works to have to accept the idea that the Messiah would suffer afflictions and degradation to the point of death.[16] The Targum and Septuagint are thus evidence of interpreters who could not reconcile the explicit text with their own general conceptual framework and in the process they rewrote the original by altering the text of Isaiah 53. Instead of continuation of the older text, there were efforts of transforming the text on the basis of preconceived ideas. One would wonder, if the intertestamental writings went off-road on Isaiah 53, whether the New Testament would also disrupt the concepts of Isaiah 53.

14) Antti Laato, *A Star Is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 340-42; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 331-32; Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 58-59; Roger Syrén, "*Targum Isa.* 52:13-53:12 and Christian Interpretation," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40 (1989): 205. One cannot miss the transformative nature of the Targums which readapts, reapplies or otherwise revises *in traditio* the older *traditum*. Mostly the Targumists reflected what they considered is in the text but at times they went beyond the textual constraints and Isaiah 53 is a key example.

15) David A. Sapp, "The LXX, IQIsa, and MT Versions of Isaiah 53 and the Christian Doctrine of Atonement," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 176-84. See for example the words in the LXX of Isaiah 53:9: "Καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ."

16) Cullmann, *The Christology*, 58.

The Attestation of the New Testament as Messianic

Also the New Testament writers considered Isaiah 53 as messianic. It applies this passage to Jesus as fulfilled in his ministry, death, and resurrection. This passage was either directly quoted or alluded to numerous times by the New Testament authors.[17] Jesus' suffering and substitutionary death on the cross are a running theme of the whole New Testament as the essence of the gospel message.[18] No other Old Testament passage shows the mission, suffering, death, resurrection, and his eternal victory clearer than this Servant Song as the background of the redemptive work of Christ recorded in the New Testament. So how does the New Testament compare to the Septuagint and Targums translation of Isaiah 53? The New Testament, contrary to the transformation by the Targums and the Septuagint of Isaiah 53, did not transform the text of Isaiah 53 but harmoniously kept all aspects of the text: redemption, conflict and suffering as atonement, related in one person, Jesus Christ.[19]

What will become clear in the following section, is that in examining the "warrior" messianic nature of the Servant, the language of war and battle metaphor are imbedded in parallel with the suffering experience of the Servant.

The Language of War

The Aspect of Vocabulary

The vocabulary in the beginning and at the end of Isaiah 53 communicates that the chapter is in the context of warfare and the Servant is engaged in a controversy.[20] First of all, the phrase "arm of the Lord" appears in 53:1, which signifies the

17) See examples: Matthew 8:17; 26:63; 27:12-14, 57-60; Mark 14:61; 15:5, 28; Luke 23:9; John 10:14-18; 12:38; 19:9; Acts 8:32-33; Romans 4:25; 5:18-19; 10:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Peter 2:22, 24-25.

18) See Matthew 20:17-19, 28; Mark 10:32-34, 45; Luke 18:31-33; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 5:9, 12. Recently, the self-understanding of Jesus portrayed in the Gospels was studied by Michael Wilkins, Luke's recognition of Jesus as the Servant of Isaiah in the Book of Acts by Darrel Bock, and also the identification of the Servant in the letters of the New Testament by Craig Evans, in Bock and Glaser, ed., *The Gospel according to Isaiah 53*, 109-132, 133-144, and 145-170, respectively.

19) SungHo Oh also studied in relation with the continuation between the Old and New Testament and concluded that the OT predictions were fulfilled in Christ. SongHo Oh, "Three Views of Understanding the Relation between the Fourth Servant Song and the New Testament" 한국개혁신학 57 (2018): 340-374.

20) The theme of the great warfare between God and Satan received a special treatment by scholars, poets, and writers in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Post-Reformation Period. A Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel wrote his *Lucifer* (1654) as part of a trilogy to describe this conflict. Cf. A. P. Grové, *Joost van den Vondel Lucifer* (Pretoria, South Africa: J. L. van Schaik, 1968). The work of Hugo Grotius, *Adamus exul* (The Exile of Adam; Tragedy, 1601) was the prototype of John Milton's Paradise Lost. In 1667, John Milton published his *Paradise Lost* (London), depicting this theme of the conflict between God and Satan. Some scholars even went beyond Milton to St. Ephrem (306-373) about this theme. Cf. Gary A. Anderson, "The Fall of Satan in the Thought of St. Ephrem and John

strength of God. This phrase was employed throughout Isaiah 40-66 with the Exodus imagery (Exodus 6:6; 15:6, 12, 16). Especially in 51:9, it was used to describe God as the divine warrior who defeated Rahab or the dragon by drying up the Red Sea at the Exodus. This clear battle term regarding the "arm" repeats in Isaiah 52:10 and 53:1, relating it to the Servant.[21] The "arm of the Lord" in the first part of the poem in 53:1 is equated with the Servant himself, as the following verses answer the rhetorical question of vs. 1.[22]

So where does one see the battle language in Isaiah 53? The battle language becomes clearer in the last part of the passage. The Hebrew verb חלק means "to divide, share, or apportion."[23] It was used with the noun שׁלל in Genesis 49:27, Exodus 15:9, Judges 5:30, Psalms 68:13, Proverbs 16:19, Isaiah 9:2, 33:23, as well as in Isaiah 53:12, in the context of dividing the spoil. The word שׁלל means "spoil, booty, prey, or plunder."[24] Positioning these terms in the passage is a noticeable indication that the Servant of this chapter is engaged in a war situation. Moreover, the term שׁלל suggests that the Servant has successfully won the victory over the enemies and is now apportioning the spoil with the great and strong. By this vocabulary here, the whole text, which is called the "fourth Servant Song," is set forth in a war context.[25]

The Victorious Royal Figure

Not only is he a warrior that is engaged in a

Milton," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 3/1 (January 2000). http://fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/ anderson.htm (Accessed June 2, 2015). Augustine mentioned it in *De Civitate Dei* XI. A list of Lucifer's sins are given by John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition upon All the Epistles and the Revelation of John the Divine* (London, 1647), 659; and Edward Leigh, *A Systeme or Body of Divinity* (Oxford, 1654), 280f. There are the works of Roberto Bellarmino, *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei* (Keulen,1619); Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes de Angelis* VIII c. 13a5 (Cardon, 1620); and Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentarii in Sacram Scripturam* part VI (Antwerp 1616; Paris 1854) 229b. A female writer in the Victorian Age was Ellen G. White with her Conflict of the Ages Series (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1888-1917), consisting of five volumes covering from the Creation until earth recreated. The fifth book of the series appeared with the title *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*, mostly dealing with the Middle Ages and the final part of the earth's history. See also Kim, *The Warrior Messiah*, 79, where she discussed the vocabulary of this war.

21) Grogan, "Isaiah," 300; Olley, 351; E. Young, *The Book of Isaiah,* vol. 3, *Chapters 40 through 66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 341.

22) Motyer, *Isaiah*, 427. In *Targum Onkelos* of Deut 33:27 the "arm" is identified with the Word (מימרא in Aramaic; λόγος). See Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic: The Pentateuch according to Targum Onkelos*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1992). Also, Risto Santala, "The Suffering Messiah and Isaiah 53 in the Light of Rabbinic Literature," *The Springfielder* 39 (1976): 182, on this.

23) Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), s.v. "חלק I."

24) Ibid., s.v. "שׁלל."

25) As F. Duane Lindsey examined the career of the Servant, the victorious and triumphant exaltation of the servant was counted as the main them of the poem. Lindsey, "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant," 312.

battle, he is royal. His engagement in a war signifies that he is a "royal" figure who battles against his opponents. It may be put forth that this aspect, his being a royal figure, supports the individual view of the identity of the Servant as one messianic figure, which naturally excludes the collective view to identify him as the whole of Israel. By using the third person singular verbs, Isaiah 53 had one messianic figure in mind that would be a royal sufferer but come out of the conflict victoriously. Through this triumphal success, he redeems many people (53:10-12). But what weapons would the Messiah as Warrior use in this battle? In the next section, we will examine what method of war the warrior Messiah is to employ.

The Servant's Way of Conducting a War

Something needs to be said about the pronouns in this chapter. It is interesting to note that both "I" (meaning Yahweh) and "he" (the Servant) are used as the subjects in parallel in 53:12. Surprisingly enough, the spoils are given to the Servant who has gone through various forms of suffering and humiliation. If the victorious suffering Servant gets the spoil, what weapons does he use for this war? Contrary to the customary way of conducting a war with military weapons and using physical, material, or political power, he takes a different way of achieving supremacy, namely through suffering, humiliation, and death. The remarkable aspect of his power is becoming clearer in 53. To him, his power was from his character: He achieves the victory through the power of his character.

Suddenly, the scope of this event raises to superhuman levels. The Servant takes his own way of fighting, that human wisdom could not comprehend as an option. By means of suffering culminating in death (vss. 8-9), the Servant accomplishes his conquest against the opposing forces up to the point of dividing the spoils.[26] What a mystery! The Servant figure portrayed in the Hebrew text is the one who suffers in the place of others, for the purpose of redeeming his people: he would be despised, a man of sorrow and grief, would receive chastisement, and would be pierced and crushed (vss. 3-5). It was so confusing to Judaism that the Targumic and Septuagint's interpretation could not understand it and the suffering and death aspects of the Servant were altered.[27]

While the Septuagint in a lesser degree and the Targum in a greater degree deviated from this concept as intertestamental writings, the original

26) Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 176; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 443; Charles de Santo, "God and Gog," *Religion in Life* 30 (1961): 116; Norman R. de Puy, "Desert Storms and Suffering Servants," *Christian Century* 108 (Sept. 1991): 843; and Mowinckel, *He That* Cometh, 228, 255, also perceive this unique way of achieving victory over inimical powers.

text and the New Testament align around a central harmonious presentation of the Servant as a warrior figure. Still, he does not fight with political intrigues or power but by suffering and dying as sacrificial substitute in the context of atonement as redemption as the following section will show. How do you save by dying and get the spoil?

Sin-bearing Sacrifice

According to this passage, the suffering of the Servant was as a guilt offering (אשם), a sin-bearing sacrifice for the transgression (revolt, פשע) and iniquity (עון) of his people (vss. 5, 6, 10-12).[28] By using the terms of sin comprehensively together--פשע, עון, and חטא ('sin' in vs. 12), the Servant Song covers the whole range of sin, including the human nature with the propensity to sin. This text also explicitly manifests that the suffering is on behalf of human people (vss. 4-6, 11-12).[29]

For a moment one should consider the aspects that agree between the portrait of the Royal Servant here in Isaiah 53 and the Messiah the Prince in Daniel 9.

In surprising ways, the portrait of the Messiah the Prince in Dan 9 shows a close parallel to that of the Servant in Isa 53.[30] Similar to what is described in the Servant Song, the anointing of the Most Holy in 9:24 is associated with the atonement for iniquity (עון), finishing of the transgression (פשע), and sin (חטא).[31] Both texts have

27) Frank Collison, "The Use of Isaiah 53 by Jesus and the Early Church," *Indian Journal of Theology* 20 (1971): 118; Rikki E. Watts, "Jesus' Death, Isaiah 53, and Mark 10:45: A Crux Revisited," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 151; Sapp, "The LXX, IQIsa, and MT Versions of Isaiah 53," 176-84. His peculiar method of conducting the war must be the reason why the intertestamental translators of the Scriptures could not comprehend the text the way it is. It should be a difficult thing for them to acknowledge that their Messiah would receive afflictions and suffering of death. This aspect was discussed in the section "The Servant as the Messianic Figure."

28) The sacrificial aspect of the Servant's death as an offering is examined in detail by Kye Sang Ha, "Cultic Allusions in the Suffering Servant Poem (Isaiah 52:13:53:12)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2009).

29) Sung Ho Park studied the fourth Servant Song in relation with the Christian understanding of the early church and concluded that the early Christians studied the meaning of the "Servant" deeper and came to understand that He not only bore the result of the sin but brought the fundamental liberation from sin through His death on the cross. 박성호, "'고난받는 종' 예수: 네 번째 '야웨의 종의 노래' (사 52:13-53:12)에 대한 초대교회의 기독교적 해석 (Interpretation Christiana)" ["The Suffering Servant Jesus : Christian Interpretation (Interpretatio Christiana) of the Early Church on the Fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:13-53:12)] Canon & Culture 11/1 (2017): 169-211.

30) Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 149, also sees this connection.

31) The Most Holy here can be read either as an object (Temple) or a person. S. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publisher, 1994), 261; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), 375. Since this anointing is associated with the Anointed One (Messiah) in vs. 25, taking it as referring to the messianic figure seems reasonable. As Koot van Wyk studied Daniel 9:24 text-analytically, he also recognized that the description in Daniel 9:24-27 was fulfilled in the person of Jesus as the Messiah. Koot van Wyk, "Towards a Text-Analytical Commentary of Daniel 9:24," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5 (2015): 312. Being full of sanctuary language suggests the Anointed One as priestly. Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The*

Table 1. Parallels between Isaiah 53 and Daniel 9

Parallels	
Isaiah 53	Daniel 9
• פּשׁע, עון, and חטא [32]	• פּשׁע, עון, and חטא [33]
• Language of צדק: יצדיק "shall justify"[34]	• Language of צדק צדק עלמים "everlasting righteousness"[35]
• נגזר "he was cut off"; קבר "grave"; אשם "offering for sin"[36]	• יכרת "shall be cut off"[37]
• רבים "many"[38]	• רבים "many"[39]

the language of צדק ("righteousness" in Dan 9 and "to justify" in Isa 53).

In addition, Dan 9:26 clearly states that Messiah the Prince will have to die (will be cut off: יכרת), establishing the covenant with the "many" (רבים) as the Servant dies for the guilt of "many." The verbal connection is clearly shown between Isa 53 and Dan 9:24-26 as much as the thematic one (See Table 1).

As is well known, Dan 9:24-26 specifies "When" of the Messiah, that is, when He will be anointed (vs. 25) and when His death will be (vs. 26), while Isa 53 describes "How" of the Warrior Messiah: how He will fight the battle against the evil power, through His suffering and death.

Comparison with the Baal Religion

Some Scholars' Claims

But is it not possible that the concepts were taken over from what we know of the pagan religions like Baal, plagiarized or borrowed or alluded to by the biblical text and that applying it to Christ would be out of context?

There have been scholars who claimed the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Servant depicted in Isaiah 53 was an influence of the "dying and rising gods" myths of the ancient Near-Eastern culture. The Baal fight in Baal myth is an example.[40] W. Robertson Smith in the late

Vision of the End (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 37. He is also called נגיד ("prince," vs. 25), which strongly suggests the person as a priestly-king. S. Miller, *Daniel*, 264.

32) 53: 5, 11, and 12.

33) 9:24.

34) 53:11.

35) 9:24.

36) 53:8, 9, and 10, respectively.

37) 9:26.

38) 53:11, 12.

39) 9:27.

40) W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901; 1st ed.

nineteenth century started comparing the predictions of suffering in the Isaianic text with the annual cycle of death and life of Baal in Baal religion. He argued that being part of the agricultural Semites, the Israelites shared the common root of annual mourning for the dead god and his coming back to life as they commemorated the religious feasts symbolizing hope for the next season's increase of vegetation.[41]

James George Frazer elaborated and systematized the pattern of "dying and rising gods" and attempted to compare it with the death and resurrection portrayed in this passage.[42] S. Mowinckel adopted this idea of assimilation. He developed the idea of Israelite New Year Festival upon which, he argued, the Israelites commemorated the annual death and resurrection of the deity in relation to the kingship ideology of God in the form of ritual drama.[43] They, to a great extent, take the pattern of the dying and rising god as the underlying motif to explain the humiliation, death, and restoration that happened to Jesus in the NT, in the light of the Suffering Servant motif in Isa 53.[44]

Are There Links with Isaiah 53?

But is there any proof of comparison here on the unique aspects of Isaiah 53 with these religions?

In addition to the fact that there is no convincing textual evidence in both biblical data and cuneiform records concerning the cultic battle or annual ritual humiliation of the king,[45] profound differences between the Baal fight and the portrait of the

in 1889), v-vi, 373, 396, 411-16, etc.; James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, A New Abridgement from the 2d and 3d eds., ed. Robert Fraser (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 666-76; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh.*

41) W. Robertson Smith compared the animal sacrifices of the neighboring religions with the Israelite Passover or Day of Atonement, and also with the life and death of Jesus reported in the NT. W. R. Smith, 373, 396, 411-16.

42) He, a student and a friend of Robertson Smith, also attempted to explain the death and resurrection of Jesus against the backdrop of this category. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* 666-76; Robert Ackerman, *J. G. Frazer: His Life and Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 169; John B. Vickery, *The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 134.

43) *Mowinckel, He That Cometh*; Biorn Fjärstodt, "The Use of Isaiah 53 in the N.T.--Recent Scandinavian Research," *Indian Journla of Theology* 20 (1971): 112. Mowinckel's idea still remains as the mainstream of the Scandinavian school and critical biblical scholarship in general.

44) J. Philip Hyatt, "The Sources of the Suffering Servant Idea," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944): 84-6; Fjärstodt, 110-17; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*, Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 18 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 69-72; Mark S. Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods' in the Biblical World: An Update, with Special Reference to Baal in the Baal Cycle," *Scandianvian Journal of the Old Testament* 12 (1998): 257-58.

45) Paul D. Hanson, "Messiahs and Messianic Figures in Proto-Apocalypticism," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 73; Karel van der Toorn, "The Babylonian New Year Festival: New Insights from the Cuneiform Texts and Their Bearing on Old Testament Study," in *Congress Volume Leuven 1989*, Supplement to Vetus Testamentum 43, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 339, 342-44; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 260.

Suffering Servant suggest that the biblical record is utterly unique.[46] First of all, the nature of the fight offers a striking difference. According to Isa 53, the Servant had done no violence (vs. 9); in contrast, the gods in the Baal myth fight, bite, and trample. The moral significance is lacking in the fight and death of Semitic gods. The death of the servant in the Scriptures was a unique death that happened once for all, whereas that of Baal was an annual one that must occur repeatedly.[47]

In addition, the category of "dying and rising gods" itself is at stake.[48] Moreover, the ritual drama in the ANE mythic battle accompanies sympathetic magic aiming to create fertility. As Baal defeats the forces of chaos with some magical words and ritual performances, the stability and fertility of life are guaranteed in the belief of the community. Thus the death and resurrection of the deity are symbolic and not real, with magical connotations rather than moral.[49]

More than anything else, the death of a Semitic deity is not a sacrifice. The Servant offers his life as a sacrifice for the sins of others. By his death he justifies many unrighteous. It brings salvation to them. This is apparently a unique conception which can be found nowhere outside of the Bible. There is no indication that the deity in the Baal myth suffers as a substitute of the unrighteous to bear their iniquities, by which life is offered back to them.[50]

Few would still claim the kinship to the ancient Near Eastern civilizations that the faith of the Israelite religion was a product of the Canaanite/ Babylonian soil and they borrowed the humiliation, death, and life idea of the Suffering Servant from the festivals of the surrounding nations.[51] M. Stol

46) Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 207; Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 139; Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3: Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (1975): 340; E. Young, "Suffering Servant," 32.

47) A. Collins, *Combat Myth*, 117; Heidel, 17; E. Young, "Suffering Servant," 27

48) M. Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods'"; van der Toorn, 337.

49) John Day, *God's Conflic with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 8; in *KTU* 1.2.I it says, "That he will be defeated with magic weapons." Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquin Sanmartin, ed., *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places: (KTU)*, 2d ed, Abhandlugen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palastinas und Mesopotamiens, bd. 8 (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995); John Gray, "Baal," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 1:328; Heidel, 17; T. Jacobsen, "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Unity & Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 77; Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3: Part IV," 332-33.

50) E. Young, "Suffering Servant," 29-32; van der Toorn, 333.

51) McKenzie, li; Mark S. Smith, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle,* vol. 1, *Introduction, Translation and Commentary on KTU 1.1-1.2*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum LV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), xxvii; van der Toorn, 339. Not only in the anthropology and history of religions areas is the comparative approach not gaining success, but in the folklore studies area as well. The Brothers Grimm, as they collected fairy tales, mostly from oral sources, found that the

indicated that for a long time scholars thought that certain gods die but he says recently scholars are indicating that in the ancient Near-East, there were no dying gods, only gods that disappeared.[52] The fundamentally sublime ideas, which are beyond human analogy, rather strongly support the reality of divine revelation.[53]

The Servant takes our griefs and sorrows. He would be pierced and bruised for our corruption and revolt against God. Our iniquity falls upon him. He bears our sin and perversion. Because of this, we are healed. By his taking our place, he opens the way for us to take his place as his offspring (vs. 10). The Servant justifies "many" (רבים), because he poured out his life for their sake. He brings them from sinfulness to righteousness. Since he was crushed bearing the sins of humanity, the Servant redeems "many" from the consequence of their iniquities.[54] The connections between Daniel 9 and Isaiah 53 are very strong compared to any similarities between Isaiah 53 and the myths of deity fighting in the ancient Near-Eastern literature.[55]

Conclusion

A divine warrior is predicted by Isaiah 52:13-53:12

folk tales in one area were not influenced by those in another area, though they were similar. They established the so-called "mushroom theory" of transmission that the folk tales in various areas were formed independently. See M. Smith, "Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods,'" 267-68; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812, 1948); Hedwig von Beit, *Symbolik des Märchens: Versuch einer Deutung* (Bern: Francke, 1952), 9-10; Therese Poser, *Das Volksmärchen: Theorie-Analyse-Didaktik*, Analysen zur Deutschen Sprache und Literatur (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1980), 36-40. Discussions with Dr. Wolfgang Kunze, Modern Languages Department, Andrews University, were a great help.

52) Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 642.

53) R. Allen, "The Leviathan-Rahab-Dragon Motif in the Old Testament" (Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1968), 63; Heidel, 138; W. Martin, "An Exegesis of Isaiah 51:9-11," *Restoration Quarterly* 9 (1966): 152, 155; Harry M. Orlinsky, "The So-Called 'Suffering Servant' in Isaiah 53," in *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition: The Golden Lectures 1955-1966*, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky, The Library of Biblical Studies (New York: Hebrew Union College Press, 1969), 250-52; John N. Oswalt, "The Myth of the Dragon and Old Testament Faith," *Evangelical Quarterly* 49 (1977): 163-68; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51*-100, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 254. The similarity in language and imagery used might suggest "a superficial and accidental resemblance" between the depiction of the Suffering Servant and the humiliation of the ANE deities. E. Young, "Suffering Servant," 32.

54) Daniel P. Bailey, "Concepts of *Stellvertretung* in the Interpretation of Isaiah 53," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 223-24, 233; E. Young, "The Origin of the Suffering Servant Idea," 21.

55) W. Robertson Smith, 373, 396, 411-16; James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, A New Abridgement from the 2d and 3d eds., ed. Robert Fraser (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 666-76; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh.* However, Mark S. Smith points out the category of the "dying and rising gods" itself is at stake. Mark S. Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods' in the Biblical World: An Update, with Special Reference to Baal in the Baal Cycle," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 12 (1998): 262-63. The profound differences are far greater than similarities between them, and the biblical record is utterly unique. Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 207.

who would gain the victory. However, he does so through his humiliation, suffering, and sacrificial death for the sins of many. Through giving up his life he gives life to them. By employing the battle language, the whole poem is brought into a war context. It is marvelous that the ideas of redemption and atonement are intertwined with those of war and conflict. According to this text, the messianic figure achieves his triumph in this cosmic conflict, not by any physical or military force of violence, but rather through his suffering and sacrifice. The experience of the Servant culminating in his death was the very means of his successful prevailing. It encourages and invites his followers to adopt the same method of fight to be partakers of his nature (2 Peter 1:4), as they also participate in this great conflict against his foes of evil. Knowing his triumph through sacrifice grants us confidence to walk toward the victory.

The lofty idea shown in this biblical text of Isaiah 53 is far from being compared to the vulgar fight of the deities of the ancient Near-Eastern culture such as Baal in Canaanite myths. The servant Messiah accomplishes his purpose and triumphs, utilizing quite an opposite way of conducting a war against his enemy power, which none of the ancient or modern concepts of militancy can imagine. This dimension in the essence of the divine battle is unique and much more study should be done in this direction of also other divine war passages in Scriptures.

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