

# *Know the God of Scripture*

*Volume 1*

## **Week 32: The Suffering Servant - Answer Guide**

*Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.*

**1.** God is compassionate to all His people wanting them all to come and obey His commands. Man is but grass or grasshoppers that are here today and gone tomorrow, whereas God is eternal, powerful, strong and almighty. He sits above the circle of the earth because He created it and all that is in it. He needs no council, no help in accomplishing His will in all of us. He directs the hearts of men. Compare Isaiah 40 with Romans 1.

**2.** Answers may vary. Reading Scripture draws one close to the Lord and comforts the soul. In whatever circumstance life throws your way the Bible, combined with the Holy Spirit, will strengthen your resolve to stay on the right path God desires. The Word of God is our strength. Reliance upon God is our hope. Like David says in Psalms 119, God's Word is a light unto our paths in life illuminating His goodness.

**3.** Isaiah is giving his audience a precursor view of the coming Servant of the Lord (Jesus). If the baptism of Jesus initiated His ministry with the descent of the Spirit, the present passage presents Jesus' ministry from the perspective of His baptismal inauguration. Matthew helps us interpret this passage by quoting it as being fulfilled by Jesus. In addition, compare Ephesians 1:3-14 and Philippians 2:5-11.

**4.** The LORD created and chose Israel and loved them unconditionally from the beginning (like He does us!). He desires their compliance and obedience. Because He loved them, His wrath was punishment for their rebellion. After exile He desires to call them back to Him, the only Savior they have. His creation, redemption and protection demonstrate His boundless love for Israel. Although Israel is blind, deaf and a failure, the LORD continues to love them. The height of agape love is demonstrated in this relationship.

**5.** In Isaiah 44:1-5 the main theme is verse 3, "I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants" pertaining to the future Israel and Judah (Jacob).

### **Isaiah 44:1-5 Chiasm Structure**

A - But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen: (verse 1)

B - Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen. (verse 2)

**C - For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; (verse 3)**

B' - And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water. (verse 4)

A' - This one will say, 'I am the Lord's'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the Lord,' And will name Israel's name with honor. (verse 5)

In Isaiah 44:21-23 the main theme is joyous celebration for the work of the Lord in forgiving and redeeming future Israel and Judah (Jacob).

### **Isaiah 44:21-23 Chiasm Structure**

A - Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. (verse 21)

**B - I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you. (verse 22)**

A' - Shout for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the Lord has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory. (verse 23)

These are both New Testament concepts, blessing and forgiveness of sins.

6. Cyrus was a future king of Persia who lived between ~600-530 BC, so he was yet to be born. Here we have specific, detailed prophecy shared by Isaiah of a future king to be. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian records (in his Antiquities 11:5:2) “these things Cyrus knew from reading the book of prophecy which Isaiah had left behind two hundred and ten years earlier.” This is a testament to the validity of Isaiah’s prophecy.

The mere fact that Isaiah quoted a future king is one thing, but to quote him by specific name is miraculous. Only one filled with the Holy Spirit could achieve such a task.

7. There is no doubt that Isaiah had Genesis 1 in mind when he wrote chapter 45. Verse 8 is a literary apostrophe describing overwhelming grace from God above. God is the author of salvation and freely offers it to all mankind. Paul, in writing Romans, can be seen referring to this chapter in Isaiah. God reiterates His claim as the One and only true God worthy of praise.

8. Isaiah mysteriously introduces a third entity that has baffled many commentators to this day. In a rare occurrence this verse displays all three entities of the Holy Trinity: The Lord (Hebrew = Adonai), God (Hebrew = El) and Spirit (Hebrew = Ruach). It is interesting that in the Old Testament the Spirit never sends but is always sent.

9. Isaiah introduces irony or sarcasm here in asking Israel where their divorce certificate or creditors are. God never divorced them or sold them. It was their sin that separated them from their bridegroom. The Sovereign Lord (Adonai Yahweh), mentioned four times here, offers Himself to redeem rebellious Israel. In verses 10-11 those who rebel try to make their own way home, but the chasm is too wide and deep for self-redemption.

10. A good description of the Suffering Servant can be found at:

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/reviced-common-lectionary/good-friday/commentary-on-isaiah-5213-5312-10>

Discussions with vary but keep focused on the work of Jesus to redeem mankind through His gracious and humble acts of servitude.

11. Jesus quotes this verse when He cleansed the Temple in Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46. The Temple had become a commodity exchange market, a far cry from the house of prayer originally intended by God.

**12.** When the Pharisees handed Jesus the scroll to read in the synagogue, He chose to read Isaiah 61. Afterwards, He proclaimed that the redeeming Messiah which Isaiah prophesied had fulfilled His role that day. This obviously shook the Pharisee's faith because in claiming this Jesus effectually claimed to be God.

### **Additional Questions:**

**1.** Israel means "he who struggles" in Hebrew. Judah means "praised." These names are fitting for the theme of the book of Isaiah. Isaiah records the "struggles" Israel had with God and obeying His Law. Many times, Isaiah calls the people of God to turn from their wicked ways and praise the One who created them and loved them.

**2.** Inscribing the names of Judah and Israel on the palms of His hands is anthropomorphic verbiage meaning that God will uphold His end of the covenant He made with Abraham. That is, He will be faithful to make His descendants as numerous as the grains of sand and bless many nations through them. In a nutshell, God is faithful.

**3.** The husband analogy occurs also in Jeremiah 31:31-34 in the context of the new covenant promise there. In the New Testament Jesus is referred to as the bridegroom and His bride is the church. Throughout Old and New Testament God describes His relationship with His elect as one of covenant marriage. Reference John 3:29; Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:19; Revelation 22:17.

