

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 53:4-6, THE SUFFERING SERVANT, PART 5

While studying these three verses, it became clear that many people do not understand and even deny the fact of vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice. In this lesson, the subject will be examined, and the exegetical examination of each verse will be picked up next week.

In the next three verses, the vicarious nature of the Servant's sacrificial suffering is emphasized. Vicarious means acting or done for another [s.v. "vicarious" *The Oxford American College Dictionary*]. (1) To perform, exercise, receive, or suffer in place of another; (2) taking the place of another person or thing; acting or serving as a substitute [www.diction.com, accessed 30 Oct. 2021]. Substitute means a person or thing acting or serving in place of another [*Oxford American College Dictionary*]. An examination of these verses reveals that there can be no doubt that a substitutionary sacrifice is the subject. The Suffering Servant is truly sacrificed in place of not only the Israelites, but of mankind as the use of the word, "many" proves (Is. 52:14, 15; 53:11, 12). He did not deserve to die for His sins because there were no sins that He committed for which He needed to die. He died for the sin of others so that they might live. This is truly a substitutionary, sacrificial death suffered on behalf of mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Concerning their comments on 2 Corinthians 5:21, many theologians who author the notes in study Bibles and in commentaries reference Isaiah as the basis for the claim Paul made here in 2 Corinthians 5:21. "God made Him ... to be sin for us (cf. Isa. 53:4-6, 10)" [David K. Lowery, "2 Corinthians" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 568]. "Harris, following Hoad and Barnett, has convincingly argued that Isa. 53 lies behind Paul's words at this point. That passage expresses the ideas of identification, substitution, and transformational interchange, which also lie at the heart of 2 Cor. 5:21.... The description of the Suffering One in Isa. 53 certainly includes the idea of substitution ..." [George H. Guthrie, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 2 Corinthians*, 314-315].

Yet, there are theologians who want to deny the obvious truth of substitutionary sacrifice that is so clear in the Suffering Servant song. "At this point Orlinsky [a Jew] and Whybray [an Oxford Old Testament professor and Church of England priest] say, 'Not so!' [to substitutionary sacrifice in Isaiah 53]. The people of Israel had surely already suffered for their sins to the full measure in the destruction of their land and their captivity. Is this not the point of [Is.] 40:2? Israel has already suffered, and the Servant cannot suffer for her. He can only participate with his people as they suffer. He (the prophet) is a righteous man, but because of the people's sins, he must suffer too" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 385]. Isaiah 40:2 is about the end of the Tribulation immediately prior to the inauguration of the

Messianic Kingdom; it is not about the Babylonian destruction of Judah and Jerusalem and the subsequent captivity in Babylon. At the point in time that Isaiah 40:2 is concerned with, Israel has believed in the Messiah King and the nation has been saved. This is why theology, particularly Dispensational Theology, is so important. The men making these false claims about Isaiah 40:2 are replacement theologians who have no clue what the Old Testament is revealing about God's future plans for the nation Israel. These men cannot accurately interpret the Old Testament and that is completely due to bad theology. This is nowhere more evident than in their denial that substitutionary sacrifice is revealed in Isaiah 53.

Notice the use of the plural, corporate pronouns in the NASB translation of these three verses: "our/ourselves" (6x), "we" (2x), and "us" (3x). In the context, these pronouns refer specifically to Israel, but we also know that the "many" (Is. 52:14-15; 53:11-12) is a reference to mankind in total; therefore, some theologians apply the use of these plural, corporate pronouns to all people. That is not accurate; Israelites are speaking of themselves as a nation in the Suffering Servant song, but "many" is a reference to mankind in total. Therefore, it is a correct application to understand that the work of the Suffering Servant is efficacious for all. "The indeterminacy of the 'we' is perhaps intentional. It is almost certainly the prophet identifying himself with his people and speaking for the whole. But the Servant's ministry is not limited to the 'people.' He is also to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6), establishing the rule of God among them (42:1, 4). Thus all persons who recognize that their sin has caused the Servant to suffer may include themselves in the all-inclusive 'we'" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 384, n. 4].

In these supposedly "modern" times, some liberal theologians have devised a number of reasons why the concept of substitutionary sacrifice is no longer an acceptable biblical truth—and their reasons have nothing to do with the Bible. "... (1) it is a medieval doctrine not found in Scripture; (2) it is irrelevant and does not make sense to modern cultures because it glorifies abusive behavior; (3) it is too individualistic, focusing on individual guilt and forgiveness while ignoring the bigger issues of social justice; and, (4) it is too violent, requiring of God a violence for redemption that He would condemn in humans.... [They] rejected any notion of divine wrath besides that of allowing people to go their own way" [Gary E. Gilley, "The Significance of Christ's Crosswork: Challenges and Responses to Why Christ Died" *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 15, no. 45 (August, 2011): 17 quoting Mark Dever, "Nothing but the Blood" (online)].

The reason I refer to the Lord's work on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice rather than an atonement is not just a matter of semantics. His death on the cross was for the purpose of sacrificial substitution, the innocent for the guilty. Atonement, while also involving an innocent for the guilty substitutionary sacrifice, is properly relegated to repairing and restoring broken fellowship. There is a difference between the purpose for a propitiatory sacrifice and the purpose for atonement. Atonement is an Old Testament concept that is generally akin to our New Testament use of 1 John 1:9. "[T]he sacrificial system was something God gave to people that were already in covenant relationship with Him. The sacrifices were for the purpose of maintaining fellowship, not for establishing a relationship" [David R. Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology*, 3rd ed., 66]. "The term atonement is especially objectionable since it only describes the Levitical sacrifices, which were not a

final dealing with sin and only anticipated the saving death of Christ. The anticipation clearly falls far short of the fulfillment ... Therefore, it would be helpful to suggest a better term for theological usage which would be both accurate and comprehensive enough to include the many New Testament words. Consider sacrifice, cross-work, and/or passion as being more helpful" [C. Gordon Olson, *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, 3rd updated ed., 70].

Sacrifice, זָבַח, means sacrifice or slaughter for sacrifice. "The *zābah* was 'a sacrifice of slaughtered sheep, goat or cattle to create communion between the god to whom the sacrifice is made and the partners of the sacrifice, and communion between the partners themselves' (HALOT 265)" [Willem A. VanGemeron, gen. ed., s.v. "זָבַח," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 1:1068]. Sacrifice is the appropriate term to use when we are referring to the propitiating work of the Suffering Servant.

Propitiation, ἱλαστήριον, means that which expiates or propitiates, means of propitiation, or the place of propitiation (mercy seat). It "indicates that the action is directed toward God or some other offended person. The underlying purpose is to change God's attitude from one of wrath to one of good-will and favor" [Moises Silva, ed., s.v. "ἱλάσκομαι," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis, Volume Two, E-K*, 2nd ed., 2:531, 2:534].

"Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. In relation to soteriology, propitiation means placating or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ" [Charles C. Ryrie, "The Meaning of the Death of Christ" in *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, 339].

"Jesus Christ is designated as *hilastērion* in Rom. 3:25 and Heb. 9:5 because He is designated not only as the place where the sinner deposits his sin, but He Himself is the means of expiation. He is not like the high priest of the OT whose expiation of the people was accomplished through the blood of something other than himself.... [T]he translation 'mercy seat,' symbolically referring to Jesus Christ, is an inadequate translation of the Gr. word which is rather equivalent to the Throne of Grace. The *hilastērion* means the propitiating thing or the propitiatory gift, that which causes God to deal with us mercifully" [Spiros Zodhiates, ed., s.v. "ἱλαστήριος," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 771-773].

Expiation, כִּפָּר, means to cover, to forgive, to expiate, to reconcile. "[T]he word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature" [Carpenter and Baker, s.v. "כִּפָּר," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 521]. It is used to refer to the appeasement of anger. "Expiation is the removal of impersonal wrath, sin or guilt" [Charles C. Ryrie, "The Meaning of the Death of Christ" in *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, 341].

"Expiation has to do with reparation for a wrong; propitiation carries the added idea of appeasing an offended person and thus brings into the picture the question of why the offended person was offended. In other words, propitiation brings the wrath of God into the picture while expiation can leave it out. If one wanted to use both words correctly in

connection with each other, then he would say that Christ propitiated the wrath of God by becoming an expiation for our sins" [Charles C. Ryrie, "The Meaning of the Death of Christ" in *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, 441].

Atonement, כַּפָּרִים, is an act of ceremonially accounting for wrong done in a covenantal relationship which causes forgiveness, pardon, and right relationship which may have a possible implication of appeasement of anger. Reconciliation is the objective. The base for this concept is to cover or to conceal; it is not for the final resolution of the sin problem.

"[D]ispensationalism teaches that justification is by grace through faith in every age. Therefore, dispensationalism generally understands the purpose of OT sacrifices to be distinct from justification entirely.... That purpose of the OT sacrifices is best understood as a provision for Israel to express and experience love in fellowship with God and with each other, by means of confession.... The sacrifices were part of a system that expressed love within the relationship established by God's covenant with Abraham. The sacrifices provided for confession and restoration to fellowship" [Joshua D. Meier, "Why were there animal sacrifices?" in *What is Dispensationalism?* ed. Paul Miles, 154].

The concept of vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice needs to be understood by the serious Bible student as it is presented in this Suffering Servant song. The doctrine of substitutionary sacrifice is vitally important to understanding the work of the Suffering Servant. It was revealed to us through the Word of God from the beginning (Gen. 3:21), typified through the sacrifices required by the Mosaic Law, and it culminated with the vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice of the God-man, the Suffering Servant, on the cross when He died for the sins of not only the Israelites but for the sins of mankind in total.

1 John 2:2 ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

He who did not deserve to die for sin, died for mankind who does deserve to die for sin.

Genesis 2:17 ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Romans 6:23 ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because the Suffering Servant paid the sin debt due on behalf of mankind, we can understand what He meant when He implied that the lake of fire was not prepared for mankind, but for no one other than the devil and his angels. In other words, no human being need go to the lake of fire. Everyone can access the work Christ did on their behalf on the cross by means of faith in the One who died on their behalf.

Matthew 25:41 ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; In Isaiah 53:4-6, Israel is admitting, after realizing that the nation's initial assumption that He was dying for His own transgressions was incorrect, that the Messiah, the Suffering

Servant, did, in fact, die on their behalf. The personal pronouns used in these verses clearly reveal the concept of One person, singular: He/Him (8x), doing these things on behalf of others, plural: our/ourselves (6x), we (2x), and us (3x) as we noted a bit earlier. Yet, there are theologians who deny the revelation of substitutionary sacrifice. "R. N. Whybray and H. M. Orlinsky find the servant 'identifying' with those suffering but vigorously deny the idea that he suffered in the place of others. They claim that 'there is not found either here or elsewhere in the Bible any justification for the concept of vicarious suffering and atonement.' ... Orlinsky, 'The So-Called "'Suffering Servant'" in Isaiah 53,' in *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition*, 246. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 169, 175, has a similar interpretation and limits the servant's role to 'identification with them in their suffering'" [quoted by Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 447, 447 n. 364].

There are archaeological finds that indicate the concept of substitutionary punishment was not unknown in the Ancient Near East. "A common person could take the place of the king and suffer the negative effects that would otherwise fall on the king. At the end of this ritual period of danger the substitute king would be killed" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 448 quoting J. Scharbert, 'Stellvertretendes Sühneleiden in den Ebed-Jahwe-Liedern und in altorientalischen Ritualtexten,' *BZ 2* (1958): 190-213]. There is obviously no spiritual significance attached to this pagan, humanistic ritual, but the fact of substitution is clearly evident.

Some theologians simply reject any concept that allows one person to suffer divine punishment for the sins committed by another person. "I. Kant rejected the whole concept of transferring guilt, concluding that guilt is 'not a transmissible liability which can be made over to someone else, in the manner of a fiscal debt'" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 448 quoting I. Kant 'Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason,' in *Religion and Rational Theology*, 113].

Here is a typical liberal view of substitutionary sacrifice: "[H]e expressed his inability to come to terms with the 'crude' beliefs he thought 'so many orthodox churchmen' entertain.... I feel certain that he [Jesus Christ] would not have preached to us of a God who would be appeased by the cruel sacrifice of a tortured body.... I cannot accept either the hypothesis that the appalling death of Jesus was a sacrifice in the eyes of God for the sins of the world, or that God, in the shape of his son, tortured himself for our redemption. I can only confess that, in my heart of hearts, I find such religious ideas to be amongst the least attractive in the whole of anthropology. To me they belong to quite a different philosophy—different psychology—from that of the religion that Jesus taught" [John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 112 quoting Sir Alister Hardy, *The Divine Flame*, 218]. This man is probably an unbeliever, but, if not, he is certainly someone who denies the inspired, inerrant nature of the Word of God.

Another theologian, C. H. Dodd, denied the concept of substitutionary sacrifice on the grounds of what he believes to be God's character. "The rendering propitiation is ... misleading, for it suggests the placating of an angry God, and although this would be in accord with pagan usage, it is foreign to biblical usage" [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*:

A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth, 340 quoting C. H. Dodd, "Hilaskesthai, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms" *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1931): 352-360. "Though he [Dodd] cited elaborate philological [the branch of knowledge that deals with the structure, historical development, and relationships of a language] and exegetical evidence, his principal reason for this conclusion appears to be theological. To him it is sub-Christian to think that God can be angry and therefore needs to be appeased; therefore, propitiation must be defined in some other way. He proposed expiation as the substitute word and concept for propitiation" Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, 340-341].

There is ample revelation concerning God's anger with Israel and with sin throughout the Word of God to render this argument absurd.

To deny that God demanded death for sin is a clear denial of the truth of Genesis 2:17 and Romans 6:23. A simple examination of Old Testament Scripture for the words "anger" and "wrath" reveals that God demanded that His anger and His wrath must be satisfied.

Ezekiel 5:12-13 ¹²One third of you will die by plague or be consumed by famine among you, one third will fall by the sword around you, and one third I will scatter to every wind, and I will unsheathe a sword behind them. ¹³Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them.

Dodd's attitude seems to be a reaction to the cruelty of the cross by pitting God's attributes one against the other. How can a loving God exercise His wrath by having someone, even God the Son, murdered on a tortuous instrument called a crucifix after having Him mercilessly scourged nearly to the point of death? That is rational, humanistic thinking.

Most of us have heard and/or sung the song "In Christ Alone" which has a line in it that reads: "'Til on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied." Many people, following Dodd's line of thinking, want to change the second part of that line to read: "the love of God was magnified." Critics believe that "this gives us a rather paganized view of God: an angry, barbaric, capricious, and blood-thirsty God." When a mainline denomination wanted to change the line in their hymnal, the composers, Stuart Towns and Keith Gentry, refused them permission, they dropped the hymn from use in their church. [Clarke Morledge, "Does N. T. Wright Deny Penal Substitutionary Atonement???" <https://sharedveracity.net/2018/12/08/does-n-t-wright-deny-the-doctrine-of-penal-substitutionary-atonement/>, accessed 4 Nov. 2021].

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) developed a theory called the moral influence theory. "Abelard emphasized the primacy of God's love. He insisted that Jesus did not make a sacrificial payment to the Father in order to satisfy his offended dignity [The view of Anselm]; instead, Jesus demonstrated the full extent of God's love for the human race. Thus, the primary issue of the atonement is not to uphold God's honor, but rather to relieve the fear and alienation humans feel toward God" [Conrad Hilario, "The Christian Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement," <https://dwellcc.org/learning/essays/christian-doctrine-substitutionary-atonement>, accessed 5 Nov. 2021].

The moral influence theory, generally held by liberal theologians, emphasizes the experiential effect on the sinner of Christ's sacrifice. The cross represents the ultimate in divine love and, in turn, fosters love in the sinner who responds to the sacrifice by no longer living for self and by forgoing sin. "... [T]he sight of the selfless Christ dying for sinners moves us to repentance and faith. If God will do all that for us, we say, then we ought not to continue in sin. So we repent, turn from it, and are saved. The thrust in all this is on personal experience. The atonement, seen in this way, has no effect outside the believer. It is real in the person's experience and nowhere else" [L. L. Morris, "Atonement, Theories of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell, 117]. To an extent, this may be true, but absent faith on the part of the person so emotionally moved, the death accomplishes nothing in that person's life.

Liberal theologians use the moral influence theory to relate the Suffering Servant's vicarious sacrifice with social justice and love and ignore the eternal, spiritual ramifications of His work on the cross.

"Opening Dr. Bushnell's 'Vicarious Sacrifice,' the reader meets the following titles: 'Nothing superlative in vicarious sacrifice, or above the universal principles of right and duty'; 'The eternal Father in vicarious sacrifice'; 'The Holy Spirit in vicarious sacrifice'; 'The good angels in vicarious sacrifice'; 'All souls redeemed to be in vicarious sacrifice. Under the latter heading occurs the following:

'In what is called his vicarious sacrifice, Christ simply fulfils what belongs universally to love; doing neither more nor less than what the common standard of holiness requires. And then, since there can be no other standard, and no perfect world or society can be constituted under a different or lower kind of excellence, it follows incontestably that the restoration of mankind, as a fallen race, must restore them to a love that works vicariously, and conforms in all respects to the work and passion of Christ himself. Vicarious sacrifice, then, will not be a point where he is distinguished from his followers, but the very life to which he restores them in restoring them to God. What we call his redemption of mankind must bring them to the common standard. Executed by vicarious sacrifice in himself, it must also be issued in vicarious sacrifice in them. The common impression, I am sorry to believe, is different'" (p. 105)'" [Lemuel S. Potwin, "Destructive Analysis in Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 29, no. 115 (1872): 420-421, quoting Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice, Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation*]. This is an example of the moral influence theory.

Bushnell thought that the moral influence theory proved that Christ's death on the cross accomplished three things, none of which have anything to do with eternal life and the remedy for mankind's sin problem. "Jesus' death was aimed at removing our fear of God, ... Jesus' death causes us to feel remorse that ultimately leads to repentance, ... [and] Jesus' death gives us inspiration" [Conrad Hilario, "The Christian Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement," <https://dwellcc.org/learning/essays/christian-doctrine-substitutionary-atonement>, accessed 5 Nov. 2021].

The moral influence theory, as Bushnell described it, destroys the unique nature of the God-man's vicarious sacrifice. If sinful mankind can do vicarious, sacrificial good works that are no different in nature than the Lord's sacrifice on the cross then His death means nothing and was for nothing. This theory actually humanizes Jesus and makes Him on the

level of man without regard for His God nature; it seems to be a denial of the hypostatic union as revealed in the God-man. His sacrifice on the cross becomes nothing more than a good work that a sinful man can do on his own. However, there is no spiritual salvation available for mankind in the performance of their own good works no matter how much sacrifice is involved in performing them and regardless of how noble those good works are in the sight of the world.

The early church held to a theory of the cross that believed Christ died as a ransom paid to the devil for the souls of mankind. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and most other early theologians believed this theory. According to this doctrine, Satan has established himself as the ruler of mankind; therefore, man must be removed from his power and control. Based on Mark 10:45 that records the Lord saying that He came to "give His life a ransom for many," Origen reasoned that the ransom the Lord was speaking about was a ransom paid to Satan to free mankind from his evil control. That ransom, of course, would be paid on the cross with the God-man's life.

In Origen's thinking on this theory, Satan made the ransom bargain by demanding the blood of Christ as the ransom price to be paid for mankind. Because Satan suggested the deal, he deceived himself; God did not deceive him into agreeing to the deal. Satan did not realize that Jesus could not remain dead; the resurrection freed Him from death, and He set mankind free before Satan realized his mistake [Conrad Hilario, "The Christian Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement," <https://dwellcc.org/learning/essays/christian-doctrine-substitutionary-atonement>, accessed 5 Nov. 2021].

God does allow Satan to exercise a great deal of authority over the creation at this time, but his authority can only operate within the limits allowed by God. God has a plan to remove this authority from him, and that plan does not involve paying something to Satan in order for him to go away, so to speak.

Anselm (1033-1109) developed what is known as the satisfaction theory. "He saw sin dishonoring the majesty of God. Now a sovereign may well be ready in his private capacity to forgive an insult or an injury, but because he is a sovereign he cannot. The state has been dishonored in its head. Appropriate satisfaction must be offered. God is the sovereign Ruler of all, and it is not proper for God to remit any irregularity in his kingdom. Anselm argued that the insult sin has given to God is so great that only one who is God can provide satisfaction. But the insult was done by a human, so only a human could provide the satisfaction. Thus he concluded that one who is both God and human is needed" [L. L. Morris, "Atonement, Theories of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell, 118].

This theory has nothing to do with sin and salvation; it simply deals with the supposed dignity and honor of a sovereign. I don't think God needs our help to preserve His honor and His dignity by devising a theory to explain the cross that is devoid of biblical relevance. Anselm is known for his desire to reconcile philosophy and theology and to prioritize reason over biblical revelation [cf. John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 119], which makes him very suspect as a competent theologian.

A variation of the satisfaction theory that was developed by 16th century Reformed theologians involves the Lord's obedience to the Mosaic Law. "Jesus Christ's personal submission to the law was indispensable to our rescue from its condemnation.... [H]is submission took two forms, his perfect obedience to it in his life and his bearing of its penalty in his death.... Jesus' obedience to death on the cross was just as 'active' (i.e., voluntary and determined) as his obedient submission to the moral law. His obedience to the Father's will is one and the same, whether in his conduct or mission, his life or death. The value of continuing to speak of Christ's 'double' obedience is that we then distinguish between his fulfilling the demands of the law and his enduring the condemnation of the law. Both kinds of submission to the law were essential to the efficacy of the cross" [John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 117]. This theory recognizes that everything about the Law is perfect and reflects the perfect attributes of God. The problem is that it says nothing about the spiritual, eternal purpose of God to pay mankind's sin debt and provide the opportunity for eternal life in Christ Jesus. More importantly, this theory also fails to recognize the reality that the penalty for sin was death, and that the death of the Messiah was revealed long before the Mosaic Law was instituted (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:15). The theory fails.

Genesis 2:16–17 ¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:15 ¹⁵And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

A governmental theory of the cross was developed by Hugo Grotius (d. 1645). God is the supreme moral governor of the world and as such, "He has established an order in which the good is to be approved and rewarded, while the evil is to be condemned and punished. To approve the evil or to condemn the good would subvert this moral order. In such a world the unprincipled forgiveness of sins would be equally subversive" [John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 122]. God's justice must be satisfied, and in so doing the established order of His law is upheld and people will subsequently recognize the magnitude of sin. He has a vested interest in upholding public morality by both preventing crime and upholding the law. Public justice is more important than retributive justice. Christ's sacrifice on the cross showcased God's extreme displeasure with sin.

Another theory, one that recognizes the substitutionary sacrifice element of the cross, refers to the cross work of Christ as penal substitution. In this theory, God's law has been broken and the wages of sin is death; therefore, a death must occur to pay for sin. "[T]he essence of Christ's saving work consisted in his taking the sinner's place. In our stead Christ endured the death that is the wages of sin. He bore the curse that we sinners should have borne (Gal. 3:13)" [L. L. Morris, "Atonement, Theories of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell, 118]. Not just any person could suffer this death; it had to be the God-man who was Himself alone qualified as the sinless One who could substitute for sinful mankind.

This theory recognizes the substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrifice. Liberal theologians claim that the punishment for sin cannot be transferred from one to another, which is a conclusion that is simply the product of humanistic thought. God can do whatever He

wants to do however He wants to do it as long as it is consistent with His attributes. They also claim that this theory pits the love of God the Father against the love of God the Son which must be considered greater since He is the one who died. Theologians who deny the substitutionary nature of the Suffering Servant's sacrifice have to reject a tremendous amount of Biblical revelation to maintain their position. Jesus said that there was no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 10:13), and He referred to His disciples as friends (John 10:14). Furthermore, Jesus and the Father were one (John 14:9-11) and believers are in Christ and He is in believers (John 14:20).

"This author [Gary Gilley] believes the central teaching of Scripture in regard to Christ's crosswork is best defined as the Penal Substitutionary Atonement. It is this view of the atonement that is facing resistance from many who would be happy to embrace the cross as a moral example of love or a victory over the forces of evil. Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that while Christ's death was a great example and resulted in the defeat of evil forces, more importantly His death was necessary in order that one's sins might be forgiven and for the believer to be reconciled to God" [Gary E. Gilley, "The Significance of Christ's Crosswork: Challenges and Responses to Why Christ Died" *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 15, no. 45 (August, 2011): 16].

There are other examples of substitution in the Bible, particularly in the nature of the sacrifices established in the Law of Moses.

Moses offered to give up his life, even his eternal, spiritual life, in return for the forgiveness of Israel's rebellion at Mount Sinai.

Exodus 32:30, 32³⁰On the next day Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ... ³²"But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

This makes a particularly good illustration when we consider that Moses offered Himself up as a propitiating sacrifice on behalf of God's people in exchange for their restoration (Ex. 32:30) and we now know that Jesus, the Prophet just like Moses (Dt. 18:18), offered Himself up as a propitiating sacrifice on the cross as the Suffering Servant of Israel. The problem Moses had was that a sinful man, which Moses of course was, could not propitiate the sins of his fellow man; the Suffering Servant, the God-man, labored under no such barrier.

Psalms 49:7⁷No man can by any means redeem *his* brother Or give to God a ransom for him—

"The evidence from Scripture would seem to indicate that the prophecy of the Prophet like Moses was intended to speak solely and directly to an individual, namely, the coming Deliverer—the Messiah, who would inaugurate a new covenant. The only individual presented in the Hebrew Scriptures who can be said to be truly 'like Moses' is the Servant of Isaiah [52:13-53:12].... As the Servant of the Lord, the Prophet like Moses would provide final atonement for sin.... Here, Isaiah refers to God's Servant as a lamb (Isa 53:7), who

would be the ultimate guilt offering (v. 10), bearing the guilt 'of us all' (v. 6)" [Jim R. Sibley, "Deuteronomy 18:15-19: The Prophet Like Moses" in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum, 333-334].

The requirement for the animal sacrificed according to the Mosaic Law was that it be unblemished; it had to be perfect. That is the type; the antitype is the God-man who was sinless and who perfectly obeyed the Mosaic Law. The first mention of this requirement was in connection with the Passover lamb which was the picture of the perfect sacrifice for Israel's sin in Isaiah 53.

Exodus 12:5 ⁵Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

"Thus the reason for demanding perfection rested not in the quality of the meal but in the symbolic purpose: the animal served as a reminder of the eventual deliverance that a perfect God perfectly provided for his people as part of the process of making them holy like himself. Proper relating to God requires perfection" [Douglas K. Stuart, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Exodus*, 275].

The concept of an unblemished sacrifice was presented in detail in the Mosaic Law.

Leviticus 22:17–25 ¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸"Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Any man of the house of Israel or of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they present to the LORD for a burnt offering— ¹⁹for you to be accepted—it *must* be a male without defect from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. ²⁰'Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. ²¹'When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. ²²'Those *that are* blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD. ²³'In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted *member*, you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted. ²⁴'Also anything *with its testicles* bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the LORD, or sacrifice in your land, ²⁵nor shall you accept any such from the hand of a foreigner for offering as the food of your God; for their corruption is in them, they have a defect, they shall not be accepted for you.'"

The inspired Scriptures of the New Testament affirm the identity of the Suffering Servant to be Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 9:14 ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 Peter 1:19 ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.

The concept of laying hands on the unblemished sacrifice symbolized the identification of the offerer with the offering and the transference of the offerer's guilt to the offering.

Leviticus 1:3–4 ³If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. ⁴He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.

“... [I]n regard to a sacrifice the practice [laying on of hands] indicated that the animal was to be a substitute for the offerer. The act symbolized the transfer of sins from the worshiper to the animal. The sense would be that the animal is dying in the worshiper's stead, or that it is subject to the death penalty because of the sins it has now received” [Mark F. Rooker, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Leviticus*, 87].

The ritual of the scapegoat that is revealed in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement highlights the concept of the transference of sins especially as it pertains to the nation Israel making this very applicable to the events of Isaiah 53.

Leviticus 16:20–21 ²⁰“When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. ²¹“Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who *stands* in readiness.