

## Holy Week: Isaiah 40-55

The promise of new life for those in exile.



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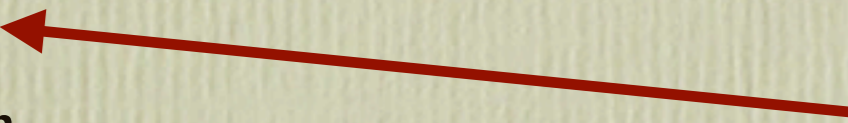
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# The Last Supper



Tintoretto



John 13:1:

‘Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.’



Sieger Köder

John 13:3-5

‘During supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel he had wrapped round his waist.’

John 13:3-4, 12

‘During supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, **laid down** his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself ... After he had washed their feet, had **taken up** his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you?

John 10:17-18

‘For this reason the Father loves me, because I **lay down** my life in order to **take it up** again.

No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down** of my own accord. I have power to **lay it down**, and I have power to **take it up again**. I have received this command from my Father.’



John 13:21-22

‘Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared:  
Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.  
The disciples looked at one another,  
uncertain of whom he was speaking.’

John 13:23

‘One of his disciples –  
the one whom Jesus loved –  
was reclining next to him.’





ho on



Exodus 3:14

‘I am (will be)  
who I am (will be).’

ego eimi ho on

Yahweh

## Jesus' Farewell Speech (John 13:33 - 14:31)

Modelled on Moses' Testament in Deuteronomy

John 13:34-35

*'I give you a new commandment,  
that you love one another.*

*Just as I have loved you,  
you also should love one another.*

*By this everyone will know  
that you are my disciples,  
if you have love for one another.'*

John 14:1-3

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.

If it were not so, would I have told you  
that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come again and will take you to myself,

so that where I am, there you may be also.

## Communion with God

God's perfect  
human Word,  
human realisation  
of the Divine Word  
of the Self-giving  
transcendent God



Communion in the  
Love-Spirit that  
unites Jesus and God,  
sharing in the Divine  
Love-communion  
of the  
Transcendent God

John 14:4-6

‘You know the way to the place where I am going.’

Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’

Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:7-9

‘If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’

Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.’

John 1:18

‘No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made God known.’

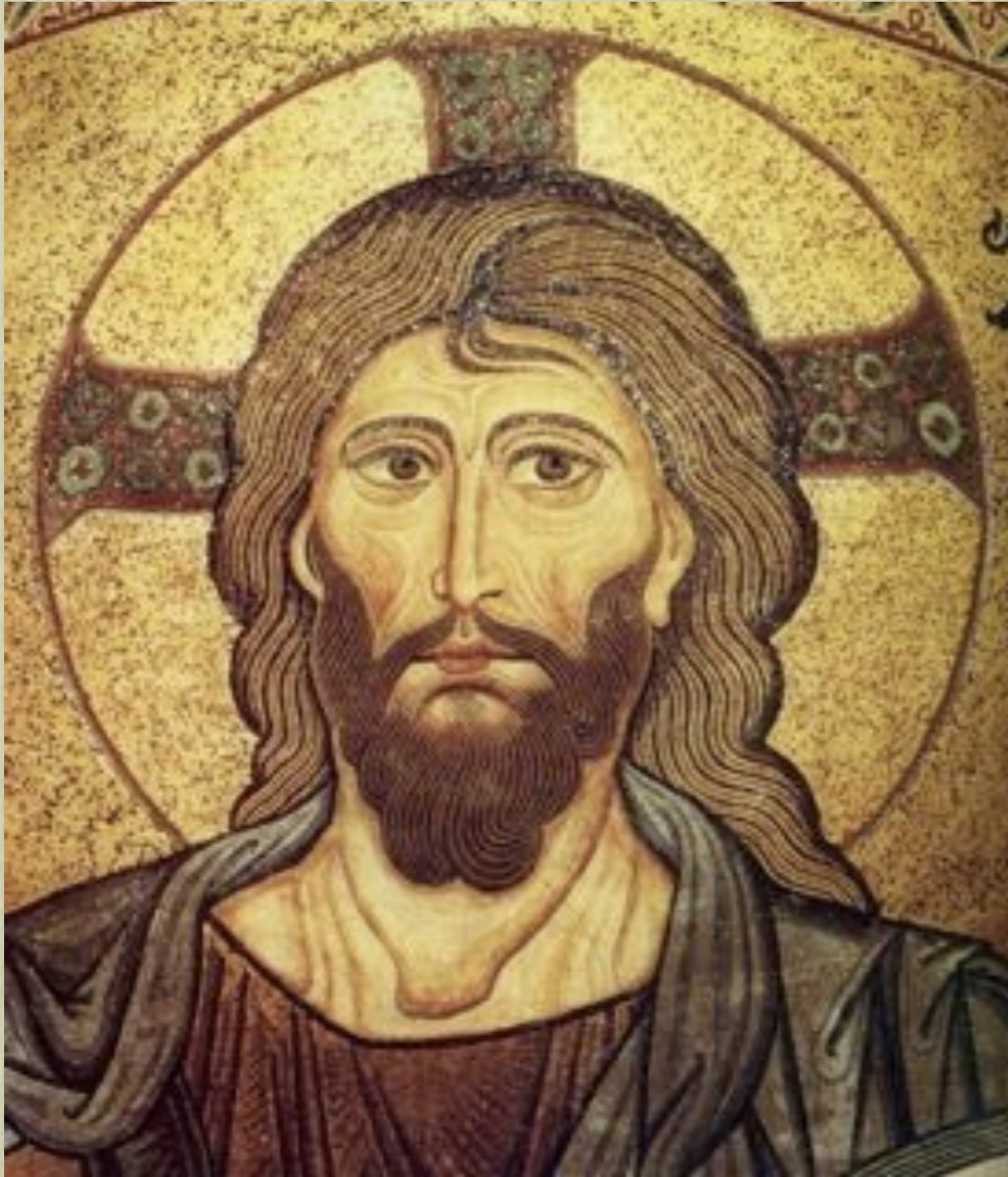




2Corinthians 4:6

‘It is the God who said: Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’

John 14:10-11



Do you not believe  
that I am in the Father  
and the Father is in me?

The words I say to you  
I do not speak as from myself.  
It is the Father living in me  
who is doing this work.

You must believe me when I say  
that I am in the Father  
and the Father is in me;  
believe me on the evidence of  
this work, if for no other reason.



John 14:12-14

I tell you most solemnly, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and, in fact, will do even greater works, because I am going to the Father.

Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask for anything in my name, I will do it.

John 14:15-18, 23

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father,  
and he will give you another Advocate,  
to be with you forever.

This is the Spirit of truth,  
whom the world cannot receive,  
because it neither sees nor knows the Spirit.  
You know the Spirit, because the Spirit  
abides with you, is in you.

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you ...

If you love me you will keep my word,  
and my Father will love you, and we will come to you  
and make our home in you.



1Corinthians 12:4-7

‘There are varieties of gifts  
[charisma]

but the same Spirit;

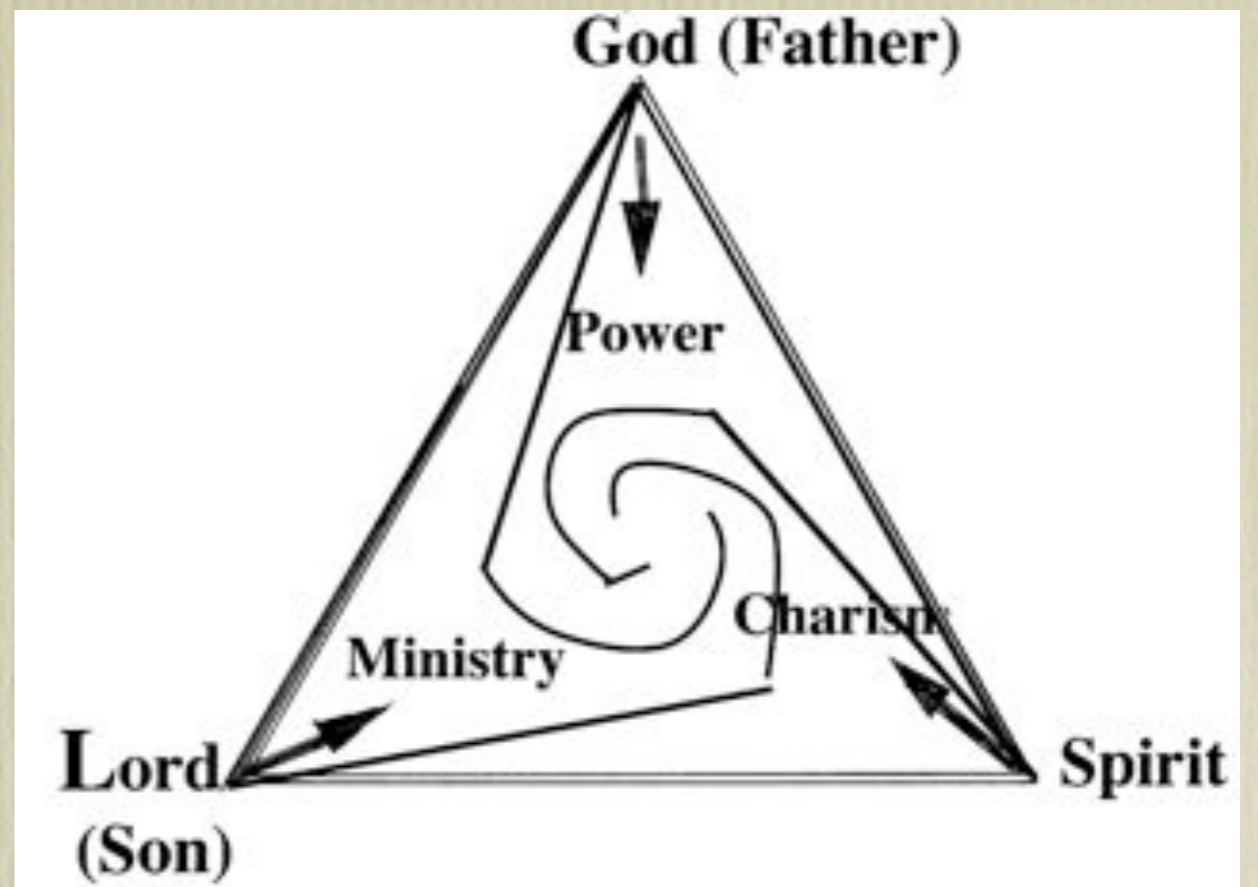
there are varieties of ministries  
[diakonia]

but the same Lord;

there are varieties of  
ways of exercising power  
[energema]

but it is the same God who  
activates them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of  
the Spirit for a good purpose.



John 14:24-25, 27

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;  
and the word that you hear is not mine.  
It is from the Father who sent me ...

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled,  
and do not let them be afraid.

John 14:31

Rise, let us be on our way.

John 18:1

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

## Additions to the Supper Discourse : John 15:1 - 17:26

I am the true vine; my Father is the vinegrower.

John 15:1-5

He removes every branch in me  
that bears no fruit.

Every branch that bears fruit  
he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

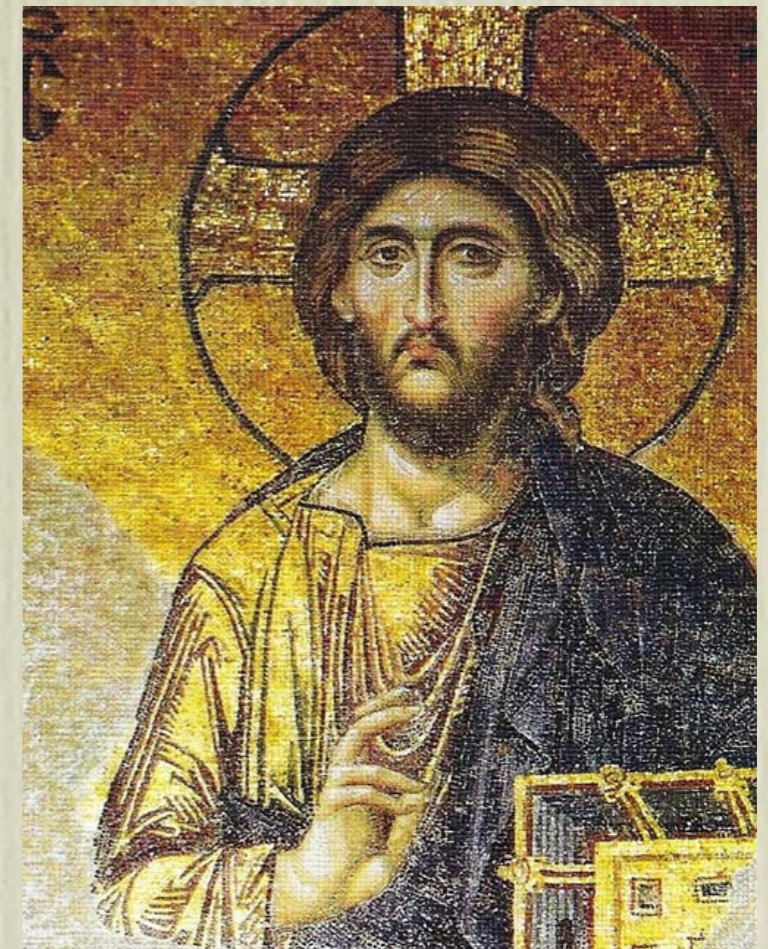
Abide in me as I abide in you.

Just as the branch cannot bear fruit  
by itself unless it abides in the vine,  
neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you abide in me and I in you,  
you will bear much fruit.

Apart from me you can do nothing.'



John 15:9

‘As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you (plural);  
abide in my love.’



Jesus has already spoken of his love for us (13:1; 13:34; 14:21). Now he tells us that the love which he has for us has its origin in the love which his Father has for him. It is the human expression of the intimate communion which is the very being of God.

With the Beloved Disciple we are being invited to share Jesus' divinity: to be with Jesus **‘in the bosom of the Father’** (1:18).

John 17:11, 13, 17-19

‘Holy Father, protect those you have given to me,  
so that they may be one, as we are one ...  
I speak these things to share my joy  
with them to the full.

Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world,  
so I have sent them into the world.  
And for their sake I consecrate myself,  
so that they too may be consecrated in truth.

John 17:20-21

‘I pray not only for these,  
but for those also  
who will believe in me through their word.  
May they all be one.  
Father, may they be one in us.

As you, Father, are in me and I am in you,  
may they also be in us,  
as you are in me and I am in you,  
so that the world may believe  
that it was you who sent me.





John 17:22-24

I have given them the glory you gave to me,  
that they may be one, as we are one.

With me in them and you in me,

may they be so completely one,

so that the world may realise

that it was you sent me

and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me

to with me where I am,

so that they may always see the glory

you have given me because you loved me

before the foundation of the world.

John 17:25-26

‘Righteous Father, the world does not know you,  
but I know you;  
and these know that you have sent me.  
I made your name known to them,  
and will continue to make it known,  
so that the love with which you have loved me  
may be in them,  
and so that I may be in them.’



A friend broken for me

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‘Isaiah School’ in Exile 545-538

Isaiah Scroll 40-55

# Exile in Babylon (597-538)



In 550 Cyrus of Persia conquered Ecbatana, the capital of Media (west-central Iran).

In 547 he captured Sardis, the capital of Lydia (western Turkey).

Then he took Susa, the capital of Elam (at the foot of the Zagros Mountains in the Khuzistan region of Iran).

In [Isaiah 40-55](#) The 'priest-preachers' ('temple singers') gave expression to the excitement and hope that characterised the final years of the exile. They saw Cyrus as the instrument raised up by YHWH, the lord of creation and the lord of history, to liberate his people.

Isaiah 40:1-2

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her  
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from YHWH's hand  
double for all her sins.

## Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way for YHWH,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

Then the **glory** of YHWH shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of YHWH has spoken.”



Isaiah 40:9-11

Get you up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good tidings [LXX euangelizô]

lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”

See, the Lord YHWH comes with might,  
and his strong arm asserts his rule;

his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,

and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40:31

‘Those who wait for YHWH shall renew their strength,  
they shall fly with renewed wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 41:8-9

But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;  
you whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners, saying to you,  
“You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you  
off.”

Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid,  
for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 42:1-4

Here is my servant [LXX adds 'Israel'], whom I uphold,  
my chosen one, in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him;

he will establish justice for the nations.

He will not shout or raise his voice, or make it heard in the street;

a bruised reed he will not break,

and a dimly burning wick he will not quench.

He will establish justice.

He will not grow faint or be crushed

until he has established justice in the earth;

and the coastlands wait for his law [Torah].

Isaiah 42:5-7

Thus says God, YHWH,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

I, YHWH, have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,

a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,

to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,

from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Isaiah 42:18-20

Listen, you that are deaf;  
and you that are blind, look up and see!  
Who is as blind as my servant,  
or as deaf as my messenger whom I send?  
Who is as blind as my dedicated one,  
or as blind as the servant of YHWH?  
He sees many things, but does not observe them;  
his ears are open, but he does not hear.

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now thus says YHWH,

he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am YHWH your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.



Isaiah 43:10-13

You are my witnesses, says YHWH,  
and my servant whom I have chosen,  
so that you may know and believe me  
and understand that **I Am**. (see 41:4)

Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

I, **I am YHWH**, and besides me there is no saviour.

I declared and saved and proclaimed,  
when there was no strange god among you;  
and you are my witnesses, says YHWH.

I am God, and also henceforth **I Am**;  
there is no one who can deliver from my hand;  
I work and who can hinder it?

Isaiah 45:8

Drop down dew, O heavens, from above,  
and let the skies rain down righteousness;  
let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,  
and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also;  
I YHWH have created it.

Isaiah 45:22-23

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

By myself I have sworn, from my mouth

has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return:

“To me every knee shall bend, every tongue shall swear.”

Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:9-11

## Isaiah 48

Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea,  
declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it,  
send it forth to the end of the earth;  
say, “YHWH has redeemed his servant Jacob!”  
They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;  
he made water flow for them from the rock;  
he split open the rock and the water gushed out.  
“There is no peace,” says YHWH, “for the wicked.”

## Introduction to Isaiah 49-55

From the opening words of chapter 49 it is clear that there has been a significant shift of focus. Two things have happened.

The first is that Cyrus did not live up to the expectations that the composers of Isaiah 40-48 had of him. Though Cyrus conquered the Babylonian Empire, Judah is still devastated and Jerusalem and its temple are still in ruins.

The second is partly a consequence of this: the doubts already expressed by the community have hardened into rejection of this School and of their prophetic message.

Yet the prophet-preachers remain convinced that it is YHWH's will to bring about the return of the exiles and to build up Judah so that the people can carry out the mission that they have inherited from Abraham and Jacob; namely, to reveal YHWH to the nations. Since the people are not in a position yet to do this, and since they are no longer listening to the prophetic message, the members of this exilic School realise that it is they who are called to be YHWH's 'servants', to keep the flame burning and to realise the mission given to Israel. They must, in that sense, be Israel.

Their opening words, then, are no longer addressed to the people of Judah, whether in Jerusalem or in exile. They are addressed to the nations, for it is YHWH's will for the nations to come to know him and experience freedom and salvation through following the way of the Torah, the way YHWH has revealed to Israel, the way that has its source in communion with YHWH and flows into a world order characterised by justice.

*[I have altered 'prophet' to 'prophet-preachers']*

‘A sombre sadness now muffles the enthusiasm. The people could not believe that God’s compassion would reach this tenderly to the ends of the earth, nor could the people accept the price of sharing the covenant and its God with other nations. Worst of all, the *prophet-preachers* acclaimed the Persian Cyrus as another Moses in 44:24 - 45:7. Such openness clashed with the narrow prejudice of the people. The *prophet-preachers* were spurned, publicly humiliated, cast aside. In the solitary darkness they saw themselves reliving the history of their people in their dreadful suffering. They also sustained hopes beyond despair, life beyond death, absorbed from the tradition of Moses and the earlier prophets.’



Isaiah 49:1-4

Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
YHWH called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.  
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a sharpened arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.  
And he said to me, "You are my servant, [The Isaiah School]  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

But I said, "I have laboured in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with YHWH,  
and my reward with my God."

Isaiah 49:5-6

And now YHWH says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honoured in the sight of YHWH,  
and my God has become my strength—  
he says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Isaiah 49:9-10,13

Say to the prisoners, “Come out,”

to those who are in darkness, “Show yourselves.”

They shall feed along the ways,

on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;

they shall not hunger or thirst,

neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,

for he who has compassion [raham] on them will lead them,

and by springs of water will guide them.

YHWH has comforted his people,

and will have compassion [raham] on his afflicted.

Isaiah 49:14-16

But Zion said, “YHWH has forsaken me,  
my Lord has forgotten me.”

Can a woman forget her unweaned child,  
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?  
Even if these should forget, I will not forget you.  
See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands;  
your walls are continually before me.

Isaiah 50:4-6 The prophet-preachers are mocked

The Lord YHWH has given me the tongue of a disciple,  
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear to listen as disciples listen.

The Lord YHWH has opened my ear,

and I for my part was not rebellious, nor did I draw back.

I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

## The suffering and rejected servant

Who is the suffering and rejected servant described in this poem?

1. Is it Israel?

2. The prophet-preachers?

3. Their leader?

Isaiah 52:13-15

See, my servant shall prosper;

he shall be exalted, lifted up; he shall be very high.

Just as there were many who were astonished at him –

so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,

and his form beyond that of mortals –

so he shall startle many nations;

kings shall shut their mouths because of him;

for that which had not been told them they shall see,

and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Isaiah 53:1-3

Who has believed what we have heard?  
And to whom has the arm of YHWH  
been revealed? For he grew up before  
him like a young plant, and like a root  
out of dry ground; [devastated Judah]  
he had no form or majesty that we  
should look at him, nothing in his  
appearance that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by others;  
a man of suffering and acquainted with  
infirmity; and as one from whom others  
hide their faces he was despised,  
and we held him of no account.

‘They did not believe in Jesus. This  
was to fulfill the word spoken by  
the prophet Isaiah: Lord, who has  
believed our message, and to whom  
has the arm of the Lord been  
revealed?’ (John 12:37-38)

‘Not all have obeyed the good  
news; for Isaiah says: Lord, who  
has believed our message?’

(Romans 10:16)

‘He emptied himself, taking  
the form of a slave ... and  
became obedient to the point of  
death— even death on a cross.’

(Philippians 2:7-8)



Isaiah 53:4-6 Suffering can be redemptive!

Surely he has borne our infirmities  
and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded  
for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the punishment  
that made us whole,  
and by his bruises we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have all turned to our own way,  
and YHWH has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

‘This was to fulfill what had been  
spoken through the prophet Isaiah:  
He has borne our infirmities and  
carried our diseases’ (Matthew 8:17).

‘Christ died for our sins in  
accordance with the scriptures.’  
(1Corinthians 15:3)

‘He was handed over to death  
for our trespasses’ (Romans 4:25).

## Isaiah 53:7-9

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is  
silent, so he did not open his mouth.  
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.  
Who of his contemporaries  
gave this any thought? For he was cut off  
from the land of the living, stricken for the  
transgression of his people. They made his  
grave with the wicked and his tomb with the  
rich, although he had done no violence, and  
there was no deceit in his mouth.

This is the passage the  
Eunuch wanted explained in  
Acts 8:32-33.

‘I was like a gentle lamb led  
to the slaughter. And I did  
not know it was against me  
that they devised schemes ...  
to you I have committed my  
cause’ (Jeremiah 11:19-20)

1Peter 2:21-25

‘Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.’

## Isaiah 53:10-11

Yet it was the will of YHWH  
to crush him with pain.

He has laid down his life as a reparation offering;  
he will see his offspring; he will prolong his days;  
through him the will of YHWH shall prevail.  
From his anguish of soul he will see and be content.

Isaiah 53:11     {YHWH speaks}

*My righteous servant, shall make many righteous;  
he bears the burden of their iniquities.*

Jesus saw his mission in these terms:

‘The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.’ (Mark 10:45)

‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.’

(Mark 14:24).

‘The free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many ... through the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous (Romans 5:15,19).

## Isaiah 53:12

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

‘The God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus’ (Acts 3:13).

‘The scripture must be fulfilled: He was numbered among the transgressors.’ (Luke 22:37)

‘Jesus kept on praying: Father forgive them’ (Luke 23:34).

The connection between acceptance of suffering and exaltation is a connection that is made often in the New Testament when Jesus’ disciples speak of Jesus’ death and resurrection (Luke 24:25-26; Mark 9:12).