

Points in Contrast between the Suffering Servant and the Substitute King

1. The substitute king is exalted before his death; the suffering Servant is to be exalted in the future.
2. The substitute king is executed; the cause of the Servant's death is variable, but may be the result of the transgressions of the people or his own choice in "pouring out his soul." It is crucial to identify *how* the servant dies. Is he beaten to death? Does God crush him to death? Is it sacrificial (an *'ašam*)? Does he pour himself out to death? Is his death at the hands of the rebellious people who put him to death as an act of injustice? This lies in contrast to the substitute king who is summarily executed.
3. The substitute king is brought before Šamaš and made to bear the legal omens. The Servant suffers injustice or a travesty of justice; thus he suffers outside a human-made legal system.
4. The substitute king and queen die for the king's reprieve (*pīdu*); the Servant is cut off from the land of the living because of the people's rebellion (*pd'* is not used).
5. The substitute king bears the signs; the Servant bears our sicknesses and the iniquities of many. Walton sees this as netting the same thing because the term for sin can mean punishment, but why would it include sickness unless he believes that Isaiah is acceding to the generally held view of illness as divine punishment?
6. The substitute king is made to recite omen litanies before Šamaš; by contrast the Servant is silent.
7. Part of the substitute king's substitution is to rule as king. His execution would mean nothing without this. Part of the Servant's substitution is to grow up without good looks or majesty. Walton claims that this aspect of the Servant is prior to his substitutionary role and thus is parallel to the substitute king's previous lowly state. However, a closer reading of 53:2-5 suggest strongly that his humility and rejection are intimately tied to (and indeed are part of) his substitutionary sufferings (vv. 4-6).
8. The substitute king ritual is entirely magical; no magic is found in the Fourth Servant Song.
9. Substitution is very clear in the *šar puhi* texts; the primary conveyance for substitution in Isa. 53 is the *bet pretii* of 53:5: "*in exchange for his stripes, we are healed.*" However, the LXX renders this line as causal: "*by his stripes we are healed.*" The concept of transfer or "bearing" of sin is also a possible vehicle for substitution, especially if the word sin is rendered as "punishment." However, the vehicles for substitution seem to make it a loose metaphor rather than the prominent act of equivalence it seems in Mesopotamian texts.

10. Walton claims that the guilt offering appeased God's wrath, yet there is no real evidence for appeasement as part of atonement in the Old Testament, including the ritual texts. This includes the guilt offering laws. In addition, no mention of divine anger is used in the Fourth Servant Song. The use of omens in Mesopotamia were predicated on the belief that they contained the verdicts of gods. If the gods were angry with the king, they would bring about his downfall and/or destruction. An eclipse was deemed a certain forecaster of divine wrath against the king. By contrast, Yahweh, the Old Testament God, did not manifest displeasure in this way but rather through certain actions from time to time and warnings of prophets. And then what turns away Yahweh's anger is repentance and change of action, not sacrifice.

11. As a correction to Walton's statement—"it is inferred from the omens that it is Marduk's will to strike the substitute"—it is important to state that it is not Marduk's will to strike the substitute but to strike the king. The nation provides the substitute, anticipating that the gods will accept him instead of the real king. This is in contrast to the Fourth Servant Song where it states that "Yahweh was pleased to crush him." Yahweh obviously is in favor of substituting the Servant for the nation of Israel.

12. Is the Suffering Servant really a substitute *king* for the people? There is no intimation in the Fourth Servant Song that he rules over the people before his death. While royal imagery is applied to the Servant throughout the book of Isaiah (as duly noted by Walton, 741, 742), in that the Servant does kingly acts (Isa. 42:1, 6, 7; 49:5, 6; 61:1-3, 9-11, etc.), it nowhere speaks of the Servant as Israel's ruler nor does it speak of his reign. This is something stressed in the *šar puhi* texts. Nevertheless, a strong case could be made for the Servant as a royal figure if one considers that in Kirta, King Kirta is called, "Servant of El." In this case, "my servant Job" would have to be a royal figure. Yet other non-kings are called "my servant" such as Abraham (Gen. 26:24) and Isaiah (Isa. 20:3), and "servant of God" such as Daniel (Dan. 6:20). Thus we cannot assume that the Suffering Servant is king. This is not to reject this passage as messianic. The Anointed One did not rule, indeed will never rule, after the manner of earthly kings. Even if the Servant is a king, his kingship is not emphasized as the basis for his substitution. The basis for his substitution seems to be the "seed" who will be blessed by long days and the many who the Servant will make righteous.

Further Note:

Three words may be considered *Leitwörter* in the Fourth Servant Song: "many" (*rabbîm*), "to lift up" or "to bear" (*nāsā'*), and "to see" (*rā'â*). The Servant is lifted up and bears the sins of many. What we see of him leads to rejection; what he sees is those who will accept his death. These words seem to form the core of the text, yet there is another set of words—not identical to one another, but related—that form a central motif. The words are "have success/insight," (*sākal* 52:13), "to known" or "be known" (*śāpar* 52:15), to have understanding (*bîn* 52:15), "to reveal" (*gālâ* 53:1); "see light" (*rā'â 'ôr* 53:11 Q), "knowledge" (*da'at* 53:11). When put with auxiliary words such as the *Leitwort* "to see" and related words like "believe" (*'āman* 53:1), it seems clear that a central message is being conveyed regarding the Servant, who he really is, and what he really accomplishes.