

Christ in all of Scripture

The Healing Ministry of Christ

Isaiah 53:4-6

Read the Passage

*⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.*

*⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*



Gospel Preview in the Healing Ministry of Jesus

Isaiah had said of Christ, “By his stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5). There is a pattern to the healing miracles of Jesus in the Gospels. The evangelists are aware of the substitution of the Lord’s health for our maladies. So their accounts of Jesus’ healings gesture directly to the suffering of Jesus. The afflictions of God’s people relate to Christ’s suffering and the deliverance of God’s people relate to Christ’s glory.

One of the clearest illustrations of the exchange of the Lord’s health with the suffering of one of his followers is the account of the man called Legion (Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-39). The demonized man was possessed of many evil spirits, so he was named after the largest unit of Roman military (Mark 5:9). The demons that came forth from the man rushed into a large herd of 2000 swine (Mark 5:13). This anticipates the torment of Jesus when he was delivered over to the cohort (a tenth of a legion) of Pilate’s Pretorium guard, and the torture he was to endure from these hardened and demonized soldiers.

Legion’s madness drove him to dwell naked (Luke 8:27) among the tombs (Matt 8:28; Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27). He could not be bound with shackles or chains, but broke free (Mark 5:4; Luke 8:29). He cried out in torment, cutting himself with sharp stones (Mark 5:5). After Jesus delivered the man, he was found clothed, at rest (seated), and in his right mind (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). In all of this we can anticipate both the suffering and the glory of Jesus. The suffering of Jesus before the Roman cohort of Pilate becomes quite graphic. Jesus was stripped naked (Mark 15:16-17, 20), tortured by scourging (with sharp stones embedded in the whip; Mark 15:15) all of which implies the desperate cries of suffering like Legion, and condemned to the tombs with criminals (Mark 15:28). But the redemption of Legion foreshadows the glory of the Savior as well. In the end Jesus too proved unable to be bound (Matt 27:65). He was later seen clothed and in his right mind and in robust health (Luke 24:36-43).

With this pattern in mind, we are given an insight into how the Lord endures the shame and suffering of the cross. It was for the joy set before him of being with his people—all of us who have been delivered by his gospel of liberty (cf. Heb 12:2)! Along the way of suffering (Via Dolorosa), Jesus’ unique path of torments would have reminded him of the joy expressed by the multitudes of those he had delivered. He would have recalled the gratitude of the ones he had saved, and each memory would have fortified his resolve to finish the saving work his Father had sent him to accomplish. Jesus drank for us the cup of gall, all that we might drink the cup of remembrance with grateful hearts!

The following healing miracles that gesture toward the suffering of the Savior are taken from Luke, but similar mosaic patterns can be constructed from the other evangelists’ healing accounts. We begin with Gethsemane, and the beginning of the suffering of Jesus in the garden. We have called this pattern “mosaic,” because it is constituted of many pieces that create a composite picture when taken together.



Gethsemane

<p>Peter, James & John</p> <p>1. "Now Peter and those with him (James and John) had been overcome by sleep (at the Transfiguration)" (Luke 9:32).</p>	<p>Peter, James & John</p> <p>1. "And when he (Jesus) rose from prayer (in Gethsemane), he came to the disciples and found them sleeping" (Luke 22:45).</p>
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Nothing could show the Savior's compassion toward our own weaknesses of faith than Jesus' patient endurance of his disciples' faithlessness to watch and pray in his most desperate hour. Jesus knew that Peter's spirit was willing, but he also knew that his flesh was weak. He knew that Peter would deny him. But he responded not with a sense of resentment at Peter's betrayal, but with prayer that Peter would return to faithfulness and that out of his repentance he might strengthen the brethren (Luke 22: 31-34). What a Savior!

The Trial Before the High Priest

<p>Bartimus</p> <p>2. "What do you want me to do for you? And he (Bartimaeus) said, 'Lord, that I might see again.' And ...immediately he regained his sight" (Luke 18:41-43).</p>	<p>Jesus Blindfolded</p> <p>2. "Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him and beating him, and they blindfolded him" (Luke 22:63-64).</p>
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The heart of the gospel is substitution. Jesus takes our infirmities to himself and gives us in turn his strength and health. In his ministry Jesus heals many who were blind. But to restore sight to the blind, Jesus, the Light of the World, had to be blinded. His blindness was due to his being blindfolded while the priests were mocking him. But Jesus' blindness enables us to see.

<p>The Demoniac</p> <p>3. "And demons were coming out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Son of God!" (Luke 4:41).</p>	<p>The High Priest</p> <p>3. "And they (the council, elders, priests, and scribes) all said, "Are you the Son of God?" (Luke 22:70).</p>
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There is a striking juxtaposition in Luke's parallel between the demons and the priests. While the demons are fully aware of the divine Christ, the religious leaders of Israel are in a yet greater darkness!



The Leper	Testimony
4. "...And immediately the leprosy left him. And he commanded him to tell no one. 'But go and show yourself to the high priest, and make an offering for your cleansing to the high priest, for a testimony to them (Luke 5:13-14).	4. "And they (the priests) said, "What do we further need do we have of testimony ? For we have heard it (the blasphemy) ourselves from his mouth!" (Luke 22:71).

Jesus healed many lepers. Each of them had a duty under the law of Moses to present themselves to the high priest to make a sacrifice for cleansing. The high priest had taken testimony for three years of Jesus ministry from lepers he had cleansed. Clearly all that testimony was rejected out of a hardness of heart. But the rejection was willful and knowing. Amazingly, Nicodemus confessed that the religious leaders knew that Jesus had come from God. No one, they understood, could do the signs Jesus did unless he came from God (John 3:2).

The Trial Before Herod

The Dumb	Silence in Trial
5. "Now he was casting out a demon, and it was mute. And when the demon went out, the man who was mute spoke, and the crowds marveled (Luke 11:14).	5. "And he (Herod) questioned him with many words, but he (Jesus) answered him nothing (Luke 23:9).

Isaiah had prophesied that Christ, like a sheep before his shearers, would keep silence before his accusers (Isa 53:7). While Jesus answered the high priest and Pilate, he had no word at all for Herod (Luke 23:6-9).

The Way of the Cross

The Bent Woman	Carrying the Cross
6. "...there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity...she was bent over...he (Jesus) put his hand on her and she was straightened and glorified God" (Luke 13:11-13).	6. "...and leading him (Jesus) away they took Simon of Cyrene...and placed on him the cross to carry after Jesus" (Luke 23:26).

Jesus' compassion toward this poor woman was moved when he saw her bent over and called her to himself. He reached out his hand to heal her and she straightened up to glorify God. What a picture



she is of all of us overburdened by sin! Luke reports that the Romans ordered Simon to carry the cross of Jesus, implying that he stumbled at the weight of the cross (Luke 23:26). What a picture of the burden of our sin that caused the Son of God to stumble at its weight!

<p>Simon Peter</p> <p>7. "And (Simon) Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ of God'...He (Jesus) said, 'If anyone wants to come after me, let him...take up his cross...and follow me'" (Luke 9:20, 23).</p>	<p>Simon of Cyrene</p> <p>7. "And when they led him away, they took Simon...and placed the cross upon him to carry after Jesus" (Luke 23:26).</p>
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When Jesus stumbled at the weight of his cross, he would have heard the Romans command Simon of Cyrene to take up Jesus' cross and follow after him. So there was after all a Simon taking up the cross and following Jesus, but it was not Simon Peter (Luke 9:23). But Jesus loved Peter and prayed for him. In his repentance, Peter would prove to follow Jesus, even, according to tradition, to the death of a cross!

Golgotha

<p>Legion</p> <p>8. "He (Jesus) was met by a man (Legion) who wore no clothes...and who lived in the tombs...and was bound with chains and fetters" (Luke 8:27-30).</p>	<p>Torment by the Romans</p> <p>8. "They (the legionnaires) divided his clothes...he took him (Jesus) down and ...placed him in a tomb." (Luke 23:34, 53).</p>
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Jesus knew the shame of nakedness in his crucifixion when the soldiers took his clothing and divided it among themselves. In this shame he resembled the demonized man called Legion. But by suffering nakedness, Jesus was enabling all of our shame to be covered in his righteousness (Rom 13:14)! What a Savior!

<p>The Man with a Withered Arm</p> <p>9. "Now there was a man with a withered right hand...and he said, 'Stretch out your arm...and it was restored' (Luke 6:6-10).</p>	<p>"Stretch Out Your Arm!"</p> <p>9. "And they came to the Place of the Skull, and there they crucified him with two criminals, one on the right hand" (Luke 23:33).</p>
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Jesus commanded a man with a withered arm to stretch it out, enabling him to know complete healing. But in order to do so, Jesus himself would likewise hear a command to stretch out his arm to be given to the nail. For us to be healed, Jesus himself had to be disabled. How he loves us!



The Hemorrhagic Woman	Jesus' Blood Begins to Flow
10. "And a woman with a flow of blood...touched the fringe of his garment...and the flow of blood stopped" (Luke 8:43-44).	10. "And there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33).

Jesus healed a poor woman with the debilitating condition of a bleeding uterus. She had suffered much in her twelve years of affliction. But for her blood flow to be staunch, Jesus' blood had to flow. As the Savior suffered bleeding, he was enabled to heal his people. What a Savior!

The Quadriplegic	Jesus Nailed to the Cross
11. "Now some men brought a cot bearing a quadriplegic man...and Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'Arise, take up your cot...'" (Luke 5:18, 24).	11. "And there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33).

After Jesus was placed on the cross, both hands and feet fastened by nails, he was effectively rendered a quadriplegic. He suffered all this so that we might be free. How he loves us!

Zacchaeus	The Thief in a Tree
12. "Now Zacchaeus...climbed up into a sycamore tree...Jesus looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, ... today I must stay at your house'" (Luke 19:2, 4-5).	12. "and there they crucified him...and the other (thief)... said, 'Jesus, remember me,'...and he said, ' Today you will be with me in Paradise'" (Luke 23:33, 40, 42-43).

Jesus redeemed Zacchaeus, a thief, when he spoke comfort to him, perched in the sycamore tree, and declared his wish to participate in the hospitality of his home. Jesus likewise redeemed a thief crucified on the tree of a cross, and declared his promise that he would share his hospitality with him in paradise. The promise to both thieves, Zacchaeus and the thief crucified with Jesus, was that they would enjoy the gracious presence of Jesus '**Today**'!



The Demon Possessed

13. "There was a man with a demon spirit...he cried out with a **great voice**... 'You (Jesus) are the Holy One of God,'...and it (the **spirit**) **came out**" (Luke 4:33-35).

Torment by the Romans

13. "And crying out with a **great voice**, Jesus said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,' and saying this he **expired** (spirit came out)...the centurion said, 'This one was righteous.'" (Luke 23:46-47)

One of Jesus' earliest miracles was the deliverance of a man from demonic oppression. The demon cried out with a loud voice and then came forth from the body of the man. The man was relieved of the demon only because Jesus himself was to suffer the judgment of death, for when he breathed his last, his spirit too came forth from his body. Remarkably, both accounts report a confession about Jesus' divine person. The demon acknowledged that Jesus is the Holy One of God, while the centurion likewise confessed that Jesus was certainly a righteous (innocent) man. In Matthew and Mark, the centurion further confesses his conviction that Jesus is the Son of God! (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39).

The Widow's Son

14. "Now as he (Jesus) approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only begotten of his mother, and she was a widow and he said, 'Young man, I say to you, Arise!'...and the dead man sat up and began to speak...and he gave him back to his mother" (Luke 7:12, 14-15).

Jesus Given Back to His Mother

14. "To these he presented himself alive, after his suffering, by many convincing proofs...speaking of the...kingdom of God. And gathering them together...these all with one mind were devoting themselves to prayer...and Mary the mother of Jesus was there (Acts 1:3-4, 14).

The tenderness of Jesus is expressed in this kindness toward a woman bereft of her unique son (Gk "only begotten," cf. John 3:16). The resurrection power of Jesus is so remarkable that it almost overshadows the subtheme of the grace of Jesus to this mother, "...and he (Jesus) gave him (the boy) back to his mother" (Luke 7:15). The Gospel of Luke uniquely reports the perspective of Mary, who pondered all the mystery of her unique son in her heart, a heart Simeon foresaw would be pierced through with a sword of suffering (Luke 2:35). Her suffering was especially felt in her sorrow when Jesus was feared lost in Jerusalem (Luke 2:48). The emotions at play when Jesus was feared lost and the suddenly found in the temple on the third day rehearsed the very cycle of suffering and then glory Mary would know in the day of Jesus' death and the third day when he was delivered from death and so "restored" to her. The account of Jesus in Nain restoring a son to his mother through resurrection foretells the restoration of Jesus to his own mother after his own resurrection (cf. Acts 1:14).

