

THE USE OF QUOTATIONS FROM ISAIAH 52:13-53:12 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Kenneth D. Litwak*

The question of the use of the OT in the NT requires a many-faceted answer. One cannot give a simple, straightforward reply. The answer depends on the writer, even the specific passage. One writer can use quotations from the same OT passage in different ways in varying contexts. The use of quotations from Isaiah 53 in the NT can be studied in several ways. The citations can be separated according to the hermeneutic behind them, whether it be *peshet*, *midrash* or *allegory*, to name three. Or quotations can be divided between *Septuagintal* and *non-Septuagintal* text-forms. A third alternative, adopted here, is to treat quotations from the fourth *Servant* song according to their function in their NT context.

Before examining the NT usage of Isaiah 53, it seems appropriate here to expound the understanding of the passage in its original setting assumed in this paper.¹ There has been anything but consensus on the identity of the *Servant* in Isa 52:13-53:12. M. D. Hooker identified the *Servant* as Israel. The passage is a *theodicy*, designed to explain and justify Israel's suffering during the exile.² Orlinsky, however, argues that the *Servant* cannot be Israel, for the *Servant* is innocent and the prophets make it rather clear that Israel was not righteous, either before or after the exile.³

The key to understanding the concept of the *Servant*, I believe, is corporate personality, first developed fully by H. W. Robinson. The whole community can stand for an individual and vice versa.⁴ This of course is something of an oversimplification. C. R. North follows Robinson in seeing a fluid concept of the *Servant* in the *Servant* songs. The concept moves from collective Israel in Isaiah 42 to an individual in chap. 53.⁵ Rowley identifies the *Servant* similarly to North. Unlike North, Rowley sees not only linear development in the concept but oscillation as

*Kenneth Litwak is a computer programmer for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Huntington Beach, California.

¹Space prohibits detailed argumentation, but see works cited below.

²M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant* (London: SPCK, 1959) 46. She argues that the prophet could not have had an individual in mind since there would be no point to prophesying a future suffering servant.

³H. Orlinsky, "The So-Called 'Servant of the Lord' and 'Suffering Servant' in Second Isaiah," in *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah* (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 23, 51.

⁴Hooker, *Jesus* 42; cf. J. Pedersen, *Israel*, and R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, on solidarity.

⁵C. R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948) 216.

well.⁶ Franz Delitzsch likened the Servant conception in the Songs to a pyramid with Israel at its base and Christ at its apex. North extends the lines of the first pyramid into a second with Christ at the zenith and the Church at the base.⁷ The conception of the Servant in this paper is a modified form of this taken from W. C. Williams.^{8,9}

North, I feel, is correct in saying that in a broad sense the Servant is messianic. Nevertheless he can scarcely be identified from the passage as the Davidic messianic king.¹⁰ The Servant then in Isa 52:13-53:12 is an individual whose mission carries messianic overtones. Understanding the passage in this way allowed the Church to apply it readily to Jesus.

One of the first tasks of the Church in defense of its claims was to explain the suffering and death of Jesus as Messiah.¹¹ The messianic proclamation about Jesus demands adherence to a belief in a dying and rising Messiah. Although this belief was held in some sense in late Judaism, it was not the general expectation and likely formed the chief object of attack from unbelieving Jews.¹² Lindars calls this use of the OT in the NT "passion apologetic."

The nature of passion apologetics is seen in the use of *paradidōmi*, "deliver," which is connected to Isa 53:12. It views Jesus' suffering and death from the perspective of the necessity of the atoning death of the Servant. Jesus was "delivered" because it was part of God's plan for salvation. In such a messianic motif there is an apologetic motive.¹³ The allusion in Acts 3:13 to Isa 52:11 implies a "complete explanation of the events of redemption in terms of the whole chapter (Isa 53)." This use of the prophecy fits the idea that "the passion is the work of the Servant/Son of man, who has subsequently been declared Messiah at his resurrection."¹⁴ Jesus, the primitive Church proclaimed, is the Christ because it

⁶H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London: Lutterworth, 1957) 52-53. Rowley says that the Servant as an individual can be none other than a future figure but, while the fourth song deals with an individual, Israel as a collective body enters into his mission (p. 54).

⁷C. R. North, *Isaiah 40-55* (London: SCM, 1952) 36.

⁸Taken from unpublished lecture notes (Costa Mesa, 1976).

⁹The identity of the Servant as an individual is much disputed. F. F. Bruce understands the significance of the Servant in Isa 52:13-53:12 to point to a king. Comparing this to 55:3 he sees the Servant as the messianic Davidic King (*This Is That* [London: Paternoster, 1968] 88-89). Rejecting a kingly figure per se, Zimmerli identifies him simply as an individual, prophetic figure (J. Jeremias and W. Zimmerli, *The Servant of God* [Naperville: Allenson, 1957] 28).

¹⁰North, *Suffering Servant* 218.

¹¹B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 75. I am indebted in this paper to Lindars' book.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 75. The idea of a suffering Messiah can be detailed from the nuances of translation of Isaiah 53 by the LXX, Peshitta and Targum, and the "leprous" Messiah of Aquila and *b. Sanh.* 98; cf. Jeremias, *Servant* 60-75. Lindars says, "There is really nothing corresponding to the dying and rising of Jesus preached by the Church" (p. 75).

¹³Lindars, *New Testament* 80.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 79.

was prophesied that the Messiah would suffer or, vice versa, "that Jesus suffered because he was the Christ, and the Christ must suffer." In his atoning death Jesus fulfilled the mission of the Messiah.¹⁵ Though Jesus is not recorded as having called himself the Servant of the Lord, the title Son of Man seems to include this idea in certain contexts.¹⁶

Though quotations from Isaiah 53 are not numerous in the NT, allusions to the passage are deeply imbedded in the work of all the principal NT writers as well as the early fathers, particularly 1 Clement and Barnabas. From this fact it is certain that the interpretation of Isaiah 53 as referring to Jesus belongs to the earliest thought of the primitive Church. It is highly probable, in fact, that this conception was inherited from Jesus himself.¹⁷ North has observed that the language of the fourth Servant song "is woven into the texture of NT thought." This appears even more striking when it is seen how rarely the passage is quoted at length.¹⁸

It is likely that OT quotations were used in early preaching primarily for apologetic purposes. The key passages have general theological motifs. From them specific passages are chosen for dealing with particular issues. These passages, thus, are "an armoury, from which the appropriate weapon may be selected." This is not an arbitrary picking and choosing of proof-texts, ignoring their original context. Rather, "the context with its Christian interpretation has already defined the meaning of them." This meaning makes the citations useful for specific points in an argument.¹⁹

Since the NT writers see the OT largely through the eyes of the LXX translators, a few general comments on the LXX text of Isa 52:13-53:12 are in order here. The LXX translation of this passage may well be taken to refer to an individual figure. The rendering of *yônēq* by *paidion* ("child" or "servant"), familiar from the messianic statement of 9:6, raises the question whether the LXX does not imply a messianic significance. I think the NT use of the passage from the LXX tends to corroborate such a view. The conjectural *aneteile* may point in the same direction.²⁰ If so, the Greek translation must intend to describe in Isa 52:13-53:12 a messianic figure whose coming the writer awaits.

This is confirmed by the LXX translation of 52:14-15 as future, a clear deviation from the Hebrew text. By translating the Hebrew perfects by Greek future indicatives the LXX apparently understood the former as "prophetic perfects."²¹ It appears from the text that the LXX, too, thought of a passion of the *pais*

¹⁵Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁶Cf. Mark 9:12; 10:45; Lindars, *New Testament* 78.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁸North, *Isaiah* 131.

¹⁹Lindars, *New Testament* 79.

²⁰Virtually all the MSS of all the versions support the reading *anēngeilamen* in 53:2. It seems rather likely, however, that Ziegler's emendation is correct.

²¹Jeremias, *Servant* 41.

("servant") that leads him to death.²² Also the repeated use of *doxa* ("glory") in 52:13, 14b, 14c; 53:2 carries the "decisive imprint of interpretation," as the word has no full equivalent in the Hebrew text.²³ It is true that *doxa* need not carry the theological significance of *kābôd*, but there is no clear reason to interpret it otherwise in this passage. The sum of all this is that it seems clear that to understand the NT use of the fourth Servant song the LXX must not be far from the center of focus.

The seven quotations of Isa 52:13-53:12 in the NT can be divided roughly into three groups by their function: Matt 8:17; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:32-33; Rom 10:16 are passion apologetic; Rom 15:21 promotes preaching to the Gentiles; and 1 Pet 2:22 provides moral exhortation. The citations of Isaiah 53 in the NT show the Church, following the lead of Jesus, using the passage to work out the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is partly a reaction to opposition by the Jewish religious authorities. The Jews question whether Jesus' suffering and death are consistent with Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. Furthermore, what basis does the Church's claim about Jesus' passion have in the teaching and work of Jesus himself? And if the Church's claim is true, why does this claim not compel belief?

The NT writers use Isaiah 53 to answer these questions and other external matters of the Church: the preaching of the gospel to Gentiles, and moral admonition to believers.²⁴ That is, the other subsidiary motive for using Isaiah 53 is not apologetic but relates to the moral needs of the Church. The chapter is used as an example for believers to emulate the life of their Lord. The atonement theology of Isaiah 53 appears in 1 Peter where the purpose is purely homiletical. The homiletical usage is derived from the theological and is unaffected by apologetic motives elsewhere.²⁵

The analysis of the NT quotations of Isaiah 53 will begin with those that are used for passion apologetics. The first passage being considered is Matt 8:17, the only one of the seven quotations to depart substantially from the LXX in favor of the Hebrew text. Matthew chose the text-form best suited to his purpose. He is using Isa 53:4 to show that the passage that he applied as a whole to Jesus as Messiah was fulfilled by Jesus.

It is evident that the LXX is interpretive here, "piercing through the metaphor of sickness to the root of sin."²⁶ The pesher text of Matthew takes Isa 53:4 literally. Matthew can thus apply the verse literally to Jesus' healing ministry. The fundamental point the evangelist makes here is that Jesus' suffering is redemptive. This rebuts the objection that Jesus' physical sufferings were inconsistent with his messianic claim.²⁷ By translating the Hebrew text more literally,

²²Ibid., p. 44.

²³Ibid., p. 43.

²⁴Lindars, *New Testament* 88.

²⁵Ibid., p. 87.

²⁶Cf. also the Targumic text.

²⁷Lindars, *New Testament* 86.

Matthew is able to apply the passage more readily to Jesus. Matthew uses Isa 53:4 to show that the sufferings of Jesus are consistent with and indeed are those of the Suffering Servant pictured in Isa 52:13-53:12. Isaiah 53:4 for Matthew here is a passion apologetic.

The LXX renders *ḥōlāyēnū* by *hamartias* ("sins"), while Matthew more literally translates it by *astheneias* ("weaknesses").²⁸ In 8:17 Matthew interpreted Isa 53:4 ad hoc. His rendering was a correct translation of the Hebrew text but may still be regarded as an ad hoc interpretation since it differed from all the Greek and Aramaic interpretations known to us.²⁹

There yet remains to see how Matthew's use of the passage compares to the original meaning of the prophet. North argues that the motif of vicarious suffering is clearly present in Isa 53:4-6.³⁰ J. A. Alexander argues that Matthew's application of this verse is not an exposition of 53:4 in a full sense but an indication that the prediction had begun to be fulfilled, its effects already being visible.³¹ In Isa 53:4 the prophet "has in mind the Servant taking the diseases of others upon himself through suffering and death for their sin." Insofar as Matthew represents Jesus' healings as illustrations of his redemptive work, "the evangelist has caught the thought" of the prophet.^{32,33}

Matthew's use of the verse may be partly based on the fact that Isa 53:4 forms a transition from the Servant growing up, knowing sickness and sorrow, to his suffering and death.³⁴ It seems clear that Matthew understood all of the fourth Servant song as a prophecy concerning Jesus. Matthew was thus able to use a literal rendering of Isa 53:4 as a passion apologetic, showing that physical healing was part of the Servant's redemptive work and thus the work of the Messiah.³⁵ Since it fulfills the role of Messiah, Matthew shows by Isa 53:4, indirectly, that Jesus is the Messiah.

²⁸R. N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 148. Matthew may have seen Isa 53:4 as the fulfillment in Jesus' ministry of a direct messianic prophecy. Longenecker says, "The Evangelist's textual selection and his fulfillment application signal the use of a peshar approach to Scripture" (p. 148).

²⁹K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1954) 208. Matthew elsewhere clearly shows acquaintance with the LXX. He uses it frequently. At other times, however, he deviates from it, particularly in formula quotations (p. 151). This is quite significant, for the NT generally gives the impression of a conscious desire to quote the LXX correctly (p. 158).

³⁰North, *Isaiah* 135.

³¹J. A. Alexander, *Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 244.

³²R. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 230.

³³Hooker (*Jesus* 81) argues that the quotation does not show that Jesus was understood as the Servant but only that Jesus' work was foreshadowed by God. I find this reasoning wholly inadequate exegetically. It is a failure, I believe, to grasp how Matthew is using the verse.

³⁴Gundry, *Use* 230.

³⁵It is uncertain whether the prophet intended 53:4 to refer to physical healing. Yet since the body in Hebrew thought was an integral part of man and the OT concept of redemption so often relates to the physical, it is certainly possible if not probable that the prophet had physical diseases in mind.

The other quotation of Isaiah 53 in the synoptic gospels as a passion apologetic is found in Luke 22:37. Here Jesus directly applies Isa 53:12 to himself, altering the LXX text only by using *meta* with the genitive rather than *en* with the dative.³⁶ On either side of the quotation he invokes a peshet theme. This alteration of the LXX is noteworthy. Generally speaking, Luke adheres closely to the LXX. At the same time, however, the meaning has not been changed significantly, though the Lucan rendering is probably a more accurate word-for-word translation of 'et.

The intention of the passage is to show that Jesus' rejection fulfills the purposes of God.³⁷ Luke stresses here that the progress of Jesus' career "is governed by divine necessity expressed in Scripture."³⁸ I. H. Marshall states that the changing of *en* to *meta* and the omission of the definite article by Luke bring the citation closer to the MT and show that the quotation is from a pre-Lucan tradition. The quotation is "surely indispensable to the context. It is most probable the quotation reflects the mind of Jesus himself."³⁹

It seems quite reasonable to ascribe these words to Jesus himself. By citing them Luke shows that not only the Church but Jesus himself understood his suffering and death in terms of his role as the Servant. F. F. Bruce says, "The interpretation of the achievement of Jesus in terms of the obedience of the suffering Servant is so widely spread in the New Testament as to create a presumption that it goes back behind all" to Jesus himself.⁴⁰

It is expected that the Church's earliest use of this prophecy would be identical with our Lord's teaching from Isaiah 53. Thus dominical sayings using Isaiah 53 cannot be distinguished from Church-formations in the gospel tradition.⁴¹ The evangelist used this citation as a passion apologetic to show that Jesus' suffering was consistent with and even predicted by the fourth Servant song and that Jesus understood the passage this way, identifying his role as Servant with his role as Messiah.

Perhaps the best example of a quotation from Isaiah 53 being used as a passion apologetic is in Acts 8:32-33. The quotation here of Isa 53:7-8 is from the LXX, as is usual in Acts. The use of the LXX here is quite significant. A study of the theology of Isaiah 53 suggests that Philip showed the eunuch how the mission of the Servant had been fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection. Luke himself, however, probably is thinking in terms of the passion apologetic: The proph-

³⁶Longenecker, *Biblical* 72.

³⁷Hooker (*Jesus* 86) argues that this passage does not imply the concept of the Suffering Servant; rather, it implies that Jesus' words never connect Isaiah 53 to the meaning of his death. This view contrasts sharply with that expressed by Lake and Jackson, *Beginnings of Christianity* (London, 1933) 366. I feel the latter understand the passage much better. Hooker seems determined not to find the Servant of the Lord in the NT in spite of the evidence (p. 144).

³⁸I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 826.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Bruce, *This* 96.

⁴¹Lindars, *New Testament* 78.

ecy is messianic, Jesus has fulfilled it, and therefore Jesus is the Christ.⁴²

There are two minor textual difficulties in Acts 8:32-33. While the LXX reads *keirontos*, the NT MSS vary between the aorist *keirantos* and the present *keiron-tos*. The 25th edition of the Nestle text reads the present, supported by B⁹al. This reading, however, is likely harmonized to the LXX or, less likely, vice versa. The aorist, used in UBSGNT (3d ed.), is read by P^{56,74} EHp^m; Th. and, all things considered, is probably correct, having greater testimony. This would mean a slight difference between the LXX and the citation in Acts. Also some MSS insert *autou* after *tapeinōsei* in Acts 8:33: ΩEpl; S. It is not in the LXX and is certainly not original, being omitted by better witnesses: P⁷⁴ B Aleph A pc Lat, Ire^{lat}.

The LXX rendering differs considerably from the rather difficult Hebrew. Some render the Hebrew "from oppression and judgment he was taken away," i.e., removed, released; others, "Through oppression . . . he was taken away," i.e., put to death, cut off.⁴³ Ottley renders the Greek as "(by his humiliation) his sentence was done away with."⁴⁴ Still others take the Hebrew as "by reason of an oppressive judgment he was taken," seeing the first clause as hendiadys. Others translate it as "without hindrance and without judgment he was taken." North translates the clause as follows: "From imprisonment and from judgment he was taken."⁴⁵ Since Luke used the LXX here, the Hebrew text is not of great importance except to see how difficult it is here and the way the LXX treated it. The LXX translator(s) had trouble with the prophecy, and "their rendering is even less easy to translate than the Hebrew text is itself in places."⁴⁶ The LXX *tēn genean tis diēgēsetai* is in a sense near the Hebrew, but the latter is again uncertain. "Generation" may mean "contemporaries" (Gesenius; Cheyne). Delitzsch says the LXX must mean "who can count his posterity," the Hebrew being taken to mean "and as to his generation, who considered that he was . . . ?"⁴⁷

What we find in the LXX is apparently not a translation of Isa 53:7-8 but a free rendering designed to make a difficult text easier by an interpretive translation. Unfortunately, the LXX is not much easier to understand than the MT. In this case it would mean that the LXX is used in Acts 8:32-33 because that is the usual practice in Acts, not because the LXX rendering helps the narrative. Of course it may be that the LXX was cited because that was the version the eunuch was reading from.

⁴²Ibid., p. 84.

⁴³R. R. Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah According to the LXX* (Cambridge: University Press, 1906) 346.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵North, *Suffering Servant* 124. North argues that Isa 53:7-8 shows that the Servant dies. He states that it is improper to make some details literal and others figurative to escape this notion. The whole must be taken either allegorically or literally: "As soon as we begin to pick and choose, taking part literally and part figuratively, we are out of touch with reality" (p. 149).

⁴⁶F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 188.

⁴⁷Ottley, *Book* 47.

Philip interpreted Isa 53:7-8 in individualistic, messianic terms as referring to Jesus.⁴⁸ Philip saw in the humiliation of the Servant of Yahweh in Isa 53:7-8 a prophecy of Jesus. The early Church saw in Christ's sufferings the fulfillment of the role of the Messiah. This effected the conflation of the roles of Servant and Messiah. Jesus as the Messiah fulfills the role of the Suffering Servant.⁴⁹ Thus Isa 53:7-8 was readily available for Luke to use as a passion apologetic to show that Jesus as the Messiah had to die.

Two passages, John 12:38 and Rom 10:16, quote Isa 53:1 as a passion apologetic, though each has a different context in mind. Both quotations are from the LXX, which begins with *kyrie* ("Lord"), for which there is no Hebrew equivalent. This addition seems to be an interpretation by the LXX of who the speaker is in 53:1. The addition increases the utility of the verse for the NT authors. The Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah is interpreted both in John 12:38 and Rom 10:16 as the fulfillment of Isa 53:1.⁵⁰ The LXX carries the strong implication that the messenger of the "report" has been sent by God. Longenecker says, "If the evangelist understood Isaiah 53 as having individual, messianic significance, . . . his treatment should be classed as literal fulfillment."⁵¹ Significantly John does not apply Isa 53:1 to Jesus' passion but to his previous works. While 53:1 originally referred to the inability of the prophet's audience to recognize the Servant's exaltation, the evangelist by it expresses the inability of the Jews to recognize the glory of God revealed through Jesus' miracles and signs.⁵²

While John applies 53:1 to Jesus' ministry,⁵³ Paul applies it to the preaching of the gospel. As noted above, Paul also quotes the LXX here. More than half of Paul's OT quotations are from the LXX, and the majority of the rest are of LXX type. Paul shows a consistent tendency to quote Isaiah from the LXX^A text.⁵⁴ He uses Isa 53:1 to explain why the Jews refuse to believe the "atonement theology" the Church finds in this prophecy. Also, as hinted at above, Paul probably also finds in this verse a prediction of the rejection of himself as a preacher of the gospel. Now Isa 53:1 can be applied to unbelief in general. Paul applies Isa 53:1 to the Jews' refusal to believe, contrasting their unbelief to the Gentiles who do not believe only because they have not heard.⁵⁵ Though John and Paul set this Servant prophecy against different backgrounds, they both, in applying Isa 52:13-53:12 as a whole to Jesus as the Messiah, use 53:1 as a passion apolo-

⁴⁸E. J. Young, *Studies in Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 105.

⁴⁹G. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 331.

⁵⁰E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957) 87.

⁵¹Longenecker, *Biblical* 155.

⁵²Hooker, *Jesus* 106.

⁵³L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 603. This is the first occurrence in John of the formula *hina plērōthē*. Cf. 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 36.

⁵⁴Stendahl, *School* 154.

⁵⁵Lindars, *New Testament* 87.

getic to show it was predicted that the Jews would reject Jesus the Servant/Messiah.

Isa 52:15b is quoted in Rom 15:21 not as a passion apologetic but as a justification for Paul's preaching in unevangelized areas. Paul judged 52:15 as a warrant for preaching to Gentiles in general. Lindars says that "the proper context of the verse has now been altogether forgotten."⁵⁶ Originally Isa 52:15 referred to an epoch-making event. Indeed, the Servant's exaltation is without precedent. That someone smitten, marred beyond human resemblance and rejected by God and men should have such significance and be thus exalted is truly something unheard of.⁵⁷

Paul interprets the Servant songs Christologically in Rom 15:21, quoting Isa 52:15 according to the LXX. The emphasis, however, is not on the Christological interpretation (*peri autou*, "concerning him") but on Paul's missionary task to preach in unevangelized areas, which task Paul finds prophesied here in Isaiah.⁵⁸ It is possible that Paul chose the LXX here specifically because of the future tense of the verbs, unless he interpreted the Hebrew perfects as future perfects.⁵⁹ In any case Rom 15:21 is an example of the use of a quotation from Isaiah 53 from a motive other than passion apologetic, that of grounding Paul's missionary work in Scripture.

The citation of Isa 53:9 in 1 Pet 2:22 is an example of yet a third motive for using the fourth Servant song, that of moral admonition. 1 Peter is highly homiletical. Some have even seen it as a homiletical liturgy (e.g. Cross). The purpose of the quotation is to exhort slaves to follow the example of Jesus in suffering. 2:21-25 is all based on Isaiah 53. Words and phrases are drawn from at least 53:4, 5, 6, 9, 12.⁶⁰ The quotation is taken from the LXX with only slight modification. The LXX uses *anomian* rather than *hamartian* ("lawless act" rather than "sin").

The author is drawing attention not only to Jesus' innocence in regard to any particular crime he was executed for but also to Jesus' general sinlessness. This latter idea is found widely in the NT.⁶¹ 1 Pet 2:23 gives a particular example of Jesus' innocence. In v 24 Peter passes from an emphasis on Christ's suffering as an example for slaves to follow to the redemptive value of Jesus' suffering as seen in the light of the suffering of the Servant in Isaiah 53.⁶²

Christ is here identified with the Suffering Servant of the Lord. If the modification of the LXX text is deliberate, the reason for the change could have been to bring out Christ's innocence before God. In any case the words serve as a re-

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (London: SCM, 1969) 260.

⁵⁸Jeremias, *Servant* 93.

⁵⁹So North, *Suffering Servant* 128.

⁶⁰Lindars, *New Testament* 82.

⁶¹Cf. 1 Pet 1:19; 2 Cor 5:4; Heb 7:26; John 8:46; 1 John 3:5.

⁶²E. Best, *1 Peter* (London: Oliphants, 1971) 122.

minder for maltreated slaves. When these Christian slaves are tempted to protest their innocence they should recall that their Lord, the Suffering Servant, had been no less blameless but had endured mistreatment anyway.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

There are seven quotations of the fourth Servant song in the NT. The quotations from Isa 52:13-53:12 usually follow the LXX, at least in part. The use of Isa 53:1 according to the LXX sometimes seems deliberate to enhance the argument. Elsewhere it does not seem especially advantageous to use the LXX.

The prophecy has been used for three distinct though at times overlapping reasons: passion apologetic, justification for preaching to the Gentiles, and moral admonition of believers. In one instance, Matt 8:17, significant departure from the LXX is useful. The farther away from passion apologetics a writer's motive becomes, the farther from the sense of the original passage the NT usage moves. Yet it is not always certain in those cases whether the writer understood his use of Isaiah 53 as the "real" meaning or whether he was only applying it in a different way. In this regard one wonders why, if the NT writers in general understood the fourth Servant song messianically and as fulfilled in Jesus, they did not make more use of it. Perhaps this indicates that the passage was not, as is often assumed, an important piece of testimonia in the early Church.

⁶⁸J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude* (New York: Harper, 1969) 120-121.