

GLEANINGS — April 19, A.D. 2015  
The Suffering Servant

That is a dominant feature of the portrait of the Messiah painted in holy writ. What we call the 53rd chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah depicts Him with strikingly mournful words. We see Him in the Psalms, surrounded by His enemies, the rejected Cornerstone that is really precious, the once for all Sacrifice bound to the altar. When we hear and read these and other Old Testament passages, then move on to the eyewitness accounts of Gethsemane and Calvary found in the Gospels, there is a seamless transition.

Indeed, the same Spirit Who gave to the prophets sure foresight of what was to come also gave to those eyewitnesses the capacity to flawless record what was accomplished when Jesus the Redeemer, the Man of sorrows, suffered on behalf of His people...the sheep of His pasture.

To suffering we also have been called, "...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (cf. 1 Peter 2:21). When we do suffer, let us respond as the apostles did when they were beaten and commanded not speak in the name of Jesus (Acts 5:40,41) by the Sanhedrin. Through Luke, the Holy Spirit tells us that "...they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

A very low degree of suffering was recently endured by this writer when – "out of the blue" – he was accused of being brainwashed...and more. The accuser, who used quite a bit of angry, bitter, and belittling language, was a stranger to whom I had born witness. Imitating God, I take this opportunity to seek to bring good out of evil.

Let's think Biblically about that accusation: "You are BRAINWASHED!" In common speech, to be brainwashed is to be one who has checked his mind at the door...one who has become a zombie-like adherent of some pervasive idea, or mesmerized by an authority figure who does all the thinking for his followers. In my accuser's mind, being a Bible believer means exactly that.

Why not redeem that word brainwashed, give it a Biblical meaning, then rejoice and be glad!? When Jesus wrapped Himself with a towel and began to wash His disciples' feet (John 13), Simon Peter objected. "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Peter could not imagine that the One he had confessed to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" would stoop so low! Would the Man Who had bid Peter to join Him in standing upon raging waves of water now defile Himself with a little dirty water in a basin?

But the One Who came to serve (though He is worthy of being served by all) said to Peter, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." When Peter countered with, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Then Peter wisely said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my HEAD!"

Now the brain is part of the head. In fact except in the case of dolls, mannekins, and perhaps the proverbial decapitated chicken who still runs about, it is the most important part of the head! Furthermore, it is from that inward part of man, namely his imagination, that all kinds of evil emerges. It was that inward filth, according to Genesis 6:5, that moved God to give the entire Earth a very thorough washing with water in Noah's time!

Thank God that the blood of Jesus washes not only our feet, hands, and the outward parts of our heads, but our entire beings! Praise God for His precious words, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3).

Believers are indeed BRAINWASHED in this Biblical way. We are already counted as cleansed by the blood of Jesus, are being cleansed as we grow in grace and knowledge of Him in this life, and have dazzling purity of our whole beings as our glorious destiny! Thank you, Lord, for delivering us from dirty minds!