

Second Isaiah Arm of God

Interpreting the Text:

1. Modern people are often troubled by the violence in the Bible. What do you make of the claim about the Servant that “it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain” (53:10)? Why was the Servant’s violent death necessary?
2. Isaiah 54:9-10 compares the exiles’ emerging from Babylonian captivity to Noah’s emerging from the great flood of Genesis 6–9. Do you see the similarities? What is the point of this comparison? How does it give the author credibility?
3. Much of Second Isaiah is referenced in the Christian tradition as a prophecy of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. How do you read these chapters now understanding the notion of recurring prophecy fulfillment? How do you now understand the New Testament interpretations of these texts?

Applying the Text:

1. As you encounter the Servant through this text, does he become a “significant other” for you? If so, how does his person and work question, bend, and transform you? Does he cause you to see yourself or your world differently? What has changed?
2. Second Isaiah has a communal vision of salvation rather than an individualistic one. What are the inspiring and/or challenging dimensions of spreading out the role of servant to form a new human community on earth?
3. According to Isaiah 57:15, God—“the high and lofty one”—dwells most intimately with “those who are contrite and humble in spirit.” Does the humble suffering of the Servant bring God near? Witnessing his sacrifice, do we experience intimacy with God?