

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES THESIS

THE RESURRECTED SERVANT OF ISAIAH 53:10–12: A RESPONSE TO ORLINSKY AND WHYBRAY

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The servant in the book of Isaiah is one of the most intriguing figures in the prophetic Scriptures.

Many people have stood in awe of the book's prophecy either because of its virtual lack of theological precedence in ancient literature, or because of the parallels between the servant, especially in Isa 52:13–53:12, and the portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospels. However, since the arguments of Harry M. Orlinsky and R. N. Whybray were presented over thirty years ago, there has been little examination of the servant's possible resurrection in Isa 53:10–11.

Even though Orlinsky's and Whybray's interpretations have been cited multiple times as disproving resurrection in Isa 53:10–12, participatory reference discourse analysis, a method that has been pioneered since their works were written, would suggest otherwise. Is it feasible that the resurrection of the servant is the means by which the iniquities of many are lifted (Isa 53:12)?

In order to determine if the servant is resurrected, first we should determine whether or not the servant is an individual, or a corporate entity. Next, we should investigate the evidence for resurrection in Isa 53:10. It will also be helpful to examine the “he will see light” (DSS) or “to show him light” (LXX) variant in Isa 53:11 to see if it fits contextually and structurally within the passage, and if it helps us understand the possible resurrection of the servant. We should then turn our focus to the notion of vicarious suffering, which was also put to rest by Whybray and Orlinsky, though resurfaced by a few others in recent times, to see if the servant indeed does act as a restorative individual for the people of God, and possibly as a reconciliatory actor in their

relationship with him. Finally, the concept of being God's servant, and the identity that entails, will be examined, as well as intertextual/canonical references to the servant's particular role in Isa 53:10–12.

If it is the case that the servant is resurrected and a vicarious sufferer, Orlinsky's and Whybray's two theories for reading Isa 40–56 would have different and fascinating results. When the servant's resurrection in Isa 53:10 is linked to the restoration and reconciliation of Israel spoken of in 53:12, and prophesied in 40:1–52:12, their theories lead to a culmination of events in Isa 53:10–12, rather than a testament of a fallen prophet of God.