

# The Servant Songs of Isaiah

## Norm Webb Jr.

**Text:** “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” (Acts 8:28)

### Introduction

#### I. Reading History – Back to the Future

A. Like a dot on the landscape coming down from the jewel on the mountain, the Ethiopian rider sits fixed on one of the greatest texts of the Old Testament (Isaiah 53:7-8). He is reading prophecy that has become history, but he doesn’t yet know that.

1. Of Isaiah, Jerome (342-420) writes, “...he should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the Church so clearly that you would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying about what is to come.”<sup>1</sup>
2. The chariot rider has been to Jerusalem to worship and is now returning home. He has brought with him the scrolls of Isaiah and he is determined to understand what has been written (Acts 8:31). The tragedy of the scene is that the scholars of Jerusalem could give him no more insight to the individual of the text than what he had before he got there.
3. Christopher Wright explains the confusion about the Messiah’s identity and role.
  - a. “By the time of Jesus the strongest strand of expectation, widely evident in these writings (*intertestamental literature, N.W.*), was a looking forward with desperate hope to the restoration of Israel. God would intervene in world affairs to vindicate his people, liberate them from their oppressors and restore them to their rightful place as his redeemed people. They used the language of exile to describe their current situation...So the hopes of restoration...were reapplied to the hope of ultimate freedom from their enemies. This hope was sometimes based on God’s direct action; sometimes linked with the arrival of the messiah – though that was not a clear or unanimously defined figure...”<sup>2</sup>
  - b. The suffering, silent, humiliated, murdered figure of the chariot rider’s reading does not fit the hope of Israel.
4. The irony of the scene is that the hope of Israel had come. Prophecy was now history and the history that now reached into eternity was about to be declared to this lonely chariot rider.

#### B. The Servant Songs

1. The distinction or isolation of the Servant Songs of Isaiah (42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12) is most often accredited to Bernhard Duhm (1892). Duhm also strongly proposed a Deutero-Isaiah (second writer of the book) and is often given credit for popularizing the divisions of the book.
2. “The question of the servant in Isaiah 53, while itself a focused question that has received different answers throughout history, is not unrelated to the interpretation of the four so-called suffering servant songs as a whole, which in turn is related to the theme of the servant within the larger literary context of Isaiah. Concerning the latter point, ever since Bernhard Duhm (1892) isolated the four poems as distinct and discreet

units, it has often been assumed (at least among biblical scholars) that the identity of the servant is related to the same theme in the other poems.”<sup>3</sup>

3. Nevertheless, it is not hard to see that the Servant’s identity in these poems is very different than the other servants so specifically identified. His character, his approach, his mission, his holiness, his paradoxical nature of humiliation and glorification, and his enigmatic identity draws special attention to him that the other servants, even Israel, fail to draw.
4. Brief Description of Each Song
  - a. In chapter 42, the servant is pictured as God’s elect, whom He upholds and takes great delight in. It depicts Him with a successful mission to bring justice, light and liberty to the Gentiles.
  - b. The mood begins to darken in chapter 49, as the Servant whom God has chosen to be a redemption and covenant to Israel and a light to the Gentiles is despised and abhorred by all. Nevertheless, again, His mission will be a success as people shall leave their prisons of darkness and come to God from all directions to be comforted by Him.
  - c. We observe God’s obedient Servant unjustly beaten and humiliated in chapter fifty. However, Jehovah God will vindicate His Servant and exalt Him so that the voice of the Servant is to be obeyed by the people.
  - d. Chapter 52:13-53:12 is Isaiah’s most detailed picture of the Servant’s suffering and the reason for that suffering. While the Servant will be exalted, He will also suffer death for the atonement of God’s people. Ultimately, however, His days will not be captive to death, but be prolonged and He will be given a reward for His sacrifice.
  - e. “Read in order the songs portray the fate of the servant as a progression from quiet and humble confidence about a successful mission (42:2-4) to one whose effectiveness as a “sharpened sword” or “polished arrow” of the Lord is hidden in an apparent lack of success. Isaiah 49:7 even speaks of one who was “despised and abhorred by a nation,” yet “kings will see and arise, princes will see and bow down. In 50:4-9, the servant suffers personal rejection and physical abuse. In the fourth song (52:13 – 53:12) the servant is more than despised and rejected, he is cut off from the land of the living and assigned a grave with the wicked.”<sup>4</sup>

C. So who is this figure – The Servant?

1. The term “servant” (*‘ebed*) isn’t exclusively used for any particular sort of person in the Old Testament. It simply means a servant and may be applied to one who is bought, hired or appointed, as is often the case with those whom God chooses (consider Ex. 14:31; 2 Kings 21:10), to serve. It carries the mark of humility and courtesy.<sup>5</sup>
2. In Isaiah, “servant” is used to mark a number of different people.
  - a. God speaks of Isaiah as his servant (20:3).
  - b. God calls Eliakim a servant when He uses him to replace Shebna as the steward of the royal household (22:20).
  - c. Like many occasions through the Old Testament, David is referenced as God’s servant (37:35).

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- d. Although, never referred to as a servant, God speaks of Cyrus as His anointed, indicating his role as a servant of God for releasing Israel from captivity (45:1).
  - e. Most often Israel, sometimes referred to as Jacob, son of Abraham, or Jeshurun is designated as God's servant, which undoubtedly is a reference to the nation either as a whole or a remnant (41:8-9; 44:8; 44:1-2; 44:21; 45:4). We see the same designation in other prophetic books (Jer. 30:10; 46:27;
  - f. After chapter 53, *'ebed* takes the plural and begins to refer to God's faithful servants in general. This is not just the faithful remnant of Israel (63:17), but foreigners as well who join themselves to the Lord, love His name, refrain from profaning the Sabbath and hold fast to His covenant (56:6). These will be cared for by the Lord, will sing praises to His name and will be called by another name (65:8-16).
3. Unfortunately, Isaiah doesn't always specify who he is referring to when he speaks of God's servant. Sometimes we are left to wonder and consider whether he speaks of the nation of Israel as a whole, a faithful remnant of the nation, or the individual that came to be understood as the Messiah. (It should be noted that the Hebrew word for Messiah (*mashiyach*) simply means "anointed." It only appears once in Isaiah in reference to Cyrus (45:1) who God selected to subdue nations)
    - a. In Isaiah 42:1-4, God will speak of a servant whom He upholds and delights and in the same chapter, only fourteen verses later, he refers to a servant who is blind and deaf to His instruction and deserves punishment.
    - b. Then in the same section of chapters we discover a servant bearing the punishment due to others for atonement purposes (53:4-6).
    - c. Even within a four verse section God will call the servant Israel and without a word of explanation differentiate the servant from Israel (49:3,5,6).
  4. So, who is this Servant, what is he like, what is his mission and what does it all mean to us?

#### D. Purpose

1. Consider some viewpoints of the identity of the Servant.
2. Consider some early Jewish Interpretations of the Servant
3. Examine the four Servant Songs individually
  - a. Deduce the meaning of the texts in regard to the Servant's identity, character and mission.
  - b. Consider how the texts are used in the New Testament.
  - c. Apply the Servant's relationship to us.

#### Body:

##### I. The Identity of the Servant

###### A. Various Viewpoints

1. Through out history there have been numerous identifications given to the servant in Isaiah's Servant Songs. Most of the early Midrashic interpretations of the Jewish Rabbis point to a Royal individual who will deliver Israel from her oppressors.

2. During the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, Rabbi Solomon Yizchaki, commonly known as Rashi, popularized the view that the Servant was corporate Israel. This view continues to gain popularity today.
3. Some Jewish interpreters have proposed two Servants – one who suffers, possibly Jesus, and one who rules victoriously, who is yet to come.
4. Others might suggest the Servant to be a remnant of Israel.
5. And of course, the New Testament scriptures tell us that the nameless Servant of Isaiah is wholly wrapped up in Jesus.
6. In this section I will attempt to examine a few of these viewpoints and their strengths and weaknesses.

B. Is the Servant the nation of Israel or possibly a remnant of Israel?

1. Although the Ethiopian treasurer in Acts 8:32-35 apparently considered it self-evident that Isaiah 53 refers to an individual, many modern interpreters hold that the figure identified as “My Servant” in Isaiah 42:1, 49:6, 52:13 and 53:11 bears a collective reference to the nation of Israel as a whole, an ideal Israel, or to a faithful remnant of Israel
2. In support of this it may be noted that the singular terms “my servant,” “his servant,” and “servant” appear twenty-five times in the book of Isaiah. In twelve of these the intended reference appears to be Israel (consider 41:8 for example).
  - a. Furthermore, in the servant songs there are several other descriptions or designations for the servant which are also used quite explicitly of Israel elsewhere in Isaiah.
  - b. In the first Servant song, compare 42:1, “My Servant whom I uphold” with 41:10, where God promises to uphold Israel with His righteous right hand.
  - c. Also in 42:1, “my chosen” is a designation that is used of all Israel in 43:20, 45:4 (consider 1 Chr. 16:13; Ps. 105:6, 43).
  - d. The expression “called me from the womb” found in 49:1 in reference to the Servant finds a parallel in “formed you in the womb,” which is addressed to Israel in 44:2,24.
  - e. Also in 49:1 compare, “he named me” with God’s address to Israel, “I have called you by My name” (43:1).
  - f. In Isaiah 53, the culmination of the Servant songs, the Servant suffers, dies and apparently lives (53:10f). It is notable that the sufferings of Israel are similarly depicted in Ezekiel 37 as skeletal remains of Israel arise and receive flesh and breath.
  - g. Moreover, it is possible that Israel’s “death” was thought to have benefited the nations by virtue of the witness of faithful exilic Israelites such as Daniel, Esther and Mordecai (Esther 8:17).
    - (1) This depicts a vicarious suffering, though not atonal in nature, but simply suggests those who suffer the consequences of the offenses of others (see Lamentations 5:7)
    - (2) Many Jewish scholars state that the nations are speaking in Isaiah 53 and therefore translate verse 5 as, “He was wounded because of our

transgressions and bruised because of our iniquities.” It is a legitimate translation, but contextually doubtful. J. A. Alexander of Princeton Seminary, considered by many to be one of the world's outstanding linguists, rendered the latter part of 53:8 this way: "For the transgression of My people, (as) a curse for them"<sup>6</sup>

3. Although this view of the Servant being corporate Israel seems attractive, it has some serious flaws.
  - a. First the Servant suffers or dies “though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth” (53:9), neither was He rebellious (50:5). Isaiah, however, repeatedly stresses that his contemporary Israel was a sinful people who suffer on account of their own transgressions (40:2; 42:18-25; 43:22-28; 47:7; 48:18; 59:2). This point is made as well for the remnant (46:3,12; 48:1,8).
  - b. While outside the servant songs the “servant” figure clearly refers to corporate Israel, the songs themselves are distinguished precisely by the fact that within each of them the “servant” appears to be an individual.
    - (1) This is especially seen in chapter 49, where the Servant of the Lord is called “Israel” in verse 3, but in verses 5 and 6 he is distinguished from Jacob and another “Israel.”
    - (2) Considering that the term Israel is often applied to the patriarch and to the nation that he fathered, there can be no legitimate objection to Isaiah’s dual usage.
    - (3) There are other places where the Servant is distinguished from the people. Consider the play on words on 42:3-4 between the bruised reed and the Servant who does not become discouraged. As well in 42:6 and 49:8, the Servant is promised that he will be made a “covenant for the people.” How can the nation of Israel be her own covenant?
  - c. The third and final objection to an identification of the Servant in the songs with corporate Israel is the observation that throughout Isaiah whenever the pronouns ‘we,’ ‘our,’ or ‘us’ are introduced abruptly, as in 53:1ff. (that is, without an explicit identification of the speakers, as in 2:3; 3:6; 4:1; etc.), it is always the prophet speaking on behalf of the people of Israel with whom he identifies (1:9f.; 16:6; 24:26; 33:2, 20; 42:24; 59:9-12; 63:15-19; 64:3-11; etc.). Accordingly, if the ‘we’ or ‘us’ in 53:1ff. is the prophet speaking on behalf of Israel, then the ‘he’ or ‘him’ of these same verses cannot also be a reference to Israel.<sup>7</sup>
  - d. Consider also the analogy in 53:6, “All we like sheep have gone astray,” to the number of parallels between Israel and sheep who have gone astray (Ps. 95:7-10; 119:176; Jer. 50:6; cf. Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Zech. 10:2).
  - e. McGuiggan and Hugenberger offer this thought, “By allowing him to share the servant designation of corporate Israel, however, and in one verse even the name ‘Israel’ (49:3), the prophet may be suggesting that this one is everything Israel should have been, as he faithfully fulfils the role to which Israel had been called.”<sup>8</sup>
4. The greatest evidence against the Servant being corporate Israel is how perfectly Jesus fits the description and how Israel doesn’t even come close. More on this later.

#### C. Is the Servant Isaiah?

1. This is proposed by the Ethiopian treasurer, “Does the prophet say this about himself or someone else” (Acts 8:34)?
2. Support for this at first seems reasonable:
  - a. Isaiah is identified as “my servant” by the Lord (20:3; 44:26)
  - b. First person references in the second and third Servant songs (49:1).
  - c. The themes of rejection and suffering (50:6-9; 53:3-12) fit the fate of a prophet in Israel (Isaiah 6:10).
  - d. Ezekiel was given the task of bearing Israel’s iniquity for 390 days by laying on one side (compare Is. 53:4ff and Ezekiel 4:4-6).
  - e. A prophet’s tasks included making intercession (Isaiah 53:12 and 1 Sam. 12:23, Jer. 7:16); he was endowed with the Spirit (Isaiah 42:1 and Neh. 9:30); he had the work of proclaiming the Law (Isaiah 42:2, 49:2, 50:4,10).
3. As mentioned above, these arguments seem reasonable, but if the Servant is the Messiah, then He will fill the roles of prophet, priest and king. It is natural that He should have these characteristics.
  - a. In addition, while first person references appear in the second and third Servant songs, it leaves unexplained the use of third person references in the first and fourth poems.
  - b. The same problem as B3c above.
  - c. How can a prophet bring forth and establish justice in the earth (Is. 42:1,3)?
  - d. The experiences of Isaiah or any prophet do not coincide with the exaltation of the Servant in 52:13 and his impact on many nations and kings in 53:12.<sup>9</sup>
4. It seems needless to say that the Servant of these songs cannot be Isaiah or any of the other prophets of his time.

## II. Early Jewish Interpretations of the Servant

- A. “There is a very definite contrast between the beliefs and opinions that the rabbis held about the Messiah in the time period of 450 B.C.E.-400 C.E. and between the opinions that the modern rabbis hold about the Messiah.”<sup>10</sup>
- B. During the time that the ancient rabbis were writing the Talmud, most of the rabbis believed that the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah was referring to the Messiah.<sup>11</sup>
- C. The Babylonian Talmud in Sanhedrin 98b states that the Messiah was the leprous one that bore our sicknesses. Actually the Babylonian Talmud is the oldest and “earliest indisputable, firsthand evidence of a rabbinic interpretation of Isaiah 53 which takes the servant as the Messiah, and attributes suffering to him.” A date of about 200 C.E. for the tradition of this Talmud is suggested by the formula used to introduce this section.<sup>12</sup>
- D. The Yalkut, which was a later midrash, said that the King Messiah is identified with the exalted Servant in Is. 52:13 (in ii. 571), and it also linked (in ii. 620) the chastisements of the Messiah with he who “was wounded for our transgressions.”<sup>13</sup>
- E. There is an interesting quotation from the liturgy for Yom Kippur (i.e., The Day of Atonement) which makes a clear connection between the Messiah and the one who carried the Jewish people’s iniquities and transgressions. This liturgy also states that this Messiah

was wounded because of their transgressions. According to some sources the author of this liturgy was Eleazer ben Kalir (9<sup>th</sup> century C.E.).<sup>14</sup>

- F. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (also known as Rambam or Maimonides) (1135-1204) made a clear connection between the Messiah and Is. 52:15 and in 53:2.<sup>15</sup>
- G. In 1350 C.E., Rabbi Moshe Kohen Ibn Crispin of Cordova and Toledo in Spain strongly disagreed with Rashi's view and he made it very clear through his writing that the interpretation that the Servant is the Messiah is the natural sense and meaning of this chapter. He acknowledged that this interpretation was in harmony with the teaching of the Rabbis. He believed that the interpretation of those who connect "the Servant of the LORD" with the nation of Israel was "... forced and far-fetched ...". If you read further in this rabbi's writing he did not believe though that the passage referred to God. He was aware of the Christian interpretation that this passage refers to Jesus the God-Man and he couldn't understand how God could suffer and die.<sup>16</sup>
- H. As mentioned before, Rashi, during the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, popularized the view of the Servant being Israel very likely in response to Christians using Isaiah 53 as an apologetic for Jesus as the Christ. The above references to early Jewish interpretations of the Servant songs, especially Isaiah 53, demonstrate that the earliest views were that the Servant was an individual, the Messiah to come, although none of these believe He was Jesus.<sup>17</sup>

### III. The Servant Songs

#### A. Isaiah 42:1-9: Jehovah's Ideal Servant, the Answer to the World's Plight

##### 1. Context

- a. "Present your case," says the Lord in 41:21. It was a challenge, a contest, a call to court. The heathen nations, and even Israel, had put their confidence and hope in false, idol-gods. Now God is calling on the people to prove their power.
- b. His challenge is a simple one, declare the future and make it so (41:22,23). Any so-called god can claim to control history. God calls upon the idols and their followers to declare the future and make it happen.
- c. Jehovah had already done this earlier in the chapter. He spoke of one to come who would rise up from the east and rule over kings (41:2, a reference to Cyrus).
- d. The key word that connects chapters 41 and 42 is "behold," meaning to take note of, look, observe. What does God want them to observe? The difference between the false gods (41:24) and their followers (41:29) and His Servant. They are nothing and their works are nothing.
- e. Motyer points out that the exposure of the idol-gods impotence leaves the world hopeless: "In the course of exposing the hollowness of the idol-gods, the plight of their devotees becomes apparent (41:24,28-29), and a second question arises (the first was, "who is in control of the future"). If the Lord is the only God and Sovereign in world history has he no care for Gentile humanity in its desperate need?"<sup>18</sup>

##### 2. "Behold, My Servant"

- a. The answer comes in 42:1, "Behold my Servant...He will bring fourth justice to the nations...a light to the Gentiles."
- b. The announcement of this Servant is "like a sudden blast of the trumpets or the roll of drums in an orchestral work. We immediately sense that a climax has

been reached, or that a significant change in tempo or direction of the work is about to take place and this is certainly what happens here.”<sup>19</sup>

- c. Notice that God upholds, elects, delights and empowers a servant.
  - d. While terms like ambassador, representative or even prophet would have been fitting, God chooses the term servant to bring justice to the nations.
  - e. The Jews unbelief, even until now, rests in the unwillingness to believe that their Messiah should be a servant. They picture a servant like Nebuchadnezzar or Cyrus, who comes with power to serve the Jews agenda and execute their justice upon the nations. Most likely they picture David, who was a man after God’s own heart, but served the people to himself.
  - f. This is not the manner of servants pictured in this song or the other three.
3. The Character and Approach of the Servant
- a. When kings brought their justice into the streets it was with powerful armies bearing the sword of might, intimidation and violence.
  - b. That is not the sort of Servant pictured here. His voice is not one of intimidation or self-advertisement. His voice is only audible to the listener who comes near with the ears to hear.
  - c. He is the quintessential servant who offers quintessential service.
  - d. This is demonstrated by his treatment of the weak. A bruised reed does not hold up under pressure and therefore is considered worthless and tossed aside. The smoldering or dimming wick is an irritant producing lots of smoke and little light, therefore it is snuffed out. These represent those who do not serve a purpose to the proud and mighty, but the Servant finds them useful.
  - e. Isaiah chooses a beautiful play on words to describe the resilience of the Servant and His faithfulness to God’s mission.
    - (1) He will be subject to the same pressures that have made others smolder or burn low (*keheh*), but he will not fail or faint (*kahah*). Likewise the people (heathen or Israel) are bruised (*ratsats*), but he does not bruise or become discouraged (*ratsats*).<sup>20</sup>
    - (2) He becomes a servant in whom they may take refuge and put their confidence in.
4. The Mission of the Servant: Bring Forth Justice
- a. Motyer tells us that this poem consists of three four line stanzas.<sup>21</sup>
  - b. In each stanza the mission of the Servant is stated: to bring forth and establish justice (*mishpat*).
  - c. Strong’s defines as a verdict (favorable or unfavorable), especially a sentence or formal decree (human or divine law)
  - d. Barry Webb warns that the word *mishpat* is a “rather bigger thing than we normally think of justice.”
  - e. It is used in varying ways – see 40:14,27; 41:1
  - f. Again, Motyer suggests three key meanings for *mishpat*.



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- (1) One reaches back to the trial of chapter 41 between the Lord and the idols. The Servant carries the message to the world that by the fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecy the verdict is given: There is only one God!
  - (2) *Mishpat* also summarizes the things which the Lord has authoritatively settled. The parallelism of 42:4, between justice and law, brings this out. The Servant will reveal God's truth and its requirements.
  - (3) The third meaning, although, maybe not as definitive here, is the righting of wrongs as depicted in Ps. 98:9, "He will judge the world with righteousness and the people with equity."
  - (4) The second meaning seems most dominant here. Unlike the law given at Sinai, meant only for Israel, the truth of the Lord will reach to the furthest islands of the earth (42:4). It will be a law that brings justice, hope and redemption to the Gentiles. But for this law they must wait until the Servant comes (Deut. 18:15).
5. The Confirmation of the Task
- a. God's reference to Himself as Creator serves three purposes.
    - (1) To recall the impotence of the idol-gods of chapter 41 and the powerlessness of the people.
    - (2) To declare to the world that He has not forgotten it. God continues to maintain the earth and its inhabitants, but not only physically. The introduction of His Servant indicates His concern and willingness to rescue the earth's inhabitants from the demise of sin.
    - (3) This power that God has used to create, stretch, spread and give to the world will now also be given to His Servant to fulfill His mission.
  - b. The servant will be a covenant to the people
    - (1) Hailey strongly suggests that the term people refers to Israel, since that is how it is most often used and it is not intended to be parallel with "Gentiles." However, the same word is used in verse 5, concerning the breath that God gives to all humanity.
    - (2) He will embody the covenant (which involves the justice and law of verse 4) to the people: consider Luke 22:20; Eph. 2:11-21; Hebrews 8:8-13; 9:25; 12:24.
  - c. He will be a light to the Gentiles
    - (1) It is through the Servant that God's purposes for the world will be realized by the opening of blind eyes, the freeing of captives, and the release of those who sit in darkness.
    - (2) He will bring out those held in spiritual bondage, delivering them from the power of idolatry; and He will set free those imprisoned in moral darkness (John 8:31-36; Gal. 4:8).
  - d. The Lord concludes the message about the Servant by putting His name on it. The thought causes us again to reflect back to the chapter 41 and impotence of the idol-gods to declare and control the future. The God that is able to do this will send His servant to save the world.
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6. Jesus in Isaiah 42
    - a. No one fits this passage better than Jesus. He is the quintessential servant
      - (1) He talked like a servant (Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:24-27)
      - (2) He walked like a servant (John 13)
      - (3) He obeyed like a servant (John 5:19,30; 8:28; Heb. 5:8)
      - (4) He was attested to as a servant (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27)
      - (5) He died like a servant (Phil. 2:5-8)
    - b. Jesus reception of the Spirit (Luke 3:22; John 1:32-34; 3:34; Acts 10:38)
    - c. Isaiah 42:1-4 is quoted in Matthew 12:18-21 after Matthew tells us that He healed all who followed Him and required that they tell no one. This is in keeping with the gentleness described in handling bruised reeds and low burning wicks. His command to tell no one fulfills the voice that does not cry out with self-advertisement in the streets.
    - d. Jesus' invitation to weary and heavy-laden fulfills the promise of His treatment of bruised reeds (Matt. 11:28-29).
  - B. Isaiah 49:1-13: The Servant's Mission to the World and to Israel
    1. Unlike Is. 42, this chapter begins autobiographical, with words uncommon for a prophet to apply to himself (see Is. 6:5).
    2. The servant turns His attention immediately to the world, not to Israel, although they will not be spurned (Romans 1:16).
    3. The calling from His mother's womb causes a reflection upon two things.
      - a. He will come forth from the remnant of Israel, just as God promised (Gen. 12:3; Mic. 4:10; 5:2-3; Is. 66:7-8; Rev. 12:1-5; ).
      - b. He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4) and His name was announced before His birth (Matt. 2:6).
    4. This Servant is equipped to do the will of God.
      - a. He is pictured more as a prophet here than a king (Jer. 1:5). The word of God, like a sword proceeds from His mouth (Heb. 4:12) and He is a polished arrow. These terms indicate that God will either pierce to the heart His enemies with His word or bring them under His judgment. God will reveal His Servant at the proper time.
      - b. We are now introduced to the Servant (v. 3) and His name is Israel.
        - (1) We have already noticed that this is not the nation, but it may need to be restated that there is no problem referring to an individual as Israel, since that was the name of an individual before it became a nation. With this identification, God does two things.
        - (2) One, He depicts what Israel was supposed to be and supposed to do – Be His representative to the nations in holiness.
        - (3) Second, the name brings us full circle to realize the secrets of what God has been doing since the time of Jacob.
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- (4) In this Servant and His work, God will be glorified (Eph. 3:11, 21)
5. The Servant's Despondency and Strength
    - a. The Servant expresses disappointment with the results of His work.
    - b. These words call up such passages as Ps. 22:11-21 and John 1:11, where we read that He came to His own, but they did not receive Him.
    - c. However, the Servant may trust in God to bring about His reward for His labor.
  6. The Servant's Mission
    - a. To just bring back Israel is insufficient and it seems a waste of the Servant's efforts.
    - b. He will be a the salvation to all the world (John 3:16)
  7. The World's Response to the Servant
    - a. The response is paradoxical. In one sense He is despised and abhorred. He is nothing like the world would expect from the Creator.
    - b. At the same time, He will be given honor and worship.
    - c. People shall come from afar, out of the prisons of sin to eat at His table.
    - d. The Lord will be praised for the mercy and comfort He has brought to His people.

### Conclusion:

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### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Wright, p. 138-139

<sup>3</sup> Bartlett, p. 1-2

<sup>4</sup> Bartlett, p. 2

<sup>5</sup> Vine's, under "servant," *'ebed*

<sup>6</sup> Alexander, p. 299

<sup>7</sup> Delitzsch, II p. 310

<sup>8</sup> Hugenberger, p. 7; also see McGuiggan, p. 42-45

<sup>9</sup> Much of I B & C were drawn from G. P. Hugenberger

<sup>10</sup> Brewer, p. 2

<sup>11</sup> The Mishnah is a compilation of the rabbinical oral laws and traditions and was written down by C.E. 200. The Gemara is a compilation of commentaries on the Mishnah written down by the rabbis and was written down by C.E. 500. Together the Mishnah and Gemara form the Talmud. The Talmud is a multi-volume set of books of Jewish customs and observances and is considered to be authoritative by Jewish people. Brewer, p. 2

<sup>12</sup> Page, pgs. 491-492

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pgs 9-10

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pgs. 399

<sup>15</sup> Driver, *Isaiah* pgs. 374-375

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 99-100

<sup>17</sup> Frutchenbaum, p. 33

<sup>18</sup> Motyer, p. 315

<sup>19</sup> Webb, p. 170

<sup>20</sup> Motyer, p. 320

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 319

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