

4-1-1958

A Study of Isaiah's Use of the Term Servant

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A STUDY OF ISAIAH'S USE OF THE TERM SERVANT

by

Lowell Williamson

A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty Of The

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of The Requirements For The Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

Portland 22, Oregon

April, 1958

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

A. THE PROBLEM

In the eighteenth century, when the unity of the prophecy of Isaiah began to be questioned, a new wave of critical studies ensued. Among these were many views expressed concerning what was called Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40-66). The dating of this section of Isaiah greatly affected the interpretation of the prophecies, especially those connected with the exile and all future events. As the early fervor to present workable theories of interpretation for these prophecies developed, it was evident that there was more unity to the writings of this section than had previously been held.

At the heart of Deutero-Isaiah and reaching to the highest peak of all prophecy, are the passages concerning the servant of the Lord. Up to the eighteenth century these had been held without question as Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Since the eighteenth century modern liberal scholarship has joined Jewish scholarship in re-interpreting the meaning of the term servant as Isaiah used it. The problem of this study is to determine how Isaiah used the term servant and to whom the term servant refers. Involved in this major problem is the further problem of determining the prophet's meaning where there is an apparent difference in his use of the term servant.

The problem is found principally in what is known as the "Servant Songs." There are four distinct passages in Isaiah where the term

servant appears to bear a different connotation from its use elsewhere in Isaiah. Basic to the problem is the relationship of these four servant songs to the rest of Deutero-Isaiah. Whether these four servant songs are an integral part of Deutero-Isaiah or stand apart from the context as a separate unit will partly determine the interpretation given to them. Duhm was the first to suggest that Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12 were originally an entity which had a different conception of the servant and a different author from the rest of chapters forty to sixty-six. More recent scholars, as Torrey, hold to the unity of Deutero-Isaiah, yet interpreting the servant in different ways.

B. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is an attempt to clarify the wealth of material written on the subject of the servant, because so many adverse opinions have arisen. The recent finding of the Qumran Literature, or the Dead Sea Scrolls, has given opportunity to re-examine the interpretations of the servant passages. Very little material of significance is added to the study from the Qumran Literature, though the probable interpretation of the servant held by the Qumran community may be deducted from their literature. One result of these findings has been the greater confidence in the Hebrew Massoretic Text, now known to be the most exact of any Hebrew manuscripts. It is preferred over the Septuagint translation, in which certain emendations have been made effecting the meaning.

There are two basic premises for interpreting these prophecies. Modern criticism denies the predictive element and thus finds itself in a strait between two prejudices. First, that there is no prophecy,

strictly so called, and secondly, that there is no miracle. Modern criticism either changes the prophecies into retrospects, as it changes the records of miracles into legends and myths; or it brings events prophesied so close to the prophet that to foresee them does not need inspiration, but only combination. The other premise is that of conservative scholars who maintain the supernatural and inspiration of the prophets as they wrote. The conservatives have held that the only possible explanation is that of the New Testament and have so interpreted the passages without regard for the difficulties in the context of the servant passages in Isaiah. This study is justified further, as an attempt to present this problem and find an adequate solution which is true to the prophecy and true to the New Testament interpretations.

A third justification for this study is the effect such a study has on the problem of the unity of Isaiah. Though this is not the problem treated in this study, the conclusions of such a study are indicative of how the whole of the prophecy is to be interpreted. The importance of this study is emphasized by the lack of supporting scholarship which treats the problems fairly, critically, and true to the traditional Biblical view.

C. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because most of the material written in this area of study is written in the German language, it could only be evaluated as it is used by those works in English which were consulted in this study. There was also a limitation in the sources in English to which the

writer could avail himself, though the authors which were consulted were representative of the major views held by scholars. The study is limited to the basic problem without giving a full treatment of the history of criticism as it has affected the interpretation. It is assumed that the reader has some understanding of the nature and work of criticism regarding the Bible.

D. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Certain terms need definition to clarify their use in this study. The word, Deutero-Isaiah, means second Isaiah, or chapters forty to sixty-six, and the use of the term in this study is merely to set forth those chapters so designated, rather than inferring another writer of those chapters. It does not infer that the writer is in agreement with so dividing the prophecy. He is convinced in his own thinking that the arguments for the unity of Isaiah are valid and that the problems of literary style, historical background, and theological content cannot be adequately answered apart from the Isaianic authorship. Trito-Isaiah, or the third Isaiah (chapters 56-66), is used in the same manner as Deutero-Isaiah.

The term "servant songs", or passages, is used to designate the four selected sections of scripture which are generally held to present the servant in a new role from that of its use elsewhere in Isaiah. These are Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12. This does not mean, as Duhm suggested, that they are an entity belonging to a different author. Rather, the use of the term servant songs is to show what portions of scripture are meant, rather than enumerating again the four passages of scripture included in the songs.

The symbol, LXX, is used to designate the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. It is a general designation, used of the Greek translation, rather than any one certain manuscript. The Hebrew words used in the study are quotations. The authority of these quotations is dependent on the authority of those who are quoted. Throughout the study, unless otherwise indicated, all scriptural quotations are taken from the American Standard Version of the Bible, revision of 1901.

This study is centered in the term "servant". The term is used without capitalization throughout the study except in quotations or as a proper name when the person indicated is clear to the reader. Since the term itself is indefinite, and can refer to either one or more persons, it is not capitalized except when used as a proper name in connection with "songs", as a title for the designated passages.

E. REVIEW OF ORGANIZATION

In order to locate the problem, chapter two is devoted to the study of the term servant as it is used, both secularly and religiously. The reasons for centering the problem in the four sections of Isaiah are clarified, both by showing why it is not a problem elsewhere and why it is a problem in the context in Deutero-Isaiah. Chapters three through six are an exposition of the servant passages under discussion. This exposition is given to clarify technical points, to show the significance of the passage itself to the interpretation of the meaning of the term servant, and to show the relationship of the passages to their contexts.

Since prediction of future events marks the unique character of Old Testament prophecy, chapter seven is devoted to a clarification and statement of the writer's views. These views are the basis for interpretation, setting forth the basic reason for differing with certain views concerning the servant of the Lord as Isaiah uses the term. Chapter eight presents the interpretation of Jesus and the New Testament writers. A study is made of verses quoted and their meaning. Other passages where there is a definite connection are compared and evaluated. Chapter nine presents a historical resume of the views regarding the servant. The earliest views are given, starting from pre-Christian times until the eighteenth century. From the eighteenth century until the present, representative views are explained and evaluated. The final chapter is a summary of the study and the conclusions reached by the writer. The relationship of this study to other problems is suggested as an area for further study.

F. MAJOR SOURCES FOR THE STUDY

As a result of the research made for this study, several important sources were found most helpful. For a clear historical evaluation of the servant problem, The Suffering Servant of Isaiah by C. R. North is a classic. He handles the problems as a scholar and as a critic, finding, not only the answer to the problems, but a clear solution which is true of Scripture. A recent study in Biblical Theology, The Servant of God, by W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, sets forth the use of the term, $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, up through the New Testament times. Critical scholars accepting the views of higher criticism

who were consulted include Cheyne, C.C. Torrey, Skinner, Scott, Rowley, Robinson, and Driver. Among the conservative critical scholars who were consulted are: Alexander, Clarke, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Rawlinson, Oehler, Wyngaarden, and Young.

An attempt has been made to keep objective throughout the study until chapter seven. Important views of each of the scholars consulted have been added and their contributions have determined the conclusions which were reached. In matters of grammatical construction, the commentary of Frank Delitzsch has been used as the final authority.

CHAPTER II

THE TERM SERVANT AS IT IS VARIOUSLY USED

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A. DEFINITION OF THE WORD SERVANT

The English word servant is related to various other terms, such as slave, bondman, and minister. These all refer to the agent of a master as one who serves or renders service. The idea of belonging to the master cannot be divorced from the term without destroying the meaning of it. A servant may be variously classed socially and may render a wide diversity of services or duties and still be a servant. All of these same ideas are present in the earliest Biblical uses of the term servant.

B. USE OF THE WORD SERVANT IN SCRIPTURE

The nouns in the Hebrew language can easily be associated with and identified from their verbal equivalent. The Hebrew verb עָבַד (abad) means to work or to serve. Hence עֶבֶד (ebed) means a servant, a bondman, a bondservant or manservant. There are at least five profane uses of the term in Scripture. It is translated as a slave, as a servant of a king, as a description of political submission, as a humble self-description, and as the term for the sanctuary servants.¹

The religious use of the term servant can be placed under four

¹W. Zimmerli, J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God* (Nashville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1957 in English, 1952 in German), p. 9.

categories. First, as a humble self-description of the pious in the presence of God, as Abraham addressed God (Gen. 18:3,5). It is thus used to seek favor from God as evidenced in many prayers throughout the Old Testament. It denotes both the faith of the person in his Lord and the attitude of thankful self-surrender to his Lord. The term also is used in the plural form for the servants of Jehovah as denoting the pious, those who seek refuge in him (Ps. 32:22), those who love his name (Ps. 69:36), and those who are his elect and so receive the visible pledge of Jehovah's favor (Isa. 65:8). A third use of the servant term is in the singular as referring to or as a description of Israel. Jacob, representing the nation of Israel, is called Jehovah's servant. Deutero-Isaiah is the probable origin of this description.

The last use of the term servant is as a title. There are numerous persons ascribed as servants of Jehovah. The patriarchs, pledges of the Divine will to save a people, were called servants of Jehovah. Moses is so called over forty times in Scripture. Several of the kings were described as servants of Jehovah and especially King David. The prophets likewise, as Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, are called servants of Jehovah as special word messengers of the Lord. The man Job (1:8) is called a servant of Jehovah and bears a relationship to the suffering servant of Isaiah.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 19-21.

C. HISTORY OF THE TERM SERVANT IN SCRIPTURE

The history of the term servant is traced from these descriptions. In almost all the references outside of Isaiah the term servant refers to an individual or group of individuals. Such is true in the more than eighty references to servant or servants in the Book of Genesis. Abraham calls himself a servant of the Lord as noted above (Gen. 18:35). As a title for Abraham it is first so used in Genesis 26:24 where God renews the covenant to Isaac and speaks of "my servant Abraham". In Jeremiah 30:10, Jacob is called by the title "servant of Jehovah" and also in Ezekiel 28:25. Moses is acclaimed by the same title after the crossing of the Red Sea when the people gave expression of their fear and belief in God and in "His servant Moses", (Ex. 14:31).¹

The term is used of Israel as a nation by three of the major prophets, Isaiah 20:3, Jeremiah 30:10, and Ezekiel 37:25. Deutero-Isaiah also so uses the term in Isaiah 41:8,9; 44:21; 49:3; 44:1,2; and 45:4.² Though there is a difference of opinion among scholars as to which of these first uses the term in reference to the nation, it is sufficient for the present purpose to merely mention their use.

Before more fully discussing the immediate servant problem of Deutero-Isaiah, a further historical matter must be examined. Translation presents both a problem and an answer to that problem.

¹Charles Augustus Briggs, Messianic Prophecy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), p. 314f.

²Otto J. Baab, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), pp. 196-7.

The Massoretic text; i.e., the Hebrew text as it has come down to us from the hands of the Jewish editors who established an authorized version about the eighth century A.D., and the LXX; i.e., the Greek version of the Old Testament made about the second century B.C., are not always in agreement. Some feel interpretation has led to changes in the LXX. It must be noted that the Masoretic text is much more in agreement with the recent Qumran texts found near the Dead Sea.¹

The LXX translates "servant" by six or seven different Greek words. Tables I and II are a compilation of references found in Zimmerli and Jeremias' book.²

There are fifty-six times in the LXX when a free translation is used; i.e., it is not according to the pattern of the book. Also, of the 272 passages where $\tau\eta\gamma$ is used in relation to Jehovah, none are distinguished by the particular type of translation. The conclusions to be drawn from this study of word translations are two: First, the LXX was very evidently translated by various individuals. Secondly, interpretation was used in translation. The latter point is amplified in the exposition of certain particular Isaiah passages below. One illustration will suffice here. In Deuteronomy 32:36, in the Song of Moses, is the only religious use of $\tau\eta\gamma$ in that book, "For Jehovah will judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; ($\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$) when he seeth that their power is gone, and there

¹For a full treatment of comparison of texts see: Millard Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 301f. He concludes, "In general it merely shows how old and relatively reliable the Masoretic text is." p. 318.

²Zimmerli, Op. Cit., p. 35f.

TABLE I

THE SEPTUAGENT TRANSLATION OF THE TERM SERVANT

Greek Word	Meaning	Times Used in LXX
παῖς	child, servant	340
δοῦλος	slave, servant, attendant	327
οἰκέτης	domestic servant, house servant	63
θεράπων	serve, do service, heal	46
υἱός	issue of man and woman, a son	1
ὑπηρέτης	under rower, servant	1

TABLE II

NUMBER OF TIMES THE LXX USES THE TERMS IN VARIOUS OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Greek Word		Gen.	Ex.	Lev.	Num.	Deut.	Jos.	Ps.	Ez.	Dan.
παῖς	*	79	8	3	5	9	-	3	-	12
δοῦλος	**	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	5	-
οἰκέτης		5	6	4	1	8	3	-	-	-
θεράπων		-	23	-	4	4	3	-	-	-

*From Judges to Kings παῖς and δοῦλος only are used.

**δοῦλος is used most frequently in the remaining books of the Old Testament.

is none remaining shut up or left at large." The only place in Deuteronomy where *לֵי* is translated *υἱός* is in 32:43, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, (sons) and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will make expiation for his land, for his people."

In the Inter-testament period, Jewish writings reflect the servant idea as used in Isaiah. The Targums followed the Isaiah text, only once substituting the singular term where Isaiah used a plural.¹ Recent discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls have revealed both interpretation and additions to the servant idea of the Old Testament. Debate is still in progress at the time of this writing over the concept of the Messiah as the "Suffering Servant", the "Teacher of Righteousness", and the "Son of man" suggested by Daniel, as the Qumran community seemed to understand them. From this point on there are two main streams of interpretation centering on the Deutero-Isaiah servant passages. One is the Jewish, the other the Christian interpretation. The latter's view has become a study in itself, and in the varied Christian interpretations is found the real problem of the Servant as Isaiah uses the term.

D. USE OF THE WORD SERVANT IN ISAIAH

In the book of the prophecy of Isaiah the term servant is used frequently and presents a complex problem. In first (Proto) Isaiah there is no problem on the use of the term servant. It is used ten

¹Ibid., p. 46.

times, five times in referring to a servant of a king, four times referring to a servant or servants in general, and one (Isa. 20:3) to the nation of Israel as the servant of Jehovah. Among the twenty-eight uses of servant or servants in Deutero-Isaiah there is a wide difference not only in use, but in the interpretation of that use.

The problem centers in chapters forty to fifty-five. In the last chapters, Trito-Isaiah, (56-66) there are only nine references but of such import that they need examination before discussing the larger problem of the suffering servant. All of these nine references are to servants as plural in number. The first is in Isaiah 54:17b, "This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of me, saith Jehovah." This prophecy is linked to chapter fifty-three and is an enlargement of the idea of redemption through the servant given in chapter fifty-three. In chapter fifty-four the righteousness is of Jehovah. The people of God are represented by the familiar symbols of Revelation, the Bride, and the City.¹ God's providence is noted above all else. He will bring more children to the church by the desolate than by the married wife, (v.1) he will provide protection from all enemies so that no weapon or tongue can rise in judgment and condemn or destroy his church (v. 17). This is the heritage or sure promise of the servants of Jehovah. Thus the servants of Jehovah are those he has just described and who have their righteousness in Jehovah. This is the interpretation

¹George A. Smith, The Book of Isaiah (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, n.d.), II, 397.

of Calvin.¹

The second reference is in Isaiah 56:1, "Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah to be his servants. . . ." Because of the former contextual reference in verse three to foreigners, it is evident that God will open the doors of his temple to all men without distinction, will accept them as ministers even though formerly they were heathen, and they will love him. These are his servants. They keep his sabbaths, his covenants, and worship Jehovah faithfully. Again, this, as the former, is a reference to the church as the servant of Jehovah, according to Calvin's interpretation.²

Delitzsch views the servant of this passage as proselytes who have attached themselves to Jehovah, the God of Israel with the pure intention of serving him in love. These must not be left behind in the foreign land but be brought to the temple which is to arise anew.³ To this Cheyne agrees; the proselytes will share in the joy of the Shekinah. These shall be called ministers, as Levites and priests, but by a lower term, that of servants.⁴

The third servant section in Trito-Isaiah is found in chapter sixty-five in six references; verses nine and thirteen to fifteen:

¹John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of Isaiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), IV, 152.

²Ibid., p. 182.

³Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.) II, 332.

⁴T. K. Cheyne, Prophecies of Isaiah (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1888), p. 65.

. . . and my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be put to shame. Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall wait for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; and the Lord Jehovah will slay thee; and he will call his servants by another name.

Beginning actually in verse eight, "so will I do for my servant's sake", there is a figure of a cluster of grapes among which are some good ones. There is a blessing in it, for which they will be spared. This is a softening of the earlier declaration to recompense the iniquities of the people (v. 6,7). Calvin points out two interpretations of this passage, either that the Lord will preserve his people for the sake of the elect, or that, when the reprobates are destroyed, he will rescue believers from destruction. Calvin prefers the latter interpretation. He again refers this passage to a likeness of the church, a seed that will call upon the Lord, servants that will dwell in the land.¹ Here at least the servants of Jehovah are preserved and thus also a seed and a race, who will take possession of his mountain, i.e., his holy land.²

That this is a prediction of the restoration of the Jews from Babylon is held by some,³ (nearly all the modern Germans, also G. A. Smith). A second interpretation is that this is the happy occupation

¹Calvin, Op. Cit., pp. 387-8. ²Delitzsch, Op. Cit., pp. 457-8.

³Joseph Alexander, Isaiah (New York: John Wiley, 1859), II, 420, see also G. A. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 457.

of Palestine by a regenerated race of Jews. A third interpretation is that this fortells the perpetuation of the old theocracy or Jewish Church, not in the body of the nation, but in the remnant which believed Christ; and enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles, is identical in character and rights with the church of the old dispensation.¹

In the thirteenth through fifteenth verses the object of address is still the chosen ones, the remnant, the servants. These are placed in marked contrast to those on whom Jehovah's wrath and judgment will fall because they have forgotten to worship but have sought fortune and destiny, (v. 11,12). Here again Calvin refers to the church as the interpretation and application of the passage. God's blessing rests on those who are his servants, his curse on the hypocrite and wicked.² The last statement of this section concerns the new name to be given to these servants. Calvin holds this is not the Christian name, but a designation that there are others outside the Jewish people whom he will adopt and elect.³ Alexander concurs, "I have no doubt that it also has respect to the destruction of the Jewish state and the repudiation of its name by the true church or Israel of God."⁴ Delitzsch and Cheyne both conclude that the reproach of the name of Israel is the curse of the people. Jehovah will faithfully keep his promise and covenant by giving his people, his servants, a new name. This compares with Isaiah 62:2: "And the

¹Ibid. ²Calvin, Op. Cit., p. 394.

³Ibid., p. 396. ⁴Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 428.

nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of Jehovah shall name."

The last reference to servants in this section of Isaiah is in chapter sixty-six, verse fourteen,

And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants; and he will have indignation against his enemies.

In this picture of comfort to be given by Jehovah to his people in Jerusalem is added the figure of comparison of the body and the grass. There is to be a new spring-time of life, bodily and spiritually, awakening within the servants. The preposition indicates these are "His", Jehovah's servants. His servants now shall see the restoration and comfort in Jerusalem, where before it may have been hid by the destruction of Jerusalem and period of exile.

These references in Trito-Isaiah (56-66) are as stated, all plural in number, all refer to servants of Jehovah and bear relationship to the people of God, whether considered as the remnant of the Jews in the restoration from Babylon, whether including the proselytes to the Jewish faith, or whether considered as the church, the new Israel of God. It is evident that the servants are the object of Divine favor and rich blessings are to accrue to them. As compared to their enemies and to the enemies of Jehovah the servants are not just to escape the judgments of God, but to enjoy his providential care, both physically and spiritually.

There is little disagreement here as to the meaning of Isaiah

regarding the servants of Jehovah. Though Calvin interprets them as the church, it is in the sense of application of the truth in the figure, rather than a literal interpretation. Delitzsch and others agree that the Prophet is speaking of the covenant people, whether strictly the Jewish remnant, or as other passages infer, including proselytes to the Jewish faith. To this remnant a new name is given which signifies Jehovah's faithfulness in keeping the covenant, in producing the seed and establishing a people as His servants.

The basic problem concerning Isaiah's use of the term servant remains to be expanded. In Deutero-Isaiah (40-55), the term occurs only in the singular form, although not always singular in object. The main problem lies in four particular passages though the passages cannot be divorced from the rest of the material in Deutero-Isaiah. In reviewing these passages briefly, the problem will become more clear. The full exposition of these four sections follows later.

The first passage is in Isaiah 42:1-9. Here an individual appears to be in mind of the prophet, in contrast to his reference to Israel as his servant in 41:8, whom Jehovah is going to redeem. In this passage there is a distinction between Israel and the servant of Jehovah, for now the servant has a work to do for Israel, as well as a work for the rest of the nations. It is to Israel that the servant is the embodiment of the covenant; i.e., the prophetic covenant or the new covenant seen in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For this office the servant has been anointed with the divine Spirit. Then follows a description of what the servant is like, his activity, and ultimate victory in establishing justice and law on the earth.

The servant is also distinguished from the backsliding people as one acceptable to Jehovah. Davidson suggests this is personification of the "ideal Israel", just as Zion is an ideal representation of Jerusalem. This would not be too difficult to see in the passage, an ideal Israel represented in the servant as a personification distinguished from the fragments of Israel scattered in every land.¹

Delitzsch here points out the strong differences in the servant of this passage from the servant Israel, seen in the individual personality traits. The servant therefore cannot be a mass of people personified. Neither can he be the author of these predictions, for what is said here of the servant of Jehovah goes far beyond what the prophet is called upon to accomplish. The servant here appears as the "incarnate idea of Israel", that is, "the truth and reality of the latter impersonated." This is as a pyramid to Delitzsch. The whole nation forming the lowest part, Israel according to the spirit forming the center and the mediator of salvation arising out of Israel forming the top. The whole of this section depicts Israel receiving the knowledge of salvation presented in the life of this one mediator.

Already three interpretations of the servant have presented themselves, the servant as the nation Israel, as a personification of the ideal for Israel, and as an individual servant the mediator of salvation for Israel and the nation. As Briggs and Robinson agree, "It is difficult to distinguish a personification from a person." The

¹C. A. Briggs, Messianic Prophecy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), pp. 346-7.

difference is not great, though Robinson himself feels it is referring to an actual individual.¹ How then is the servant figure to be explained, as an individual, a collective ideal, or as a collective community of Israel?

In the second servant passage an individual is more clearly suggested (Isa. 49:1-13). Zimmerli contends that there are "insuperable difficulties in the way of the collective interpretation." Another possibility is a secondary midrash,² for verse three made in a collective sense, while the original text is to be interpreted in an individual sense. He suggests that there can only be two aspects of this servant concept in relation to great figures apart from Moses and the Patriarchs: first, the Messiah King, and secondly, the prophets. Perhaps these servant songs refer to the mission of Deutero-Isaiah and receive from this an interpretation which transcends the framework of his life and dares by faith to attain an ultimate insight.³

Zimmerli answers his own suggestion by pointing out several difficulties. The true essence of this passage belongs not to Deutero-Isaiah, but to another, here Jehovah. In this as in the first passage, the servant is fashioned by Jehovah (42:6; 49:5-8), he is from the womb (49:5), the favor of Jehovah is upon him and the hand of Jehovah has seized him, (42:1). The servant is called by Jehovah in truth (42:6; 49:1).⁴ The high calling of the servant is noted, from the womb, and of Jehovah. His mission is to raise up the tribes

¹G. L. Robinson, The Book of Isaiah (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 147.

²An exposition of Hebrew Scripture, esp. that made during a period of about 1500 years after the exile. Cf. LXX of Isa. 42:1.

³Zimmerli, Op. Cit., p. 25f. ⁴Ibid., pp. 26,27.

of Jacob. But his work will first be in humiliation, then in honor. He is a despised person, abhorred of the nations and a servant of rulers, yet kings will see, and they shall worship him for he is chosen of Jehovah.

It seems to us that it is most natural to think of a Messianic prophet who was called from the womb like Jeremiah to be the teacher and Savior (Jer. 1:5). This prophet is the second Jacob, as the Messiah is elsewhere the second Adam, the second Moses and the second David. Each of these persons becomes in turn the type of the Messiah.¹

By referring again to his pyramid, Delitzsch declares this passage is not to be regarded as a personification even though in verse three the speaker is called Israel, nor is it to be regarded as the kernel of Israel. The servant and those he is to restore are distinguished here. In the Hebrew grammar a collective term cannot be used along with a phrase such as "the bowels of his mother." Nor is it possible for the prophet to be speaking of himself. What is said here is too unique and glorious to apply to a prophet of Isaiah's caliber or any of his fellow spiritual kindred. This servant is the heart of Israel from which stems their salvation.²

The fiftieth chapter, verses four to eleven, contains the third passage dealing with the servant. Here again the servant is described as humiliated, yet justified by the Lord's help. Delitzsch calls this a description of the servant's hidden life. What Job prefigures and what the Davidic passion Psalms represent by anticipation in types in prophecy become complete and antitypical in the life of

¹Briggs, Op. Cit., p. 356. ²Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 221.

the servant.¹ Here again the servant is not a personification but the mediator and one who bears the word of Jehovah. Briggs contends that this is not a Messianic prophecy and that nothing in the text so indicates that it is. The sufferings are not extra-ordinary nor are the works of this prophet to be considered in that sense. The reason such is attributed to the servant of this passage is because its position is between chapters forty-nine and fifty-two and three, which do describe the Messiah. This is merely the prophet giving his own experiences according to Briggs.²

The fourth and last of the servant songs is probably the best known and widely used of the servant passages, particularly in reference to the sufferings of Christ. In Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 is pictured the sinbearing, suffering servant. It is clear that the passage has reference to redemption. Here suffering is climaxed in death. The servant is misunderstood as guilty when he was innocent. The resurrection is not explicitly mentioned but involved implicitly. Briggs concludes that, "This prophecy of the servant who dies and rises from the grave finds its only fulfillment in the death of Jesus Christ, and in his resurrection and exaltation to his heavenly throne."³ Certainly his suffering far exceeds that of any prophet and transcends any experience of Deutero-Isaiah. His suffering goes beyond Jeremiah's, for Jeremiah's confession ends in darkness. This servant's suffering is vicarious, he fulfills the servant attitude. The speaker in the fifty-third chapter is plural in number (our-we) as if the words are uttered by a fellowship of believers gripped by

¹Ibid., p. 242. ²Briggs, Op. Cit., p. 356. ³Ibid., p. 363.

the event. Here again is the reference to the lowly beginning and the glorious end.

E. TWO MAJOR INTERPRETATIONS

The last servant song suggests the heart of the two main streams of interpretation. H. Wheeler Robinson is representative of one group. For Robinson, Isaiah fifty-three is for historical exegesis; it is a philosophy of the sufferings of the nation in themselves so perplexing to national pride and religious faith. In the previously related passages, the servant is depicted as the prophet of Jehovah, patiently and quietly teaching true religion to the nations wherever the beginnings of true desire for it are found (42:1-3). The servant is a weapon in the hand of Jehovah; discouraged, he renews his strength in the thought of Jehovah. His mission extends beyond his own borders to the ends of the earth (49:1-7). The servant is trained by regular and conscious fellowship with Jehovah to speak for him. In this service he suffers, but is not dismayed, since he knows God to be with him (50:4-9). At last, the sufferings of the servant are brought to an end, to the astonishment of other nations. The nations thought Israel was punished for her sins, but now they see they were their own sins and the suffering servant has attained the victory for them (52:13-53:12). Here the sacrificial idea is combined with the moral and the effect of these sufferings are brought upon the nations who witness them. In this interpretation Israel is the ideal suffering servant redeeming the nations through her sufferings.¹

¹H. Wheeler Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 176f.

To explain the personality of the servant, Robinson says his personality appears to be distinguished from the nation of Israel as a whole and is described with such individualistic details that many have seen a reference to some distinguished Israelite, either of the past (Jeremiah) or of an unknown future person. This is a "corporate personality", beyond anything known to us in the way of personification. An illustration is the national "thou" which can include both good and evil and the prophet can turn his gaze now on one and now on the other part of the nation in rapid transition. Similarly, the prophet speaks of one or the other aspects of the servant of Jehovah. Robinson also points to the difference in the servant passages outside Deutero-Isaiah which ask "who is blind" etc., but in the songs the servant is righteous. Yet the spiritual demand made in the songs of the servant on those who would share in their ideals was too great for the rank and file, especially in the atmosphere of narrowing nationalism which followed the exile. The demand is still too great according to Robinson for the rank and file of the newer Israel which Jesus of Nazareth created. Yet Israel's sufferings, so interpreted, have entered into His gospel, shaped His life, and issued in His cross. To those sufferings, coupled with this interpretation of them, are due the most characteristic ideas of the Christian faith and morality.¹

While Robinson thus holds to the nation of Israel as the servant, called "my servant" by Jehovah, Driver differentiates

¹Ibid., pp. 203-6.

between historical Israel as a literal nation and the conception of the prophet Isaiah of an ideal personality, a figure exhibiting the truest and most genuine characteristics of the nation, and realizing them in action with an intensity and clearness of aim which the historic Israel had never remotely attained. Thus he too retains the nation Israel as the servant.¹ Greenstone follows Driver in his interpretation.² Babb adds that there is a special sense in which the ideal servant is on a mission to the nations to bring the light of salvation through his sacrificial suffering and martyrdom. The function of the servant is to aid in the realization of the kingdom, especially in its more universal and spiritual aspects.³

The second main stream of interpretation is expressed by Calvin and most conservative evangelicals such as Young, Clarke, Fitch, Robinson, O.L. Raven, and Orr. These interpret the servant as an individual. Jesus Christ as the suffering servant has accomplished all that was predicted of him by Isaiah. This is the mediator at the top of the pyramid of Delitzsch. He is an actual historical fulfillment. The outside servant passages do refer to the nation or as indicated by the context; but these four servant songs are definitely of an individual. Therefore, before judgment is made or a conclusion reached as to the correct interpretation, a closer examination of these songs should be made.

¹S.R. Driver, Isaiah, His Life and Times (New York: Anson, D.F. Randolph and Co., n.d.), p. 117.

²Julius Greenstone, Messiah Idea In Jewish History (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1906), p. 46.

³Babb, Op. Cit., pp. 196-7.

CHAPTER III

AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 42:1-9

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AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 42:1-9

A. INTRODUCTION

Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. 3. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench; he will bring forth justice in truth. 4. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.

5. Thus saith God Jehovah, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6. I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: 7. to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prisonhouse. 8. I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images. 9. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.

Almost all Biblical expositors approach the Servant Songs from the first reference to the servant given in chapter 41:8, "And thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." It must be noted that this is part of the larger context in which the Servant Songs appear. Also within this section are the references to the deliverance from captivity through Cyrus. Therefore careful note must be given to the contextual relationship

of these passages as well as to their separate meaning, if the meaning is separate. Chapter forty-one sets forth the preparations for Israel's return from the Babylonian captivity through a great conqueror whom Jehovah will call from the North and from the East (41:25) to execute his order. The name servant here is merely a reference to Israel in the covenant relationship to Jehovah by which he is their God and they are his people. Jehovah proceeds to assure them of his providence and of deliverance. Therefore, the significance in the use of the term in this reference in comparison to that which follows in chapter forty-two is whether Isaiah continues to use the term in the same manner with the same meaning.

There is to be both a temporal agent (Cyrus) and a spiritual agent to mediate Israel's redemption, but for the latter there is a spiritual factor--Jehovah's "servant" shall be employed in bringing the good tidings of salvation to the Gentiles. This ideal figure of the servant is then described as well as the work he is called to execute. Jehovah's Spirit will rest upon him and he will teach the nations true religion. He is to restore Israel and bring justice and light to the Gentiles. The servant's advent will be a definite guarantee of Jehovah's predictions.¹ This is the greater of the two aspects of Israel's redemption. Clarke said this, "at once brings into full view, without throwing any veil of allegory over the subject, the Messiah. 'Behold my servant, Messiah,' says the Chaldee."² As has

¹G. L. Robinson, The Book of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 137.

²Adam Clarke, Clarke's Commentary (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, n.d.), IV, 166.

already been shown, there is a disagreement at this point of interpretation.

B. VERSE ONE

The first verse begins with "Behold" (הוּא), used seventeen times in Deutero-Isaiah, and introduces a further step in the prophet's thought from 41:8f. The verse preceeding (41:29), began with "Behold", but was a pronounced sentence by Jehovah upon the idolaters and idols. This second one is an emphatic way of drawing attention to the subject, a new subject in fact. "Behold my servant," is a higher conception than that shown in the previous chapter concerning the servant. The LXX has "Jacob my servant" and "Israel, my chosen", which is an interpretation of the Hebrew for neither the Massoretic text nor the Isaiah Scrolls of the Qumran findings agree.

The destruction of the threefold parallelism evident in the Hebrew text up to verse four as a result of the addition of the proper names speaks against the originality of the LXX text. The latter, however, is not only important because it unmistakably shows in what sense it was interpreted and hence is an early witness to the collective interpretation, but also because it shows the secondary penetration into the text of interpretative expansions.¹

It is necessary to evaluate this interpretation in the light of the background of the translators before proper judgment is made. Reference is made to the value of the LXX translation in chapters eight and nine.

¹ Zimmerli, The Servant of God, Op. Cit., p. 41.

It is suggested that the term servant seems to be derived from court style where the official of the king was known as his servant. It was the function of the official to make known the king's judicial decisions. Jehovah is the king of Israel and Israel is the servant of the King.¹ Note should also be made of the possessive "My" which shows the same intimate association as in 41:8-9. That the servant is "upheld" by Jehovah seems to infer that he is laid hold of by Jehovah to do his will and purpose. "My Chosen" would mean his service and election go hand in hand. This term is also used of Moses and David.²

The phrase "whom I uphold" is translated by Clarke, "on whom I lean," and would agree with the custom of kings leaning on the arm of their most beloved and faithful servant.³ Cheyne says "mine elect" or "my chosen", is a favorite word of Deutero-Isaiah and is also frequently found in the Psalms.⁴

The next clause in verse one states, "I have put my Spirit upon him." Most agree this is in regard to the prophetic office, that there is to be an endowment of the Spirit of Jehovah. This gift is to be permanent rather than just a prophetic gift. Reference is made to his power and might, for he will bring judgment. Reference is also made to the likeness of the messianic king of Isaiah 11:2 where the spirit endows the Messiah for his royal functions.⁵

¹ Scott, R.B.Y., Kilpatrick, G.C.D., "The Book of Isaiah", The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956) V, 464.

² Ibid. ³ Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 166.

⁴ Cheyne, Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 101.

⁵ J. Skinner, "Isaiah", Cambridge Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), p. 30.

"He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles," the task of the servant.

Scott says the nation (Israel) in covenant with God is a missionary.

"The Remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord," Micah 5:7.¹ This word justice is important. The word, usually translated judgment (שֹׁפֵט) can mean also, rule, form, order, model, or plan. Delitzsch says the name here is for the true religion, taken on its practical side, as a rule and law for life in all its relations, on its religious side, as the ordering of life, (νόμος).² Skinner adds that it is also the conditions which regulate intercourse with Jehovah, i.e., the principles of true religion--known to Israel and to be revealed to other nations through the missionary activity of the servant.³ Clarke said, "It certainly means in this place the law to be published by the Messiah, the institution of the Gospel."⁴ Cheyne translates it, "Cause to go forth", rather than, "will bring forth." From this he suggests three sources of this justice; from divine source, from Jerusalem, and from obscurity. The first and third may be combined which lend themselves to the individual servant while the second is the usual interpretation of those who follow a "collective servant" idea for this passage.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 119.

³ J. Skinner, "Isaiah", Cambridge Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), p. 30.

⁴ Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 166. ⁵ Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 264.

C. VERSE TWO

Verse two is a description of the servant. If the reference is to the servant of a king it could be applied as merely expressing symbolical legal practices, that the nation will not impose its life and manners on others. The heathen are like a "bruised reed and a dimly burning wick."¹ Though the verse is descriptive, it is in contrast to the response of the heathen. "He will not cry, nor lift up his voice." The servant's methods are purely inward and spiritual, in contrast to Cyrus and other kings, even men like the prophet Elijah limits himself to persuasion.² This does not exactly follow true to the pattern of the prophets either as Skinner says:

This feature of the servant's activity can hardly have been suggested by the demeanour of the prophets of Israel; and for that reason the prophecy is all the more wonderful as a perception of the true conditions of spiritual influence.³

D. VERSE THREE

The third verse continues the description with reference again to the servant's quiet method of proceeding. "Truth, not clamor and violence will accomplish the end in question."⁴ This is not a censorious approach to bringing judgment to the nations but a sympathetic expression by the servant toward the heathen

¹Scott, Op. Cit., p. 464. ²Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 264.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 30.

⁴Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 108.

nations. The "bruised reed" is elsewhere a figure of weakness, but here implies spiritual infirmity as the condition of the heathen. The servant will not break or quench them but according to the standard of truth bring justice to them. This certainly is the method the servant is to use in spreading the true religion. A further truth is that the servant is not going to destroy but to save life, the life that is nearly extinguished. Because of truth, recognition of the true state of the case in the manifold varieties of human circumstances, the activity of the servant is in moderation and gentleness.¹

E. VERSE FOUR

The prophet continues in verse four with the same thought, "He will not fail (or, burn dimly, mg.) nor be discouraged (or, bruised, mg.), till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." This is a different work than that applied to Cyrus. This servant will neither subdue nor be subdued. The final issue of history lies with the servant, not Cyrus.² The isles, or islands, are but poetical expressions for the nations.

F. VERSE FIVE

Another paragraph begins at verse five as the God Jehovah continues to speak concerning his servant. First he describes his own creative power and overruling providence. This literary form

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 120. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 466.

and thought are common to prophetic writing and to Deutero-Isaiah throughout. The breadth of God's activity is expressed, as creator of the heavens, stretching them out, as creator of the earth and all that comes from it. God also has given life to the people of the earth. The verb tenses are preterite, not perfects, showing God's creative power as constantly exercised in the continued existence of his works. The servant evidently needed this reminder of God's sufficiency as creator and of his enlivening his creatures with breath and spirit. These assurances give credit to what follows in the sixth verse.

G. VERSE SIX

"I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness," signified a special mission for the servant with a special qualification. God's righteousness, according to Delitzsch, is the strictness with which he acts according to the will of his holiness. This will of holiness is, in relation to humanity, a will of love with a counsel of grace; and this will of love is changed into a will of wrath only against those who disdain the offered grace. This righteousness then is God's procedure in conformity with the counsel of grace and the order of salvation.¹ The righteousness from the prophet's point of view is measured in regard to the divine covenant with Israel, a righteousness of the Creator towards his fallen creatures which prepares salvation and calls the mediator of salvation and appoints him to set up and impart new righteousness. The phrases, "will hold thy

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., pp. 122-123.

hand", and "will keep thee", signify that the servant is not to be "formed", but is already formed from eternity (perfect tenses).¹

Torrey disagrees with this translation. He feels the verb is to be translated, "formed" to express the initial act by which God brought into being, or fashioned, his people or prepared them at the beginning for himself. For support he appeals to 43:1,7; 44:2,24, and 45:7,18, etc. God's "covenant grace" is thus embodied in Israel and is his gracious provision for the nations.²

Concerning the "covenant" of the next phrase, "and give (make) thee for a covenant of the people", Cheyne says the medium or mediator of the covenant means the same as covenant between Jehovah and Israel. As the servant is called "a light", so he can be called a "covenant" in person. Unless this covenant is a new covenant (berith), Cheyne asks why the covenant given at Sinai was not meant? "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." (Jeremiah 31:31)³ Clarke suggests this should be translated covenant sacrifice, which meaning it often has and undoubtedly in this place.⁴ Skinner agrees that this is a new covenant and applies exclusively to the servant's mission to Israel, not to the people themselves. If this is a reference to the "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31, he suggests, "It is not

¹Cheyne, *Op. Cit.*, p. 226.

²C. C. Torrey, The Second Isaiah (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 327.

³Ibid., p. 267. ⁴Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 167.

too bold a speculation that II Isaiah had this idea in mind and that what he here means is the covenant in virtue of which Israel shall once more be restored as a nation."¹ Skinner follows Cheyne in the suggestion that the covenant also includes the mediator of that covenant but refers this to Israel. "The prophet's thought may be that the Servant is that imperishable element or aspect of Israel which is the permanent bond between Jehovah and his people, and which is destined to be embodied in a restored national existence."² To this Delitzsch disagrees, showing that "a covenant of the people, for the light of the Gentiles", is not the same level as Isaiah forty-one, eight, but the servant idea has been elevated from its national basis to its personal apex.

The retention of the national sense here necessitates artificialities which condemn themselves. . . . Unprejudiced exposition must recognize that the servant of Jahve is here described as he in whom and through whom Jahve concludes a new covenant with his people in room of the old one broken, sc., that promised in 54:10, 59:8, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 16:60ff; 37:26.³

Alexander says these epithets are applicable to Christ alone.

This is on the basis that the description is better understood in reference to men in general, not just to the Jews. The servant is not only to enlighten the nations but to be a mediator between God and the people, i.e., men in general.⁴

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 32. ²Ibid., p. 33.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 123-4.

⁴Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 111.

Clarification of the whole is made by Wyngaarden who makes a double interpretation of the "covenant". The servant, who is here the bond, or band of the covenant, is not only represented in the covenant, but also as the mediator of that covenant. It is not necessarily the new covenant spoken of in Jeremiah 31:31, but refers "to the entire covenant from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as an eternal covenant, having its roots in the protoevangelium in paradise." He illustrates this by reference to a fleet of ships, a collective group, yet all under one admiral who is the commander of the fleet. It is in this manner that the "covenant of the people" is the servant of Jehovah.¹

H. VERSE SEVEN

Contextual difficulties can be avoided as the idea of verse six is carried over to verse seven. The prophet has been referring to the servant's mission to the Gentiles, or nations, and thus he continues, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out of the prison-house." The subject of the infinitive is obviously the servant. The liberation is likewise obviously in a spiritual sense, a development of the idea of verse six, "a light to the nations."² This is also supported by verses 18-20. Healing of the blind is one of the chief characteristics of the Messianic age in prophecy.³

¹Martin J. Wyngaarden, "The Servant In Isaiah 42", Papers read at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Philadelphia, December 27-28, 1956, p. 93.

²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 469. ³Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 267.

But is this to be metaphorically understood, or is this a reference to the Captivity? If this is strictly to be understood, why did not the prophet use expressions more exactly descriptive of the state of Israel in Babylon, Alexander asks? There is no specific reason for applying this description to the exile, any more than to a hundred other reasons of calamity. The "light to the Gentiles" is conclusive that it is not Jewish exiles, but Gentiles who are to be made free. Thus this cannot be applied to the captivity without doing violence to the text and context. It must be like the former verses, a figure of spiritual blindness and bondage.¹ Clarke adds that under images borrowed from temporal deliverance the prophet sees and sets forth the spiritual redemption.² Parallel passages in 49:9 and 61:1ff add weight to this conclusion.

I. VERSE EIGHT

Jehovah's name and glory are set apart in verse eight. The name Jehovah is descriptive of the self-existent, independent and external being. The general doctrine suggested by this verse is that true and false religion cannot co-exist, because, however tolerant idolatry may be, it is essential to the worship of Jehovah to be perfectly exclusive of all other gods. This is included in the very name Jehovah, and accounts for its solemn proclamation here.³ Jehovah's glory would be obscured if shared with any other being.

¹Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 112. ²Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 167.

³Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 113.

J. VERSE NINE

Verse nine concludes the first servant song by outlining two cycles of events, "the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." This is an appeal to former prophecies already verified, as grounds of confidence in those yet unfulfilled. These new things appear as the work of Jehovah himself, through his servant who will be exalted; who will redeem Israel and bring about the conversion of the heathen. This is distinct from the preparatory stages of the work to be done by Cyrus and accomplished through arms, while the servant carries it completely into effect by the spiritual might of his mere word and of his gentle unselfish love.

K. SUMMARY

This exposition of the first Servant Song sets forth a spiritual deliverer, symbolized as a servant, or one on whom Jehovah is depending to bring deliverance to His people. Jehovah will uphold the servant, place His Spirit on him, and delight in him. The servant is thus one chosen of God, but distinct from the prophets, for his methods are different and his ultimate triumph in justice is assured. The servant is further distinguished as being formed from eternity, righteous, and given by Jehovah to the nations as a "covenant" and as a "light". All of this is to be a new thing, for the servant's work is yet to come.

The strongest argument for a collective view is that Isaiah must retain the same meaning of the term servant as in chapter

forty-one. In chapter forty-two the description of the servant, his relationship to Jehovah, and his work, distinguishes this servant from any thing which Israel as a nation, or even a pious group within Israel, ever has accomplished. The context does not support an interpretation of deliverance from Babylon, for the deliverance referred to here is to the Gentile nations and it is a spiritual, not a political, deliverance.

It has been shown that since God's Spirit is upon the servant he will bring justice, or the law, to the nations. This is further emphasized by the statements in verse six and seven, where the servant is to be a covenant and a light to the nations. He will establish on earth this new spiritual order of life. This is not the law and justice proclaimed to Israel at Mt. Sinai, but a new covenant. Thus the strongest arguments of the context point to a greater servant than Israel, a greater servant than the prophets, a greater deliverance than that procured by Cyrus.

The conclusion to these evidences examined in the text of the first Servant Song is that the servant is definitely the "Anointed One", for only the Messianic interpretation fits the description of the servant in chapter forty-two. Therefore, Isaiah does have a different meaning for the word servant in chapter forty-two than he did in chapter forty-one. "If all the passages that we have to consider remained at this level they would still be Messianic, and find their only sufficient fulfilment in Jesus Christ."¹

¹ Briggs, Messianic Prophecy, Op. Cit., p. 342.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 49:1-13

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AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 49:1-13

A. INTRODUCTION

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far: Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name: 2. and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me; and he hath made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he kept me close: 3. and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified. 4. But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity; yet surely the justice due to me is with Jehovah, and my recompense with my God.

5. And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength); 6. yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. 7. Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of Jehovah that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.

8. Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages; 9. saying to them that are bound, go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and on all bare heights shall be their pasture. 10. They

shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them will lead them, even by springs of water will he guide them.
 11. And I will make all my mountains away, and my highways shall be exalted.
 12. Lo, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.
 13. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have compassion upon his afflicted.

Isaiah the prophet reverts to the collective group as the servant of the Lord following 42:1-9, as expressed in 43:18-22; 43:10; 44:1-5, 21-28; 45:4; 48:20-22. When he comes to the section which is the subject of this chapter he seems to again make a distinct advance in the servant concept. Chapter forty-nine is a natural sequel to the first servant song. It continues with a description of his mission (1-3), his confession of failure in the past (v. 4), and his quickened faith in the revelation that Jehovah has raised him up for a still greater purpose, namely, to be his organ of salvation to the ends of the earth (5-6). Yet he plainly sees that before he can perform his mission he must do a preliminary work for his own people.¹

This section is not as much a change in topics as a change in their relative position and proportions.

The controversial tone, the repeated comparisons between Jehovah and the idols, with the arguments based upon them, disappear: the prophet feels that, as regards these points, he has made his position sufficiently secure.

¹ G. L. Robinson, The Book of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 144.

For the same reason, allusions to Cyrus and his conquest of Babylon cease also; that, likewise, is now taken for granted.¹

Not only does Torrey agree with Skinner that there is a distinct advance in the development of the prophet's conception, but that chapter forty-nine may occupy a central place in the book. Here is the most characteristic idea of this prophet regarding the future. This is an excellent starting point for a study of his ideas in regard to the servant, the restoration, the conversion of the nations, and the final status of Jews and Gentiles in God's kingdom.² Having made clear in the preceeding chapters that Jehovah is Lord God alone, the prophet no longer needs to stress His sovereignty over the idols of surrounding nations. Two mighty themes now begin to dominate the book: one, the Servant of the Lord, and the other, the glorious future that awaits Israel.

B. VERSE ONE

This chapter opens with the voice of the servant, as in 42:1, relating how he has been called to His task. The nations (or Gentiles) are called to listen and to give ear. His first statement concerning himself is, "Jehovah hath called me from the womb." Assuredly, Isaiah could not have said this of himself, either as an individual prophet or as a representative of the prophets, or as a class. This was a divine call especially for the servant. The speaker

¹ Skinner, Cambridge Bible, Op. Cit., (quoting Driver), p. 96.

² Torrey, The Second Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 380.

further asserts that his name was mentioned before his birth. This name is not a title, but a proper name. Therefore, it must be a person individualized, or the name Israel. Duhm and others, according to Skinner, refer to the name as the title, "Servant of Jehovah" which "designates its bearer as the revealer of God". Skinner asserts the Hebrew will not bear this interpretation.¹ If it is a reference to Israel, then Abraham is evidently the "womb" referred to by the servant (Cf. Isaiah 51:1-3, Gal. 1:15).²

C. VERSE TWO

Verse two presents a comparison; the speaker has a mouth like a sword. A man is known by his words and the servant is the prophet chosen and called to speak the Word of God. His word is endowed with omnipotence, "I have put my words in thy mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," (11:4). Yet, there was a delay to the servant's work for in the "shadow of his hand hath he hid me". (v.2) The emphasis seemed to be concealment and secrecy rather than protection. The picture is that of a sword in the sheath, or the arrow in the quiver, kept concealed until needed. Alexander, Scott, Skinner, Delitzsch, and Torrey thus agree. Cheyne alone disagrees on the basis that having so forceably used the word, "the incisive preaching of the servant was displeasing to the natural man, who therefore sought to parry the sword of the

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 99.

²Scott, The Interpreters Bible, Op. Cit., p. 566.

Spirit by the arm of the flesh." Therefore, divine protection was needed.¹ Whether protected, concealed or unobserved, the emphasis is on the effectiveness of the word of the servant. Skinner does contend that there is nothing in the verse inconsistent with the idea that the speaker is Israel personified. (This is important to what follows in verse three.) Israel was hid through long ages for the sake of spiritual endowment which made it the mouthpiece of revelation.² Strangely, Torrey disagrees. "In the present passage the poet has in mind an individual, the Messiah. Verse five, especially, makes this plain."³

D. VERSE THREE

The crux of this second Servant Song is in verse three, "Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Klostermann, Dalm, Schian, and Cheyne all tried to remove the word 'Israel' from the text. Torrey says this is inexcusable.⁴ Skinner continues the argument by showing that 'Israel' is rightly taken as a continuation of the predicate. "It is obvious, if genuine, fatal to the individualistic conceptions of the servant."⁵ "But the balance of evidence is too uncertain to admit of a strong argument for the national interpretation being founded on this text."⁶ Scott points to the two offices referred to in the verse, as servant to serve God,

¹Cheyne, Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., II, 11.

²Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 99. ³Torrey, Op. Cit., p. 381

⁴Ibid. ⁵Skinner, Loc. Cit. ⁶Ibid., p. 100.

and to glorify Him. Israel, in this sense, is a poetic parallelism, of similar type to 41:8; 43:10; 44:2,21. The witness of the versions, similar passages, and the meter of the verse, all argue for the retention of the word Israel. Scott makes reference to Ibn Ezra, Rashi, and Kimhi who apply the verse to an individual, but Scott says this text by itself forbids it.¹ North also shows by the same arguments that Israel cannot be deleted. He says the 'servant' here is not a name but an honorific.

The writer would seem to say that here in the Servant is the true Israel found. . . In any case, if we are not free to delete 'Israel' in verse three, and if that Israel has a mission to Israel in verse five, the Israel of verse three must in some way be qualified.²

Rawlinson in the Pulpit Commentary agrees that Israel is not literally intended as seen in verse five. The servant himself is addressed as 'Israel' because he "would stand as a new federal head to the nation (Kay), which would be summed up in him; and also because he would be, in a truer sense than any other, an 'Israel' or 'Prince with God'".³ In giving the strictest sense to the words, "Thou art my servant", the instrument or agent constituted such for a specific and important purpose, both the Messiah and his people are seen as the complex subjects of the verse.⁴ As a final

¹Scott, Op. Cit., p. 567.

²C. R. North, The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 145.

³George Rawlinson, "Isaiah", Pulpit Commentary (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., n.d.), II, 230.

⁴Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 213.

authority, Delitzsch says:

Although the speaker is called Israel in 3b, he is neither to be regarded as the personification of all Israel, nor as that of the kernel of Israel; not the former, for in verse five he is expressly distinguished from the people whom he is to restore, and for whom he is to act as mediator; and not the latter, for the people, whose restoration he is to effect (v. 5), is itself the totality of the servant ('ה' עַבְדִּי), or the *λαίμα* of Israel (see e.g. 65:8-16). Neither is he both together; no collective can be used along with the 'bowels of his mother'.¹

E. VERSE FOUR

The third verse concludes thus, "in whom I will be glorified". In these words is seen the utter necessity for Him (the Servant) to come forth. Jacob (Israel) had born the name, but failed to fulfill the idea, just as the nation likewise failed to glorify God. Now to another the name is to be given and in Him the purpose will be fulfilled; God will be glorified in Him. Israel as a nation will also finally realize its high destiny, but the beginning of the divine plan seems to be a failure. "But I said, I have laboured in vain," (v. 4) the idea of exhaustion and weariness, perhaps because his words fell on deaf ears. Yet before the verse closes the bright optimism returns for he is sure of the end, it is safe and right, God will recompense, or reward him. His call stands in spite of apparent failure at first, for his is a ministry of

¹Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 220.

justice, and Jehovah has stored up the success and fruit of his work against the day when He will vindicate His servant. This recompense, according to Cheyne, shows the servant of Jehovah has a special meaning of its own. A slave can have no recompense.¹

F. VERSE FIVE

The importance of verse five has already been made evident from the exposition of verse three. The question which arises and must be answered is, "How can the servant Israel bring back Jacob" (Israel). The Interpreters Bible translates thus to avoid the problem: "And now Jehovah, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, has said that he would bring Jacob back to himself and that Israel should be gathered unto him."² It could be implied from this that the servant is not necessarily a part of the restoration of Jacob. Delitzsch translates the verse, "and now Jahve, who formed me from the womb to be a servant to him, to bring back Jacob to him and that Israel should be gathered to Him."³ Cheyne concurs that the servant is Jehovah's instrument for restoring Israel.⁴ Alexander points out that this is not a restoration from exile, for how could this work be ascribed directly either to the prophet, or to the Messiah, or to Israel itself? It might apply to Cyrus, but the whole context, as previously pointed out, is at

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 12. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 569.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 225. ⁴Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 13.

variance with such an explanation. All that is left, then, is to give the verb the sense of bringing back ("to convert Jacob") to a state of allegiance from one of alienation and revolt. The vocation of Israel was to reclaim the nations, that of the Messiah was first to reclaim Israel and then the nations. Because of this, honor is to come to the servant in Jehovah's eyes although the proximate design of his mission, the salvation of the literal Israel, might seem to fail.¹

G. VERSE SIX

Jehovah continues to show that his call to the servant is more than a "light thing", for the servant has the exalted privilege of bringing all mankind to the Kingdom of God. "It is only a little thing that thou becomest a servant to me, to raise the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel--I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, to become my salvation to the end of the earth."² However the servant is taken, he speaks as the exponent of the religion of revelation; or an indirect prophecy of Christ.³ As a light of the Gentiles, the servant is to reach to the ends of the earth with the salvation of Jehovah. The last clause can be interpreted two ways; "That thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth", or "That my salvation may be to the ends of the earth."

¹Alexander, Op. Cit., pp. 214-215. ²Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 225.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 101.

J. E. McFadyen goes further and says:

Probably the words 'that thou shouldest be my servant' should be omitted. Besides being metrically superfluous, they have the effect of making the Servant a person, whose task it is to save the nation. But elsewhere it is the nation Israel that is the Servant; so probably here.¹

There is no evidence to support the removal of these words and all other sources quoted herein, including W. Fitch, agree that the servant is to become Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth. Just as Micah 5:5 calls the Messiah, "peace", i.e., the author of peace, so here, the servant is the bearer of salvation, the "light" and the "salvation".²

H. VERSE SEVEN

In a recent paper, unpublished at the time of this writing, Wyngaarden expressed preference for the passive forms of the verbs in verse seven, "To him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of nations". His reason for not accepting the Massoretic Text with its active verbs is the support of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the thrust of the Revised Standard Version, and the lack of supporting evidence from other sources.³ Delitzsch follows the Massoretic Text and the piel tense forms in the participle sub-

¹W. Fitch, "Isaiah", The New Bible Commentary, Edited by F. Davidson, A.M. Stibbes, and E.F. Kevan (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 597.

²Chayne, Op. Cit., p. 13

³Wyngaarden, "The Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah and the Dead Sea Scrolls", read at the 1957 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Wilmore, Kentucky.

stantive, signifying the thing, place, or instrument which effects what the psalm describes. "To him whose soul is condemned, to him whom people abhor."¹ Though the passage is obscure and difficult, it is descriptive of the deep abasement and general contempt to be brought against the servant by wicked men, who consider him unworthy of life, his soul is condemned.² They despise and abhor, but worse, tyrant kings shall make of him a slave. These descriptions are placed between a statement of Jehovah's relationship to Israel and the transition which comes in the fortune of the servant. The Lord is the Redeemer of Israel, and his "Holy One". Negatively, his holiness is revealed in judgment, positively, it is revealed in redemption. Though the despondency of verse four carries over into this verse, this Holy One of Israel, so despised and abhorred, shall be raised from deepest degradation to the highest honor, and the very rulers "shall see and arise", "princes shall bow themselves down" because Jehovah is faithful. This clause describes not only the promised change of the power of God but represents it as intended solely to promote his glory. Again, the servant need not be taken collectively, for he is addressed in this passage as the restorer of all humanity for all humanity. Kings shall worship the Servant for Jehovah's sake because he has chosen him.

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 227.

²See Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 14f for a fuller exposition of the term soul in relation to both the collective and individual servant.

I. VERSE EIGHT

"An acceptable time" does not convey the full meaning of this phrase in verse eight. It is rather in "a time of grace", or a suitable or appointed time for showing of favor. "In a time of favor have I heard thee." The object of address is still the servant and his people. Jehovah is no longer silent, but will answer the perplexity of Israel. The day of salvation will bring help. The grace of the covenant has been restored to the people, and will be mediated by the servant of Jehovah. The person of the servant of Jehovah now passes into the background and the exiles' return as ransomed ones is depicted.

J. VERSES NINE TO ELEVEN

Two types or figures are used to describe the deliverance and restoration. The first is a flock following their shepherd. The second is like a desert journey, bringing heat from the sun and from the sand. The servant will protect them from this, supplying food and drink and showing mercy in his leadership. The march is such that the very mountains, or all natural barriers, will be turned into a way. Skinner says the possessive "My" should be deleted for it cannot refer to the mountains of Palestine.¹ Nevertheless, as Alexander suggests, restriction of these figures to deliverance from Babylon can seem natural only to those have assumed the same hypothesis throughout the forgoing chapters.²

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 103. ²Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 218.

Scott and Delitzsch hold the view that it is a reference to the restoration following the captivity. The twelveth verse shows the restoration is widespread, though the Jews of Dispersion were doubtless in the prophet's mind. The directions are partly indefinite, since only north and west are specifically mentioned. "From afar" and "from the land of Sinim" would evidently refer to south and east respectively, though this cannot be dogmatically stated. There has been much written, and numerous views expressed for the meaning of the phrase 'the land of Sinim'. The Sinites of Palestine and the valley of Sin on the nearest boarder of Egypt have been suggested. Rawlinson feels it may have been Phoenicia (Gen. 10:17). The Targums and the Vulgate locate it in the south, "a southern land". China is the most commonly accepted view and well supported by Alexander, who ascribes the ancient name to the ruling house in China of the second and third centuries B.C. and the possibility that the name existed much earlier. Trade with India by the Chinese is known as early as the tenth and twelveth centuries B.C.¹ Delitzsch adds the names of Gesenius, who has closely studied the problem, Langles, Lassen, and Movers, specialists in Oriental antiquities, who all agree it is China.²

K. VERSE TWELVE

Certainly all creation must praise Jehovah for the mighty work done in restoring his people for his comfort is administered not only in word, but also in deed. Here again the glorious

¹Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 226. ²Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 230

liberty of the children of God appears as the focus from which the whole world is to be glorified. The joy of Israel becomes the joy of heaven and earth.

L. SUMMARY

The second Servant Song more conclusively describes the servant as an individual. The servant's birth, his name, and his speech, point to an individual. Such descriptions are not given to a collective group. The difficulty caused by the naming of the servant as Israel in verse three has already been answered as being an honorific title given to the servant as a "Prince with God". It is necessarily so for verse five clearly includes Israel in the work of restoration which the servant is to do. Verse six depicts the extension of this ministry of the servant beyond Israel to the nations. This ministry is the salvation Jehovah offers both to Israel and to the nations.

The suffering associated with the servant is introduced in the text for the first time. The servant is shown as despised and condemned. But this passage comes between the statement of Jehovah's relationship to Israel and the transition in the fortune of the servant, for the kings shall see the one they abhorred, and shall worship him.

This same servant is to aid Israel in regaining the desolate heritages. Full salvation is promised to Jehovah's people who have been scattered and afflicted. Here the servant is definitely the means of salvation to Israel. Therefore the second Servant Song

definitely describes an individual servant who is to be Jehovah's salvation, not only of the nations, but also to Israel. The restoration is more than the return from captivity for the whole context points to a greater deliverance, though Isaiah doubtless saw this as the first probable meaning when taken literally.

The conclusion of the exposition of the second Servant Song is that the servant is again revealed as an individual. Isaiah has portrayed more than before regarding the person and work of the servant. There is a new note in this section, that for a time the servant will suffer as a despised and abhorred slave of rulers before his final triumph.

CHAPTER V

AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 50:4-11

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. 5. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. 6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 7. For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. 8. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. 9. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

10. Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, and that obeyeth the voice of his servant? he that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God. 11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

The fiftieth chapter of Isaiah contains what expositors call the Third Servant Song. There are three distinct paragraphs in the chapter which Torrey says are a unit and closely related, to which most other writers would disagree. For Torrey, the opening verses are made into a resume in the eleventh verse. The fourth to ninth verses are made into a resume in the tenth verse. Verses four to

nine, which unmistakably deals with the servant, are for Torrey like the introduction of a new character into a scene or play, or like a second theme in an orchestral composition. Verses ten and eleven are not in obscurity to each other, but mutually related.¹ This makes the servant song purely a reference to the national experience of Israel and certainly does not answer all the difficulties.

Justification for separating these songs from their context has already been established. There appears to be an elevation of concept which of itself lifts these passages above their immediate setting. Further, their content is a separate concept from the context and therefore needs individual treatment. Verses four to eleven are the third such song; and although the servant is not specifically mentioned, there can be no doubt that the servant is meant. There is a close agreement in structure, in content, and meaning with the previous two servant songs. As Skinner would say, this passage forms an almost indispensable link of connection between the first two and the last servant song.² This passage describes the servant's intimate relation to Jehovah, his gift of eloquence, his persecution, and the steadfast faith with which he undergoes them. No mention of the evangelization of the heathen is made here.

The question is raised as to who is the speaker and to whom is he speaking. Cheyne gives this listing of opinions: Ewald thinks Israel is the speaker; Seinecke thinks the pious kernel of the nations

¹Torrey, The Second Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 389.

²Skinner, The Cambridge Bible, Op. Cit., p. 112.

Gesenius, Hitzig, and Knobel think the speaker is the prophet.¹

Skinner and Alexander and Delitzsch concur that the servant here speaks of himself and of his works. (This has been established in the exposition following.) It also makes for a closer connection with verses two and three preceeding, which reveal Jehovah as giving a self-witness that he has come with the gospel of redemption from sin and punishment, even though Israel has not received this message in faith. Delitzsch asks, "And in whom has Jehovah come?" He answers that most say in his prophets, which is not false, but insufficient to explain the further progress of his address. "For it is 'one' who speaks, and who else than the servant of Jehovah, who elsewhere also in these addresses is introduced speaking in his own name with dramatic immediacy."²

B. VERSE FOUR

"The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary;" (v. 4). The "tongue of them that are taught" can also be translated literally, "a disciple's tongue", or a trained or practiced tongue. The servant has the facility of a well trained scholar which Jehovah has given him. Some such as Skinner, question the plural "them" in this phrase but it is a matter of comparison rather than a reference to the number of the subject. Disciples have "awakened ears" through study, the servant has it as a gift. There is here a whole new con-

¹Cheyne, Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 25.

²Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 240.

cept for the prophetic office. The servant, because he is so gifted, has a ministry of consolation. The term, "weary", refers to a spiritual and inward weariness which the servant will sustain by a word. Scott points out a difficulty with the word "sustain", which the LXX renders "to speak in season"; Konig translates: "to refresh or to quicken"; Duham and Ehrlich translate: "to answer"; and Cheyne: "to teach".¹ Part of the difficulty arises in trying to assign this to the nation Israel, as Scott does, as their duty to their own nation, since the Gentiles are omitted in this reference. "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." This is constant communion, as Rawlinson suggests, the sense of being uninterrupted, a glad attentiveness.² The other prophets had only visions or dreams, occasional awakenings. Thus the stress of the servant's confession is upon his personal spiritual communion with God. As in 49:2, the servant's mouth was like a sword, and in 42:2, he does not cry aloud even though the Spirit lays upon him to establish justice; so also in 53:7, he opens not his mouth. Here again he has a peculiar ministry. Comparison could be drawn from Moses who spoke "face to face" with God. While wide awake, and with consciousness clear as day; every morning when sleep is past, Jehovah comes to him, awakens his ear and gives to him the signal to attend. This tongue befitting a disciple of God is a good sign of consolation.³

¹Scott, The Interpreter's Bible, Op. Cit., p. 583.

²Rawlinson, The Pulpit Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 248.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 241.

G. VERSE FIVE

Obedience is still the description the servant gives of himself.

"The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward." Having an open ear places the servant in the position to perceive Jehovah's will, in order that he might mediate the divine revelation. To this, he has not set himself in opposition, nor turned away from doing it. Here is a contrast between a true prophet and a professed servant. (Rawlinson) Two writers attribute this description, at least as a possibility, to Jeremiah. Skinner refers to the lack of rebellion as a characteristic of Jeremiah. This, he feels, contributed much to Isaiah's portrait of the servant of Jehovah.¹ Scott is more definite, suggesting that the prophet was speaking of Jeremiah. Saadiak identifies the servant with Jeremiah, as did Grotius, Bunsen, and Duham (originally).² If these songs are as related as even these authors would admit, the descriptions cannot refer to Jeremiah, though he may have had similar experiences as described in these verses. Cheyne points to the voluntary office of the servant. He was not a mechanical organ of revelation, but had a spiritual sympathy with it, even when it told of his own personal suffering involved. He did not stiffen his back in opposition to duty. "This declaration thus ascribed to the servant is decisive against the collective theory." Israel, like Jonah, pursued in a very opposite line of conduct than herein described, thus it could not be Israel. Further, Cheyne points to the words of the passage

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 115. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 584

which are only appropriate in the mouth of an individual.¹

The sufferings of the servant are described in verse five as being beaten, hair plucked, insulted, and spit upon. Two references in the Psalms are suggested in this connection: Psalm 22:7, "All they that see me laugh to scorn," and Psalm 129:3, "The plowers plowed upon my back." Most writers agree the language is figurative. Cheyne says it is figurative "since there is no one in the religious history of Israel to whom they can be literally applied."² It may be, as Skinner suggests, a reference to an extreme Oriental insult, plucking of the hair of the beard.³ Both Scott and Wyngaarden refer to the Dead Sea Scrolls which in place of "plucked off the hair", the words, "my cheeks to metal rods, " are used. The LXX translates "scourges".⁴

Volz supposes that the Jews objected to his missionary activity beyond the confines of Israel. He was surrendering the major reality of Israel's faith -- her election. He was a heretic, a blasphemer, and one may add, a visionary enthusiast, carried off into the raptures of eschatological fantasy.⁵

D. VERSE SIX

The prophet is too idealistic for Israel. Scott concluded that in that case the prophet is identifying his own work with the missionary work of the servant.⁶ Smith adequately answers this

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 26. ²Ibid.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 115. ⁴Scott, Op. Cit., p. 584.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 585.

problem in an exposition of verse six as follows:

These are not national sufferings: They are no reflection of the hard usage which the captive Israel suffered from Babylon. They are the reflection of the reproach and pains, which, for the sake of God's Word, individual Israelites more than once experienced from their own nation. But if individual experience, and not national, form the original of this picture of the servant as martyr, then surely we have in this another strong reason against the objection to recognize in the servant at least an individual. It may be, of course, that for the moment our prophet feels that this frequent experience of individuals in Israel is to be realized by the faithful Israel, as a whole, in their treatment by the rest of their cruel and unspiritual countrymen. But the fact that individuals have previously fulfilled this martyrdom in the history of Israel, surely makes it possible for our prophet to foresee that the servant, who is to fulfill it again, shall also be an individual.¹

E. VERSE SEVEN

Jehovah is the source of the servant's help. The third of four appeals in this section to Jehovah is made in verse seven, "For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know I shall not be put to shame." The pressures of his sufferings serve only to strengthen the servant, both in his assurance that he will not be disappointed in Jehovah's assistance and in his confidence in ultimate victory. These assurances so sustain that his face is "like a flint", his countenance reveals his determination. The consciousness of his high calling remains undisturbed, and all this

¹G. Adam Smith, "Isaiah", An Exposition of the Bible (Hartford: The S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), III, 330-1.

because the servant can say, "I know".

F. VERSE EIGHT

Another step is taken in the eighth verse. Not only does the servant say he knows he will not be put to shame, he also knows Jehovah will justify him for Jehovah is near. There is expressed a sense of personal fellowship and communion which results in his knowing that Jehovah will vindicate his cause. The servant will not be condemned of Jehovah but declared to be in the right. There is a justification of the servant's claims to divine authority and inspiration, in which he, not the people in this case, will be justified. Note the resemblance to Job's experience in what follows, "who will contend with me?" Yet, with Cheyne, recognition of a distinct difference is also pointed out. Job, the type of a righteous man, shrinks in terror from the issue, the servant, human and yet super-human in nature, has no doubt of a favorable result.¹ He therefore challenges his adversaries to join forces, to confront him or engage in conflict, for "who is mine adversary", or literally, "the master of my cause."²

G. VERSE NINE

Verse nine is inseparable from the former verse. For the fourth time, the servant declares that Jehovah will help him. The servant addresses his adversaries once more and asks, "who is he that shall condemn me?" God is the sole judge, not only of persons, but of the servant as well. God will assist his servant like an

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 27. ²Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 115.

advocate or judge. The last phrases of the verse are again figurative expressions, common to the Old Testament Hebrew writers, "Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." (v. 9) (Compare 51:8, Hosea 5:12) Though this judgment on the servant's adversaries seems trivial, it is really terrible, hinting as it does at a destructive power which works secretly and slowly, but all the more surely, at the ruin of its object.¹ This is a gradual but inevitable destruction.

H. VERSE TEN

Here the words of the servant cease and Jehovah's address continues from verse three. "Who among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God." (v. 10) This clearly shows that the speaker of verses four to nine was the servant. The question is put in order to declare his duty and his privilege to any one who will answer "I wish to be such an one". The "who", it is clear, is addressed to the Israelites, certainly the unfaithful ones who have lost their roots in the covenant people, says Scott.² Skinner, on the other hand, says this is an exhortation to pious Israel to imitate the servant's faith in God. It is spoken by the prophet in his own name, and is obviously based on the soliloquy of the servant in verses four to nine.³

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 244. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 587.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 116.

Cheyne, Delitzsch, and Rawlinson agree with the latter viewpoint that it is addressed to those who fear Jehovah, but have insufficient light to trust in him.

There is a question raised concerning the servant, as to who he is in this reference. Some would not necessarily agree with his being the speaker of verses four to nine as already stated. Rawlinson feels it is a general term used of any prophet of the time; it could be Isaiah himself, or Jeremiah or again, "the servant."¹ Cheyne thinks it is the same as in 44:26 where the writer refers to himself. This would isolate verses ten and eleven from the rest of the chapter, but he believes there is nothing in those verses directly referring to the preceeding paragraph. Otherwise, he says, it may be understood as His Servant, or the Servant of Jehovah, especially so called. Cheyne prefers the former view.² Alexander supports Calvin's explanation that the phrase is descriptive of God's ministers or messengers in general.

The verse may then be connected with what preceeds, as the words of the same speaker. . . as the terms employed appear to be descriptive of the people of Jehovah, or of some considerable class among them, the most probable conclusion seems to be, that by the Servant of Jehovah we are here to understand the Head as distinguished from the Body, with a secondary reference, perhaps, to his official representative, so far as he employs them in communication even with the Body itself.³

¹Rawlinson, Op. Cit., p. 349.

²Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 27.

³Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 251.

I. VERSE ELEVEN

While the first of these two verses (10-11) is addressed to those who fear and obey Jehovah, the second is addressed to those who resist his will. The former encourages trust, the latter threatens such as "kindle fire", or cause strife with retribution.

Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that
gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk
ye in the flame of your fire, and among the
brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye
have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.
(verse 11)

The expression is a general one denoting final ruin, and of course includes, although it may not specifically signify, a future state of misery.¹ The kindling of a fire may represent the unrestrained passion or the destruction which enemies of Jehovah prepare for his servants, (so Hitzig, Ewald, Knobel, and Delitsch) others (Vitringsi, Lowth, Gesenius) regard it a figurative expression of rebellion against the oppressors of the Jews. Again, to others (Calvin, Hohn, Birks, Weir) it is supposed to be a domestic fire which is meant, and they take this to be a figure for all merely human comforts and supports. Cheyne takes the view of Delitzsch and those with him.² Scott and Skinner would agree also. Delitzsch says, "The fire which they kindle is not the fire of the divine wrath, Jeremiah 17:4, but the fire of הַיָּדֵי , 9:17, especially the hell fire with which the wicked tongue is set aflame, . . . an image of the blasphemies and

¹Ibid., p. 253.

²Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 27.

and anathemas which they hurl at the servant of Jehve."¹ Jehovah has ordained that these shall "walk into the flame of their fire." Their mischievous designs will recoil on themselves at the hand of Jehovah.

Closing the verse "ye shall lie down in sorrow", poses the conclusion of the whole matter for the ungodly. The fire of their indignation becomes the fire of divine judgment, and this fire becomes their bed of pain. It is not certain whether by this is meant a definite place or not, writers differ, it is a condition in which the only sufficient description is "place of torment".

J. SUMMARY

The Second Servant Song forms an indispensable link between the third and fourth Song. The servant is speaking of his gift of wisdom, a new concept for the prophetic office. By this gift, a weary Israel is sustained. Hence, the Third Song presents the servant as an individual, rather than as Israel. Though the first part of the text could be fulfilled by a pious kernel within Israel, the gift of wisdom is uncommon to Israel, and the descriptions of suffering which follows likewise are not the sufferings of Israel.

Sufferings such as Isaiah describes within this text are not those of himself, nor of Jeremiah, though they may have had similar sufferings. The attitude of the servant toward suffering differs

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 245.

here, both from Israel's attitude, and that of the prophets. This is another evidence of an individual, rather than a collective servant. The servant faces his sufferings knowing the outcome. His assurance of Jehovah's help, coupled with his communion with Jehovah throughout his time of suffering, is striking.

The conclusion presented by the exposition of this passage is that the servant is definitely not Israel, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor any other figure in Jewish history. Rather, the servant is an individual who has a peculiar ministry of suffering, but helped by Jehovah until he is justified and brings judgment and sorrow on his adversaries.

CHAPTER VI

AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

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AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

A. INTRODUCTION

Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14. Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men), 15. so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which they had not heard shall they understand.

53:1. Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? 2. For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him;

he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The climax of the Servant Songs is reached in chapter 52:13 to 53:12, quoted above. Robinson expresses it as the "acme of Hebrew prophecy."

The profoundest thoughts in the Old Testament revelation are to be found in this section. It is a vindication of the servant, so clear and so true and wrought out with such a pathos and potency, that it holds first place in Messianic prophecy.¹

The last three verses of chapter fifty-two sum up in a clear and concise fashion the theme of chapter fifty-three and thus form an introduction to the larger development. It is fitting therefore, to begin with 52:13, as all authors mentioned thus far in this study would agree. Robinson's introduction most briefly and clearly sets forth the contents.

It consists of five strophes (as stanzas of a poem) of three verses each: the first of which describes the Servant's destiny (52:13-15); the second, his career (53:1-3); the third, his suffering (53:4-6); the fourth, his submission (53:7-9); the fifth, his reward (53:10-12).²

¹G. L. Robinson, The Book of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 145.

²Ibid., p. 146.

Because of the peculiarities of the style and of the vocabulary of this section, along with the fact that if it is omitted the prophecies on either side readily flow together, certain critics have supposed it is borrowed from an earlier writer and inserted here (so Ewald, see also Briggs, p. 315). As Smith continues to point out, such a versatile and dramatic writer as Isaiah could certainly have written such a passage, just as Shakespeare or any other writer can have their finest passage. Though its omission might not necessarily detract to the uncritical eye, its presence is most important to the whole. Observe also the juncture at which this section appears, just as the servant passages earlier were inserted, just after a call to the people to seize the redemption achieved for them and to come forth from Babylon.

It is the kind of pause or climax in their tale, which dramatic writers of all kinds employ for the solemn utterance of principles lying back, or transcending the scope, of the events of which they treat. . . . We see good reasons why the prophet should choose just this moment for uttering its unique and transcendent contents, as well as why he should employ it in a style and vocabulary, so different from his usual.¹

Even though it cannot be dogmatically asserted that the material of the prophecy was written in just the order in which it appears in the translation, it is better to treat it as a unity, than in separate segments which later compilers placed in this arrangement. The evidences from the earliest existent manuscripts add weight to the argument for their unity.

¹ Smith, The Expositor's Bible, Op. Cit., pp. 237-238.

B. VERSE THIRTEEN

Isaiah moved forward in his prophecy from a description of the departure from exile (vs. 52:11-12) to a greater deliverance, a spiritual deliverance from sin, made possible through the servant. "Behold, my servant shall deal wisely (prosper, mg.), he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high." (v. 13) First is seen the path by which the servant attains greatness and secondly, his increasing greatness itself. Delitzsch shows the meaning to be that of attaining good fortune by his own concurrence; that attained by fortunate action, or action adapted to the desirable result at which he aimed.¹ The servant's mission shall prosper, i.e., his career shall be crowned with success. Scott and Cheyne disagree with other commentators as to the source of his victory. To "deal wisely" they hold is the divine wisdom of the servant and the source of his world conquering faith as well as the secret of his success. (Note connection between 42:16 and 4)² This same verb is applied to the "Righteous Branch" in Jeremiah 23:5, and there refers to the Messiah.³ Smith adds that this phrase "deal wisely" shows how practical the sufferings of the servant are to be, for he endures them for a practical end. "The sufferings which in chapter fifty seemed to be the servant's misfortune, is here seen as his wisdom which shall issue in his glory."⁴ Note also here the accumulation of verbs, deal

¹Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 272.

²Cheyne, Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 40.

³Ibid. ⁴G. A. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 347.

wisely, exalted, lifted up, and, be very high. Seemingly no single expression was strong enough. There is a parallel in Psalms 89:27, "I also will make him firstborn, supreme above the kings of the earth." Also, note that Jehovah is the speaker, and note his reference to the servant as, "My servant". Jehovah had already spoken of his mission (42:1-4) and that there were to be sufferings involved (50:4-9) as the servant himself speaks of them, but no mention of why he must suffer. Jehovah here discloses the "why" of what preceeds. This first verse of the sections prepares for the stupendous message to follow. Assurance is given that the servant will perform well. The three statements of his exaltation reflect not a temporary accomplishment, but that having been exalted, he shall continue so to be.

C. VERSE FOURTEEN

Astonishment is the key word of the fourteenth verse, words expressing the stupified amazement, as one who beholds a strange reverse of fortune. Fitch gives this literal rendering of the verse, "So marred from the form of man was his aspect that his appearance was not that of a son of man". This explains why "many were suprised at his appearance."¹ Skinner makes a transition of this clause to follow 53:2 where he feels it fits perfectly and thus expresses why the figure is "marred". The servant was disfigured by suffering and disease so that he no longer bore a human appear-

¹Fitch, The New Bible Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 599.

ance.¹ Whether this is permissible is questioned, though the meaning is basically the same without the transition.

Two textual problems are discussed in connection with this section, one in this verse. The pronoun "Thee" shows a change of speakers in the middle of the verse, an abrupt change unaccounted for by the prophet. According to Skinner, The Targums and the Pes-hitto read "him" instead. The LXX preserves the second person throughout the verse. These both thus avoid the problem.² Scott follows the former suggestion. Delitzsch shows a parallel change in used by Isaiah in 42:20, 38:2 and 50:29, so he does take this reproach of changing persons. Delitzsch concludes that were it otherwise; and the people were addressed instead of the servant, a different rendering would appear in the verb. Hence, it is the servant who is addressed.³

D. VERSE FIFTEEN

The second textual problem is in verse fifteen, "so shall he sprinkle many nations". Every expositor and critic has seemingly personal interpretation. The margin reading for "sprinkle" is "startle", and finds the most favorable reception. Other comments on the word are listed here, not to confuse the issue, but to show how difficult any literal interpretation would be. Skinner shows that elsewhere

¹Skinner, The Cambridge Bible, Op. Cit., p. 134.

²Ibid.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 273.

the verb is translated as to scatter (a liquid) in small drops.

This is sustained by ancient authorities. (Aquila, Theodotion, Vulg)¹

Though Skinner prefers "startle", others support the former reading besides the ancients. Scott quotes from Lindblom who renders it, "He (i.e., the servant) will (at sometime in the future) besprinkle many peoples, i.e., purify many peoples from their sins." Scott likewise refers to Young's interpretation defending adequately the former rendering of "sprinkle" as in a priestly sense, so used in Leviticus 4:6; 8:11; 14:7,27,51, and in Numbers 8:7, etc. Scott himself follows G. F. Moore who renders it as, "were excited".²

Cheyne likewise disagrees from a contextual viewpoint which he claims will not support the rendering "sprinkle". The sacrificing function of the priest is nowhere brought into relation to a Messianic personage, Cheyne claims. Therefore, a word must be supplied. It is "clear that the sense requires a word expressing the shock of joyful surprise with which the nations shall greet the turn of the servant's fortune as an antithesis to the shock of horror in verse 14".³ The LXX translates it "many nations marvel at him". Both Gesenius and Ewald follow. Rawlinson concludes that "it is certainly hard to see how the idea of "sprinkling" comes in here even if it can mean "purifying".⁴

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 134.

²Scott, The Interpreter's Bible, Op. Cit., p. 618.

³Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 42.

⁴Rawlinson, The Pulpit Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 281.

Delitzsch shows that the hiph'al of this verb, sprinkle, elsewhere does mean the sprinkling of the blood with the finger, especially on the day of atonement upon the mercy seat and the altar of incense. It also is used of the sprinkling of water of purification on the leper by means of a brush. It is used of the sprinkling of the ashes of a red heifer on one made unclean by a dead body (Numbers 19:1), and in general, it is used with a view to atonement and sanctification. These, with the explanation of verses 53:4 and 53:8 have much in favor of the rendering "sprinkle". Delitzsch explains that the usus loquendi (usage in language) decides against this, "inasmuch as is never used with the accusative of the person or thing which is besprinkled. Thus Delitzsch follows Martini in using "startle". It is an upstarting in amazement that is meant. . . they will tremble in themselves with astonishment.¹ Clarke, Young, and Alexander retain "sprinkle", though Clarke admits he is dissatisfied with it.² Alexander and Young both follow what has been outlined above by Delitzsch in regarding the sprinkling as that done by a priest following the Mosiac law in purifying by blood, water, and oil. Young asks that if the word must be changed, to what shall it be changed? The text does not indicate, and it is not known what the original text was. Young appeals to the Dead Sea Scrolls for support.³

We do not have a plural in 52:15, in the Hebrew word, yaz-zeh, he shall sprinkle,

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 275.

²Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 202.

³Edward J. Young, Isaiah Fifty-Three (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 17-19.

where the Greek, LXX form is the plural thou-ma-son-tai. The Hebrew root na-zah has been given its usual meaning of sprinkle by many translators, but some have translated it: cause to leap, startle (in joyful surprise). If the Qumran reading were a plural, it might be read as a hophal, thus shall many nations be startled, surprised at him, and this reading would then be a good deal like the LXX sense, thus shall many nations wonder at him. But the LXX reading, thau-ma-soutai, receives no such support from the present Dead Sea Scroll, which has the singular yaz-zeh.¹

If these verses are, as already stated, a summary of what follows in an expanded text, the implication of a vicarious work here could more readily be sustained in view of the support for the rendering "sprinkle". Otherwise, the variant reading, "startle", is more suitable to the actual context, as the description of the reaction of many who were astonished at his marred visage. Wyngaarden suggests a further problem concerning the word "marred" (verse 14) which Brownlee repoints to read with the extra yodh, na-shac-ti, meaning, "I annointed." Though this is strongly contested, the extra yodh's in the text being meaningless, this would change the whole meaning of the text, and give definite support to the translation "sprinkle".² Worthy of note is another interpretation suggested Munster, who translates it, faciet laqui, and explains it thus in his note, " ל'י' yazzeh properly signifies to 'sprinkle', and to 'scatter' about drops; but here it means to speak, and to disseminate the word." This is pretty much as the Rabbins Kimchi and Sal.

¹Wyngaarden, Op. Cit., p. 1 (unpublished work). ²Ibid.

ben Melec explain it, referring to the expression, "dropping the word".¹ This would agree with what is said of the kings, whose mouths are stopped, and the opening phrase of chapter fifty-three, "Who hath believed our report." But the textual difficulty still remains unanswered. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown add a helpful word in support of the rendering, "sprinkle". Referring to the need of an antithesis for "astonished", they remark, "The antithesis is sufficient without any forced rendering. Many were astonished; so many (not merely men, but) nations shall be sprinkled." They were amazed at such an abject person claiming to be Messiah; yet it is He who shall justify and purify. The wonders of redemption, which had not been told to them before, shall be heralded as wonders never heard or seen paralleled, (Romans 15:21).²

The difficulty of translation is seen in this one instance as well as the difficulty of interpretation, which is the easier part. Either reading, that of the text, or of the margin, would be permissible without doing harm to the context. Whichever it may rightfully be, its effect on the kings was quite pronounced, their mouths were shut in astonishment, and this is turned into worshipful homage.

Who then, is this servant? Though chapter fifty-two is needed to answer this fully, an answer is needed before examining the remainder of this section. Again, two views are pitted against each other. Scott and Skinner both hold to the collective servant,

¹Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 202.

²Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, A Commentary (Hillsdale, Michigan: Names and King, 1880) II, 457.

based on one main argument, the "many" of verse fourteen, who were astonished. This could not be the nations as supposed for if the servant were an individual, nations would not see him, only individuals.¹ Scott adds that if it is the nation of Israel, political observers would see and be astonished at the unanticipated rise of Israel.² Alexander, with others as Young, Clarke, Cheyne, Smith, Delitzsch, recognizes that if it were a collective body, the servant then has never fulfilled the prophecy, even in coming out of exile. Further, if it be any other individual than the Messiah, the description, though similar, does not follow completely. Hence, only the Messiah can answer to the description contained herein.

This is a description, at the very outset, of the servant of Jehovah as an expiatory purifier, one who must be innocent himself in order to cleanse others, an officer and a character alike inapplicable either to the prophets, or a class, or to Israel as a nation, or even to the better class of Jews, much more to any single individual except one who claimed to be the Purifier of the guilty; and to whom many nations do at this day ascribe whatever purity of heart or life they either have or hope for.³

E. VERSE ONE

The second strophe begins at 53:1, "who hath believed our message, and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? The question arises as to the speaker. It cannot be the heathen for

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 134. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 615.

³Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 283.

they have never heard or seen what on the part of Israel is announced as already an accomplished fact. Thus, Delitzsch concludes it is Israel who speaks, for "when in prophetic language 'we' is used without explanation, it is always Israel which speaks, the prophet including himself in the people." Delitzsch shows further that the assumption of Calvin and others who hold the first person plural to include other preachers of salvation, cannot be sustained. Verse two continues Israel's confession of blindness to the calling of the servant. This assures verse one as spoken by Israel and connects it with verse fifteen preceeding. Israel has to lament that it put no faith in the message which it had already heard for long, the message bearing on the person and work of the servant of God, and pointing from his lowly beginning to his glorious end. The heathen accepted in faith what they had not hitherto heard.

Smith agrees with Delitzsch on the grounds that the Old Testament knows nothing of Israel bearing the sins of the Gentiles as herein expressed. Thus the prophet is showing the speaker to be Israel in verses one to six.¹ Cheyne says the speaker takes his stand with the Israelites of a later age (not among the Gentiles, as Rosemuller following the Rabbis) and bears penitent musings on the national rejection of the prophecies of the servant.²

The "report" is generally agreed to be the prophecies concerning the servant, particularly those just given by Jehovah (52:13-15). (so Cheyne, Del., Hengstenberg, Ewald) Others would translate, "that

¹G.A.Smith, Op. Cit., p. 348. ²Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 42.

which we, the prophets, heard." (so Calvin, Vitringi, Stier, and Urwick)¹ A paraphrase would read, "It was an incredible report that reached us; only those who were initiated into the divine purpose could have believed it." The report is thus the revelation from Jehovah through his prophets bearing on the servant's glorious destiny. The "arm of Jehovah" is a metaphor for Jehovah's operation.² "And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed." (v. 1) Scott bases his main argument for the collective servant idea on the relationship of this term to its reference to Israel in 40:10-11; 48:14; 51:2; and 52:10, a weak argument in view of the overwhelming evidences for the individual servant.³

F. VERSE TWO

One of several difficult and obscure phrases of this section is in verse two, "For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground." The utterance of astonishment at the paucity of true believers expressed in verse one prepares the way for a description of the servant's course of life. The first phrase is correctly translated here. The tenses are perfects. Young translates the tenses as futures to fit the context which begins and ends with future tenses. This he says sets the time of the entire action, and hence, the entire body of the section if future.⁴ This may have

¹Ibid., p. 43. ²Skinner, Op. Cit., pp. 137-8.

³Scott, Op. Cit., p. 618. ⁴Young, Op. Cit., pp. 32-33.

merit but Cheyne makes a clearer explanation. The perfect tenses can stand as translated as the perfect tense of "prophetic certitude..". That is, the action was already finished in divine counsels before the "foundations of the world" were made.¹ These images depict the poverty and insignificance of the small but fruitful beginning. The "dry ground" may refer to the enslaved and sunken people, the lowly conditions among which the servant was to make his earthly appearance. Some would connect the "root" with 11:1 and 11:10. The similarities may be only accidental, but are interesting to note, nevertheless. The reference here alone does not prove the servant is a scion of David.

The disfigured servant of 52:14 is portrayed in further detail in verse two also. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." The metaphors of verse two are often explained, according to Cheyne, of the pious kernel of the Jewish nation. They are called the "poor" and the "needy", from parallel passages in Psalm 37:14. It is clear that in Deutero-Isaiah the faithful were reduced to great straits among their unbelieving neighbors. "Still the prophecy as a whole is far from favorable to this view--it refers not to the type (the pious kernel of the nation) but to the antitype (the personal servant)."² This is an observation worthy of note. "No beauty that we should desire him" was seen to imply a physical appearance, the most

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 43. ²Ibid.

plausible interpretation of the phrase. The servant dwelt among Israel so that his bodily presence was before their eyes, yet Israel saw nothing attractive or pleasing in him. On the contrary, his appearance was repellant. It may also be true that there is a sense here of the response to what the servant was to accomplish among men, in which to men there was no appearance of beauty, form, or comeliness.

C. VERSE THREE

Leprosy is suggested by the portraiture of verse three. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not." A loathsome disease caused men to hide their faces from him. "Sorrow" should be translated "pain", for it includes the idea of the punishment of sin. The Servant's chief characteristic is to be found in his sorrows, yet men set no value on him. They did not know who he was or what he was doing. Young places importance on the word "man". Following his rejection by men, the man of sorrows stands in a form of remarkable contrast. Men reject the man as of no value.¹

H. VERSE FOUR

There are twelve distinct assertions in this chapter of the vicarious character of the suffering servant, according to Cheyne,

¹Young, Op. Cit., p. 40.

one being in verse four. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."¹ He bore his undeserved sufferings as a sacrifice on behalf of his people. It could be translated, "He took away."

Delitzsch speaks to this point with the following:

With the accusative of the sin, it signifies to take the guilt of the sin upon oneself as one's very own and to bear it, i.e., to acknowledge and feel it, e.g., Leviticus 5:1, 17; more frequently, to bear the punishment that has been incurred because of the sin, i.e., to pay for it, Leviticus 17:16; 20:19f; 25:15; and where the bearer is not himself the guilty person, to bear the sin as a mediator in order to expiate it, Leviticus 10:17.²

The plain meaning is that the servant endured in his own person the penal consequences of the people's guilt. "Stricken" refers to the stroke of God's hand and the direct consequence of sin. Again there is a picture portrayed in the likeness of a leper, marred, disfigured, isolated from human society, universally convicted by his contemporaries, special object of divine wrath, and confirmed by the parallel case of Job. Skinner says leprosy is the only strong image for such suffering as the wrath of God evidences on sin.³ Sin is often thought of as the cause of sickness and suffering, but here the servant suffers as the innocent for the guilty, the faultless for the wicked. The basic idea is more than that his suffering has a likeness to leprosy, or a sickness, he suffered vicariously.

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 45. ²Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 282.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 141

I. VERSE FIVE

In verse five the true state of the case is continued as opposed to this false estimate. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Here is described the work, not of his life, but of his death. According to Delitzsch, the noun is one used in reference to one who is mortally wounded though not yet dead, and the verb used of a heart wounded to death. "Stronger expressions for the violent and painful death the language did not afford."¹

Skinner shows a two-fold connection between the servant's passion and the people's sins. One, the servant's suffering was the penalty due as a consequence to their transgressions, and two, it was the remedy by which they were restored to spiritual health. The metaphors could be applied again to the ravages of leprosy. The "Chastisement" was that which was needful to procure peace for us.

The people suffered, but their suffering did not heal. They could only be healed by the servant's voluntary submission to the divine chastisement. Atonement is thus effected between Jehovah and Israel.² The punishment borne vicariously, and the vicarious suffering, were efficacious in the eye of God. Voluntary suffering here ended in death.

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 283-4. ²Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 141.

If he (servant) be only a personification of the pious kernel of the people of Israel, we must make the rather far-fetched supposition that the violent deaths of some individuals were imputed, as it were, to the whole of the believing community, and that they operated towards the conversion of the rest of the nations. . . if the whole nation is the servant, no rational explanation of this passage seems possible.¹

Cheyne concludes then that the meaning of this passage is perfectly clear, if the servant is an individual.²

J. VERSE SIX

The opening words of verse six, "all we", is another sure evidence that the servant is an individual, for Israel includes herself here in the "all". The servant could not even be the pious kernel, or the nation as a whole, nor even the body of the prophets, for all these are included as having gone astray. The emphasis is not only that all have strayed, but also each one individually. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The straying is not into exile but into the wilderness of sin. (Compare Ps. 119:176) The "iniquity of us all" was laid upon the servant. As punishment by an inner necessity overtakes the sinner, so the servant by Jehovah's will made himself the substitute for Israel. It necessarily follows that the punishment due Israel must fall on him.³ While Israel heaped guilt upon guilt, it was the servant of Jehovah who bore the guilt, that he might expiate

¹ Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 46. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid., p. 46.

it by his sufferings. The question of punishment of the innocent in place of the guilty is answered well by Delitzsch, who shows the servant must stand

face to face with God, to that wrath which is the inevitable divine correlate of human sin. And what else could have moved God not to let the all-bitter cup of death pass from him, except the ethical impossibility of recognizing the atonement as really accomplished, till the representative of the guilty, who stood over against him taking their guilt upon himself, should have tasted the punishment that guilt had incurred?¹

People now see that although he suffered greatly he was himself innocent, and for this they have concluded that he suffered vicariously, bearing the penalty due to the sin of his nation. This change of attitude toward the servant marks the beginning of repentance in the people.² Young suggests five doctrines arising out of this verse. One, the doctrine of total depravity, all have gone astray. (The writer would agree, man is depraved, but the atonement is not "limited".) Two, the doctrine of God's sovereignty--for he is the ultimate cause of the servant's suffering. Three, the doctrine of salvation by grace, the servant, by having our iniquity light upon Him, has done that which was necessary to save His people. The fourth, the doctrine of satisfaction and expiation, already discussed, and number five, the doctrine of Divine providence, the servant's suffering was not accidental.³

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 287. ²Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 140.

³Young, Op. Cit., pp. 57-8.

K. VERSE SEVEN

The fourth strophe describes how the servant suffered and died and was buried. "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (v. 7) The willing sufferer is explained by the figure, "as a lamb", and the self-surrendering silence by the figure, "as a sheep." Delitzsch says, "all the New Testament utterances concerning the Lamb of God are derived from this prophecy."¹ Delitzsch translates "willingly suffered", and Young, in agreement, translates, "He was afflicted, and He suffered Himself to be afflicted." Thus the suffering was voluntary and suffered in patience.² That it is not a reference to Jeremiah is clearly shown by Cheyne. He points out in Jeremiah 11:19, "But I was like a lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me", that this latter part distinguishes Jeremiah from the servant.³

L. VERSE EIGHT

"By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?" (v. 8) Here is another of the obscure phrases, variously interpreted. "He was taken by oppression and judgment."

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 288. ²Young, Op. Cit., p. 59.

³Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 47.

(Scott) "From prison and from judgment hath he been taken away."

(Delitzsch) Actually there are three possible interpretations in the Hebrew. One, that because of an oppressive judgment he was taken, two, that without oppression or hinderance and without judgment he was taken, and three, as in the King James version, "From oppression and judgment he was taken away." Young prefers the latter, assuming by this that the prophet is speaking of the Servant's being taken away from an oppressive judgment.¹ Young, referring to and in agreement with North, translates "from prison". North shows the verb literally means, "restraint", or "coercion". It has been questioned whether it can be used in the more concrete sense of 'prison', but such is its sense as used elsewhere. (II Kings 17:4; Jeremiah 33:1; 39:15).² The idea is that of a perversion of justice. (so Delitzsch)³ The idea is through, not out of, judgment and oppression. The judgment is the sentence of death. By a violent death he was "cut off out of the land of the living." The meaning of "his generation", has also been a matter of debate. Luther refers it to his length of life, i.e., there shall be no end of his future days. Calvin includes the days of his church which is inseparable from himself. Hengstenberg, "His posterity."⁴ Delitzsch and Young refer it to his contemporaries, which alone gives the thought which suits this picture of his sufferings, and especially what follows it.⁵ "If this rendering

¹Young, Op. Cit., pp. 60-61.

²North, The Suffering Servant In Deutero-Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 124.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., pl. 289. ⁴Jamieson, Op. Cit., p. 460.

⁵Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 290.

is correct, the verse teaches that the death of the servant caused little comment upon the part of His own generation."¹ "Stricken" for "my people" shows again the vicarious suffering of the servant. Cheyne stresses here the individuality of the reference, "throughout this chapter the individuality of the sufferer is rigidly adhered to."² For the first clause of verse eight Skinner suggests the whole matter can be settled when it is decided whether the death of the servant is conceived as caused directly by man or by God through sickness. For the last clause, his exposition answers the question:

. . . as in verse four leprosy is suggested as the cause of the servant's disfigurement, and its use here in connection with his death is in favor of the view that he died of his sickness and not by the hands of his persecutors.³

M. VERSE NINE

As verse seven describes the patience with which he suffered and verse eight his departure, so verse nine looks back to his burial. "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Scott says either the meaning of "rich" is lost to us, or it is to be understood as having the same meaning as "wicked".⁴ Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Young, and Cheyne agree with the sense, "His grave was appointed", the denial of honorable burial

¹Young, Op. Cit., p. 65. ²Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 48.

³Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 144. ⁴Scott, Op. Cit., p. 627.

being accounted a great ignominy. Perhaps the same sense as the case of Absalom, being buried away from the family sepulchre. Some would make the sense to be that poverty and piety were equivalents, while riches and wickedness were equivalents. But scriptural usage will not support such claims.¹ The thought here then is that though his grave was planned to be with the wicked, in reality it was with the rich. Skinner admits that here there is proof of an individual meaning for the servant and not a collective idea.² The idea of "no violence" is parallel with Job's experience (comp. Job 16:17), but the description is much more than that of Job's experience. "Neither was any deceit in his mouth", Skinner says here "strongly suggest that the prophet had in his mind the concept of a perfectly sinless character."³

N. VERSE TEN

Reasons for all this become more clear in the last strophe, disclosing the background of this destiny. Thus was executed the decree of God's grace for salvation of his people. "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." (v. 10) The servant is here revealed as having suffered by the will of God. It shows the purpose of the chastisement that he

¹ Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 49. ² Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 145.

³ Ibid., p. 146.

suffered. Skinner remarks that no doubt the atoning effect of the suffering is the condition of Jehovah's great purpose being attained.¹ Scott rightly points out that although the servant offers his life as a guilt offering he shall yet have the posterity (seed) he was denied in his lifetime. He says the unique character of the sufferer here is extraordinary. The servant lives in intimate fellowship and communion with God. "It is the nations who live a broken and unholy existence and who need reconciliation and restoration". Therefore, their sin must be atoned for. The idea of "prolong his days" may suggest the resurrection of an individual, but this idea is of a later date than II Isaiah.² It is difficult to follow Scott's reasoning, especially when the context clearly shows Israel confessing their sin, and the Gentiles are not mentioned. How then, as already noted, can this possible be a collective servant described here? "The servant is a person, not a personification of the pious kernel of Israel. His sufferings are vicarious and voluntary."³ Hence it is seen that the servant offers his life himself and not Jehovah. "As in verse five, the divine servant is represented as a sin offering, His death being an expiation, so here He is described as a guilt offering, his death being a satisfaction."⁴ The satisfaction was for a holy covenant that had been broken by a theoretically holy people, i.e., dedicated to God, but who in reality were altogether unholy. There are

¹Ibid., p. 147. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 629.

³Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 50. ⁴Ibid.

two evidences which at least could be interpreted as referring to the resurrection. "Shall see his seed" shows evidence he shall live after being cut off, and "prolong his days", indicating that "death hath no more dominion over him".¹

O. VERSE ELEVEN

A priestly exercise is indicated in verse eleven. "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities." Scott says the meaning of the servant, both the nature of his service and its consequences, is revealed in a succession of lines which have no parallel in the Old Testament. The verbs are especially noteworthy. The servant makes himself an offering for sin, makes many to be accounted righteous, pours out his soul to death, is numbered with the transgressors, bears the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.² The servant is now predicted as looking at what he has accomplished and being satisfied. Knowledge is that which is regarded as a qualification for the calling of a priest, prophet, or king. The servant of God knows Him with whom he stands in the fellowship of love, and thus, as the righteous one, makes others participant of righteousness when they recognize him, his person and work, and enter into living fellowship with him.³

The servant is called the righteous one as a guarantee of his ability

¹Ibid., p. 51. ²Scott, Op. Cit., p. 629.

³Delitzsch, Op. Cit., p. 302.

for making "the many" righteous, whether Jews (preferred here) or Gentiles (as suggested elsewhere, v. 12).¹ The reason the servant can justify many is because "he shall bear their iniquities."

P. VERSE TWELVE

Victorious dominion dominates the closing verse of the servant songs. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (v. 12) The dividing of the spoil is a proverbial expression for victory and success.² The idea is, no doubt, that without striking a blow the servant of Jehovah has reached the result as others have by the sword (Cyrus). Through the servant's sacrificial death, the kingdom of God enters into the rank of world-conquering powers (Hengst). Thus the servant of Jehovah becomes at last practically identical with the Messianic King.³

The essence of the servant's sacrifice lies in the fact that whilst himself innocent he acquiesces in the divine judgment on sin, and willingly endures it for the sake of his people. And it is the perception of this truth on the part of the people that brings home to them the sense of their own guilt and removes the obstacle which their impenitance had interposed to Jehovah's purpose of salvation. The suffering of the

¹Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 52. ²Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 148.

³Cheyne, Op. Cit., p. 53.

innocent on behalf of the guilty is thus seen to be a moral necessity, since it was only through such suffering as the sinless Servant of the Lord was alone capable of, that punishment could reach its end in the taking away of sins and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness.¹

Q. SUMMARY

First place in Messianic prophecy is given to the text of the fourth Servant Song. There are five strophes of three verses each. These strophes deal with the servant's destiny, his career, his suffering, his submission, and lastly, his reward. Pictured as a priest, rather than as a prophet, the servant suffers vicariously for the sins of others.

Again, the deliverance procured is spiritual, as Isaiah moves forward in his prophecy from the exile and departure to the greater work of the servant. Though before no reason was given for the servant's suffering, that reason is now revealed. The response to the servant is summed up in the word, astonishment, for his appearance was not that of any ordinary man, since suffering had so marred him.

Israel rejected the ministry of the servant but the heathen accepted him, though they had not hitherto heard of him. That the servant was not the pious kernel within Israel has been clearly shown, for the servant was the antitype while the pious were the type of the poor and needy. Further, the servant dwelt among Israel, still they saw nothing desirable in him. Yet, it was for

¹Skinner, Op. Cit., p. 150.

them that he suffered vicariously, as asserted twelve times in the text of the fourth Song. The servant suffers as an innocent party for the guilty party, another argument against the collective view of the servant, for what individual or group of individuals could ever have their death imputed as a means of salvation for the nations. As Cheyne suggests, if Israel is the servant, there is no rational explanation of this passage. Israel is included in the all who have gone astray. The emphasis is on an individual in iniquity being atoned for by the sufferings of the servant.

Other evidences of an individual servant include his death and burial, the sinlessness of his character, his voluntary suffering, his resurrection alluded to in verse ten, and the priestly activities of the servant.

For the summary of various views concerning the servant who is portrayed in these songs, turn to chapter nine. A sufficient conclusion can be made now in two statements from Rawlinson: First, the portraiture of the servant of the Lord in this place has so strong an individuality and such marked personal features, it cannot possibly be a personified collective servant. Secondly, the description in this passage does go infinitely beyond anything of which a mere man is capable, that it can only refer to the unique man, the God-man, Christ.¹

¹Rawlinson, Op. Cit., p. 294.

CHAPTER VII

THE VALIDITY OF PREDICTION IN RELATION TO THE
PROPHECIES OF THE SERVANT IN DEUTERO-ISAIAH

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THE VALIDITY OF PREDICTION IN RELATION TO THE PROPHECIES OF THE SERVANT IN DEUTERO - ISAIAH

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to state the view of prophecy which is held basic to the interpretation of the selected Biblical passages of Isaiah used in this study. The purpose is not to discuss the various views held by others concerning prophecy or prediction in prophecy. The view discussed here is that view to which the various expositors consulted in this study are congenial.

B. DEFINITION OF PROPHET

The principle word used to designate the prophets was "nabhi" (נָבִי). Its precise etymology cannot be ascertained with certainty, but its usage shows that its primary meaning was one who declared the message which God had given to him. Two other words are also used, namely, "ro'eh" (רֹאֶה) and "hozeh" (הוֹצֵה), which are practically synonymous. Both stress the method of receiving revelation, namely, seeing. At the same time, the function of those who are designated by these terms is that of declaring the word of God. The three words are therefore used to designate the same individual, that is, the prophet.¹

¹E. J. Young, My Servants the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), pp. 65-66.

C. OLD TESTAMENT USAGE

From Old Testament usage it is clear that prophesying and declaring the word of the Lord are one and the same thing. (Ez. 37:4; Deut. 18:18b) The imparting of the Spirit on the person or persons was a necessary part of true prophesying. The prophet was the accredited speaker for God.

It is not denied that genuine prophecy presupposed in the person exercising the prophetic function a special natural endowment, or that it was psychologically conditioned. There are some who can just see things more clearly and interpret those things for all; but more, the genuine prophet is conscious of being laid hold of by the Spirit of God as other men are not; receiving a message from Jehovah which is not a product of his own thought. It is an imparted thought to him with perfect clearness and overpowering certainty.¹

The unique character of Old Testament prophecy is thus established by the prophet's own words. They believed themselves to have been the recipients of revelation from the God of Israel, and were compelled to give utterance to this message from Jehovah. Young suggests three factors which are involved. First, the psychological conviction that God had actually spoken to them. This conviction characterized the entire Old Testament prophetic movement which is the second factor involved. If only one prophet had been so convicted, there would be room to question his statement,

¹James Orr, The Problem of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 451.

but all the prophets, from an unnamed prophet speaking to Eli (I Sam. 2:27) to Malachi (Mal. 1:1) all proclaim, "Thus saith the Lord." The third factor concerns the body of predictions themselves. When taken together these predictions present a teleological trend to the whole. The prophets are often looking forward. Eschatology is woven into the very texture of the entire prophetic fabric. When these three elements are so recognized, it is evident that their prophecy was a revelation, rather than a phenomenon which grew out of a similar phenomena to be found elsewhere.¹

To put this into a positive proposition, Oehler's statement is quoted:

The prophet, as such, knows himself to be the organ of Divine revelation, in virtue both of a Divine vocation, capable of being known by him as such, and which came to him with irresistible power, and also of his endowment with the enlightening, sanctifying, and strengthening Spirit of God. Accordingly, a prophet knows the objective reality, as the word of God, of that word which he proclaims.²

D. FORMS OF ECSTASY

It is to be noted further that certain forms of ecstasy are not characteristic of the true prophet of Jehovah. Although visions came and God did speak to the prophet when he was in a receptive mood, this does not mean the prophet was in ecstatic trances as the "prophets" of Canaan imposed upon themselves. The true pro-

¹Young, Op. Cit., pp. 161-163.

²Gustav Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, ed. by George E. Day (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1883), p. 465.

phet was overpowered by the Spirit of God. True, there were times when he was soothed by music, or sat by a murmuring river as God spoke. It is, therefore, maintained that the prophets spoke the divine message as it was revealed to them by the spirit. This does not destroy the personality or characteristics of the individual prophet, seen in his prophecy, though the message may far surpass his individual consciousness to see all that is intended by the imparting Spirit. The forms show the clothing of the human medium through which they pass for the prophets cannot transcend the psychological and physical features of human nature.

E. PREDICTION IN PROPHECY

Prediction constitutes but one feature of genuine prophecy, and that not the common, but the extraordinary feature. It is only one section, and that the smallest, of the range of prophetic instruction. Briggs contends that prediction is a characteristic of all religions, and exists in other domains as well. Prediction as a phase of Hebrew prophecy can only be understood from the general conception of religious instruction. Prediction is the instruction that prophecy gives as it looks forth from the present into the future. Prediction is the most important section of Hebrew prophecy, simply because it presents the essential ideal of the completion of redemption through the Messiah.¹

¹Briggs, Messianic Prophecy, Op. Cit., pp. 34-36.

This prediction is to be distinguished from the many sources resorted to by the heathen, such as necromancy, magic, divination, augury, astrology, palmistry, the use of the Teraphim; all of which are forbidden in the Old Testament under penalty of death. The only source of prediction to which the Hebrews were allowed to resort was the sacred lot, whose decision was an expression of the will of Jehovah. Jehovah was the sole source of prediction. He gave it and withheld it as he pleased.¹ This prediction is seen in Isaiah 42:9, "New things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." (compare 43:9-13; 44:25; 45:21)

F. FORMS USED TO EXPRESS PROPHECY

There are various forms used to express the prophecy, such as external things, like cords, sticks, yokes, and vessels. These represent in a crude but graphic way the impending event. The Hebrew prophets ordinarily used higher symbols which are called types, such as historic persons or events, great institutions, or experience in real life. The exact correspondence or type or antitype is impossible. Parable, allegory, and the tale are also employed by the prophets. The height of Hebrew prophecy is called direct prophecy. It is at these times when the prophets expect their predictions to be realized very soon.

¹Ibid., p. 36.

G. TIME ELEMENT

The time element in prophecy is an important one. Briggs says it is a law of predictive prophecy that the prophet foresees the final goal to which the movement of his times are tending, and which they will inevitable reach; but he does not foresee all the conditions and circumstances that intervene or modify the approaches to that end. Prediction rises above temporal measurement and chronological distinctions. The end in view ever seems near as the object of hope and ardent longing, or the object of dread and anxious foreboding, the central theme of the message of comfort or of warning; and yet the prophet knows not the times nor seasons which God has reserved to himself. The effect of the interplay of human freedom and the divine law also contributes to the fulfillment of the prophecy.¹

H. PLACE OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Messianic prophecy is seen as the culmination of Hebrew prophecy as well as the central theme. Messianic prophecy is the prediction of the completion of redemption through the Messiah. It is at this point that the predictions of Isaiah stand at the peak of predictive prophecy. There are certain passages within this section which are Messianic, the remainder refers to other events.

¹Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 20.

I. THREE SUGGESTED DELIVERANCES

Clarke suggests three deliverances in this part of Isaiah.

(1) the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, (2) the deliverance of the Gentiles from ignorance and idolatry, and (3) the deliverance of mankind from captivity and sin. These three are subordinate one to another, and the latter two are shadowed by the image of the first. Cyrus effected the first deliverance. A greater person effects the latter two deliverances. He is called the servant, the elect of God, in whom His soul delights; Israel, in whom God will be glorified. This agent is the Messiah. The first deliverance is necessary to accomplish the latter two, the second deliverance is necessary before the third, or rather, is involved in it. So Isaiah has taken them in their connective view, as a prophet and as a poet.¹

J. APPLICATION TO THE SERVANT PASSAGES

This clarifies the point of interpretation. All predictions in a limited sense are not specific and exclusive, i.e., limited to one occasion or emergency, but descriptive of a sequence of events. All predictions of Isaiah are not to be literally understood, neither are all predictions to be always understood in a figurative or spiritual sense.²

¹Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 20.

²Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 15.

In the servant passages discussed in this study the servant, the savior of Israel and of the Gentiles, falls into the same scene with the exile. The distant future is here, as always, foreshortened to the prophets gaze; with the end of the exile the punishment of Israel comes to a final end; on the verge of the exile dawns the final glory of Israel and the final salvation of all mankind. This combination is regarded as one of the strongest confirmations of the pre-exilic origin of these addresses according to Delitzsch.¹

The real objection to this position regarding prediction and prophecy lies in the fact that it posits the entrance of the supernatural into human history in a special, direct manner. There is naturally objection to this view today by those who deny the supernatural and exalt human reason, but human reason must be in accord with God's reason, or else it is in error. To elevate human reason to the position of a supreme arbiter of all things is to attribute to it a function which it cannot discharge.² Therefore, prediction in prophecy is valid as used by the Old Testament prophets. When Isaiah predicted the events concerning the servant they were of no greater significance historically than other predictions. However, in regard to Jehovah's redemptive work for mankind, Isaiah's servant passages are of the greatest significance for they stand at the peak of predictive prophecy.

¹ Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 240.

² Young, Op. Cit., p. 90.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION OF THE
SERVANT PASSAGES

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THE NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION OF THE SERVANT PASSAGES

A. METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

The statement has been made and defended that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. The logical interpretation of the Servant Songs therefore is found in the New Testament. A number of the important passages are examined showing the view of Jesus, and the New Testament writers.

Certain scholars, as Gusset, Wolf, and Rosenmuller, have established rules by which to guide the student to a proper interpretation of those passages in the New Testament which are indicated as being a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Clarke gives these four rules:

- I. When the thing predicted is "literally" accomplished.
- II. When that is done, of which the scripture has spoken, not in a 'literal' sense, but in a 'spiritual sense'.
- III. When a thing is done neither in a 'literal' nor 'spiritual sense', according to the fact referred to in the Scripture; but is 'similar' to that fact.
- IV. When that which has been mentioned in the Old Testament as formerly done, is accomplished in a 'larger' and more 'extensive sense' in the New Testament.¹

It is also well to keep in mind that the New Testament writers quoted from the copies of the Septuagint which they possessed, which very

¹ Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, Op. Cit., V, 49.

probably accounts for some of the variant readings. There are other reasons as well for the various ways in which the Old Testament is used, such as the writers' own freedom in copying or quoting material, or the writers' own interpretation reflected in the way they handled the Old Testament material. If, therefore, the writers have not copied the Old Testament text exactly, it does not follow that they have misused the text, but rather, that they have used their prerogative to interpret. The writers did have the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to direct their work. The very fact that their work can be characterized by four rules is conclusive of the order and care used by the writers.

B. DIRECT QUOTATIONS IN THE GOSPELS

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the words of Isaiah 40:3 as descriptive of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ. This immediately links the interpretation of Deutero-Isaiah with the gospel accounts of the ministry of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ. The first direct quotation from Isaiah is found in Matthew 12:17-21. Isaiah 42:1-3 is quoted. Jesus used it here as a direct reference concerning himself. "That it might be fulfilled" is an expression that introduces the quotation. Alford insists that there can be no other interpretation of "that", than, "in order that". It is used only of the purpose, not of the result, here or anywhere.¹

¹ Henry Alford, The New Testament For English Reader (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 86.

"He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; neither shall any hear his voice in the streets". (Mt. 12:19) Alexander rejects the common explanation that this nineteenth verse is a reference to the mild and modest demeanour of the Savior, and says it is rather in respect to the nature of His kingdom and the means by which it was to be established.¹ In the original Old Testament passage, Atkinson says the reference is to Israel, i.e., the true Israel of God. This true Israel is gathered up in the person of the Messiah. The gospel is to be the means by which the Gentiles know the righteousness of God. He concludes that verses nineteen and twenty refer to the gentleness of Jesus. Jesus never clamoured for a hearing or wrangled in debate. He never brushed aside or trampled on the weakest faith or the wounded conscience.² Other verses that show that the type of ministry Jesus had agrees with this description include Matthew 8:4; 9:30; 11:15; 14:13; John 5:13; 6:15; 7:3,4; 8:59; and 10:40. John 8:8-11 shows the extreme tenderness, suitable in view of Isaiah 42:3.

Included in this section from Matthew twelve is the reference to Jehovah's Spirit being upon the servant. (Isa. 42:1) Though the baptismal experience is discussed later in this chapter, there are several references to the fulfillment of this prophecy. Luke 2:40, "and the grace of God was upon him," and 3:22, "And the Holy Spirit

¹ Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 106.

² Basil F. C. Atkinson, "The Gospel According to Matthew", The New Bible Commentary, ed. Davidson, Stibbs, and Kevan (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 788.

descended in a bodily form," and 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me."

Critics have here pointed to the evidence of two sources which Matthew used. The first verses (18-20) are quoted from the Hebrew text and verse twenty-one from the LXX. This they say suggests another hand is writing, or else another earlier history of the quotation is used. It is not necessary to so divide the writing, nor to forbid Matthew of using a combination of quotations together. The full statement is true of Jesus. Were even the critics correct, it would but be added evidence of the interpretation of this passage as a direct reference to Jesus as the Messiah.

The second direct reference is in St. Luke 22:37, "And he was reckoned with transgressors", found also in Isaiah 53:12. Again it is Jesus speaking of himself and of his death which would fulfill his sufferings. "For that which concerneth me hath fulfillment (end)".

Jesus not only indicated the prophecy was of him, but that the prophecy would be accomplished fully.

C. INDIRECT QUOTATIONS

Though direct quotes are few among the Synoptics, there are a number of definite references to the contents of the servant songs. Principle among these are Mark 1:11, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." (comp. Luke 3:22 and Matt. 3:17) Zimmerli compares the Greek passages of the three Synoptics and arrives at the conclusion that the proper interpretation is actually from the Hebrew text. Late Judaism does not show familiarity with the term

$\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon$, but rather translates, $\upsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon$. In a similar comparison with Matthew 12:18 where Isaiah 42:1 is quoted, it is even more conclusive that the Hebrew text is used.¹ The description of Jesus as the $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ is therefore very old. St. John adds weight to the argument as in 1:34 he recorded the words of John the Baptist, "and I have seen, and have born witness that this is the Son of God." Zimmerli says this shows conclusively that the baptismal declaration originally must have been a consistent quotation from Isaiah 42:1.² C. R. North adds further that these words are determinative and decisive of the whole course of Jesus' ministry. "It is inconceivable that the disciples or the evangelists had the insight to invent them. They are a conflation of Psalms 2:7, "Thou art my son," and Isaiah 42:1, "in whom I am well pleased."³ Tasker suggests that this divine revelation was similar to that which Moses, the first redeemer of Israel, had received when he was summoned by a divine voice to undertake a task. "It is also worth noting that these words would probably suggest to Jesus the words of Isaiah 42:1. . . Like Israel of old he was God's Son."⁴

The covenant is likewise another point of reference. Isaiah 42:6 suggests the servant is to be the covenant of the people, and the light of the Gentiles. In Simeon's remarks, at the time Jesus

¹ Zimmerli, The Servant of God, Op. Cit., p. 81.

² Ibid., p. 82.

³ North, The Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 25.

⁴ R. V. G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), pp. 24-5.

was presented at the temple, there is an application of the epithets of Isaiah 42:6 to Jesus Christ, "A light for revelation to the Gentiles," Luke 2:32. In Mark 14:24 and Luke 22:20, Jesus describes the "cup" as the blood of the covenant (new) which is poured out for many. There is an indirect contrast here between the mystery of this new covenant and the shadows of the law. Thus it was to Israel, who had so failed in keeping the law, that Jehovah twice said he would give his servant for a covenant. (Isaiah 42:6; 49:8)

Another reference is found in Luke 1:31, "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." Isaiah 49:1 says, "Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name." The angel Gabriel had thus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah in the annunciation of Jesus' birth. Both the office of Christ and his name were announced.

D. REFERENCES TO, OR FULFILLMENT OF, THE SERVANT PASSAGES

There are either references to, or fulfillment of, nearly all the verses in the servant passages. Isaiah 49:2 speaks of the Servant's mouth being like a sharp sword. Hebrews 4:12 says "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword." The Revelation of John has six similar references speaking of Christ, (1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15,21). The comparison with Isaiah 11:4 is noteworthy at this point. Jehovah also says he will be glorified in the servant. As Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name; there came a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified

it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:28)

When Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37), and expressed his grief on various occasions at the unbelief of the people, he fulfilled Isaiah 49:4, "But I said, I have labored in vain." There are numerous verses indicating that Jesus rendered service to his Father, (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 17:4). John 6:38 expresses it best, "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Jesus was to be the salvation from Jehovah to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6), and Peter so expressed it in Acts 4:12, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name given among men, wherein we must be saved." St. Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah 49:6 in their address at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:47f). Their use indicates that it is not the Messiah exclusively that is meant, but his people are also included.¹

The paradox of Isaiah 49:7, which portrays the servant as a servant of kings and proceeds the very reverse of that, is fulfilled in the life of Jesus at his trial when "Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him." (Luke 23:11) John describes also the crown of thorns, the purple garment and the "Hail, King of the Jews". (John 19:1-2) Early Christian history of the first four centuries completes the accomplishment of the verse, though there may be an eschatological teaching here that is still future.

¹Alexander, Op. Cit., p. 216.

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul quoted from Isaiah 49:8, "at an acceptable time have I hearkened unto thee, and in the day of salvation did I succor thee", (II Cor. 6:2). This use in connection with Acts 13:47 (see above) and Isaiah 49:6, according to Alexander, "precludes the supposition of an accidental or unmeaning application of this passage to the people or ministers of Christ as well as to himself." (the pronoun, himself, meaning Christ as the Head)¹

The words of Jesus in John 8:28 and 29 are a fulfillment of Isaiah 50:4, for Jesus said, "as the Father taught me, I speak these things." He knew how to "sustain the weary" by his invitation to find rest, given in Matthew 11:28. Jesus was not rebellious, as indicated of the servant in Isaiah 50:5. He prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done", Luke 22:42. The servant gave his back to be smitten, his cheeks to be plucked and his face was not hid from shame and spitting (50:6). So also Jesus, "Then did they spit in his face, and buffet him; and some smote him with the palms of their hands". (Mt. 26:67) "But Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified," Matthew 27:26. When Jesus "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" he portrays the description of the servant in Isaiah 50:7, "therefore have I set my face like a flint." The writer of the letter to the Hebrews says, "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26), significant of the certain victory des-

¹Ibid., p. 218.

cribed of the servant in Isaiah 50:8 and 9. Paul speaks to the point, "Who will contend with me", when he says, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." (Rom. 8:33)

E. PARALLELS OF ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

It is only natural that the descriptions of the servant in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 find the greatest parallels in the life of Jesus as he suffered vicariously. Paul says of Christ, "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden," Colossians 2:3, for the servant is to deal wisely and be exalted and lifted up. (isa. 52:13). "Existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:6,7)

Chapter fifty-three is applied directly to Christ in the following New Testament passages: Matthew 8:17, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Mark 15:28, "And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, and he was numbered with the transgressors". (King James version, the verse is omitted in the American Standard version). Luke 22:37, "And he was reckoned with the transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfillment." John 12:38, "that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Acts 8:32,33, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: his generationn

who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth." Romans 10:16, "But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord who hath believed our report?" I Peter 2:24,25:

who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Other parallel passages are also of value to the New Testament interpretation. The illustration Jesus used in John fifteen of the vine is parallel to Isaiah 53:2, "For he grew up before him as a tender plant." To what has already been said concerning Jesus' treatment, he was despised (Matt. 26:67,68; 27:29-31; Mark 14:65; 15:18,19), and he was rejected of men, John 7:48 "hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?"

The doctrine of the atonement in Isaiah 53:4 has a number of parallels interpreting it and supporting it in the New Testament. "Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mt. 20:28) "Nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should died for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (John 11:50) "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation." (Rom. 5: 6,8) "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. . . but God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 6,8) Other excellent passages are: II Corinthians 5:18-21; II Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:17; and I Peter 2:24. In relation to this same verse (53:4), Luke 23:47 witnesses that Jesus was a righteous man. Jesus'

own submission, his silence and deliberate giving himself into the hands of his slayers, is evidence that he was "smitten of God."

The treatment Jesus received at the time of his crucifixion matches Isaiah 53:5. He was wounded with scourging, with nails, with thorns and with a spear. He was bruised (Eph. 2:15-17) and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. Paul again says, "and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. 1:20) Healing through his stripes is stated by Peter as, "by whose stripes we are healed". (I Peter 2:24) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. 5:21) Thus "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).

Having already noted the silence of the suffering Servant and Jesus' silence through his sufferings, it need not be discussed again. The subject of the lamb in Isaiah 53:7 is of great importance. John the Baptist announced, "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). He repeats the first phrase again in John 1:36. Zimmerli points out two problems in this phrase ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. First, the description of Jesus as a lamb is unknown to late Judaism and secondly, the expression is an unparalleled genitive combination. Zimmerli says both difficulties can be solved if reference is made to the Aramaic where ܠܡܢܐ means (a) a lamb, (b) the boy, the servant. Behind the phrase, the lamb of God, lies the Aramaic ܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ in the sense of ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ (servant of

Jehovah), this supposition is also supported by the reference in John 1:29 to the servant phrase in Isaiah 53:12.¹ Revelation has a number of references concerning Christ as the lamb. Zimmerli says there are twenty-eight times Jesus is described as *ἀρνίον* (Lamb).²

Though there was difficulty in the exposition of Isaiah 53:9, in the life of Jesus the description is correct if it is used as meaning his grave was "appointed" with the wicked, but was actually with the rich. Matthew 27:57 to 60 describes the burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man. Jesus, like the servant, was not a man of violence as stated in I Peter 2:22, "who had no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"; or I John 3:5, "and in him is no sin;" or John 8:46, "which of you convicteth me of sin?" (see also II Cor. 5:21) It is also seen in Acts 2:23, "being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," that Jesus was bruised according to the will, or pleasure, of Jehovah (Isa. 53:10). Jesus clearly taught that what he did, he did by the will of his Father. "Believeth thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the word that I say unto you I speak not of myself; but the father abiding in me doeth his works." (John 14:10) The reference to seeing his "seed" is a parallel to the general teaching of the New Testament that those who believe in Jesus Christ become his children, or his seed (see Gal. 3:16, 29).

¹Zimmerli, Op. Cit., p. 82,3. ²Ibid., p. 83.

The central idea of Paul's second chapter to the Philippians, verses seven to eleven, is of Christ's obedience, even to the death on the cross resulting in his exaltation, of which every person will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The prophet Isaiah expressed it as seeing the travail of his soul and being satisfied. (Isa. 53:11) This same servant not only is numbered with the transgressors, bearing their sins, but makes intercession for them. The New Testament concurs in this as a ministry of Jesus Christ. "Father forgive them," Jesus prayed from the cross, (Luke 23:34). Paul lists intercession as the present work of Christ, "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34) "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25)

F. THE SERVANT OF GOD AS A TITLE OF CHRIST

Five times Jesus is described as the $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ (servant of God) in the New Testament. Matthew 12:18 has already been discussed, "Behold my servant". The other four are in the book of Acts. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus," (3:13), "Unto you first God having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one from your iniquities." (3:26) In Acts 4:27 and 30 the disciples, upon release of Peter and John from arrest, prayed twice using the expression "holy Servant Jesus". This is a conclusive testimony of the relationship of Isaiah's prophecy to Jesus Christ, the servant

of God.

G. PARALLEL OF MARK AND ISAIAH

Another conclusive testimony is that of Mark's gospel. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet." (Mark 1:1,2) Mark begins his gospel where Isaiah begins his gospel. The ministry of John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Lord's coming opens both Isaiah's message of comfort and Mark's servant gospel. Mark quotes from Malachi 3:1 to show where Isaiah's gospel begins. Since Isaiah wrote concerning the servant of the Lord, Mark's gospel follows the same idea in presenting the servant of the Lord, interpreting the servant of Isaiah's gospel as Jesus Christ.

H. THREE CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

There are three points to be considered in the interpretation of the New Testament regarding the Servant as described in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. First, Jesus applied these passages to himself as a prophecy which he was fulfilling in his life. Jesus lived according to the will of his Father, but saw these prophecies as a revelation which foretold his mission, in which both he and the people could find God's witness concerning his servant. Jesus knew himself as the servant of God. Secondly, the writers of the Gospels interpreted the ministry of Jesus as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies, particularly his vicarious suffering described in Isaiah fifty-three.

Thirdly, the other New Testament writers, principally Luke and Paul, confirm the interpretation of Jesus and the Apostles, with one addition by Paul. In reference to the work of the servant, Paul includes a larger group, the body of believers, as sharing in the ministry of the servant, at least in relation to the nations (Gentiles). The New Testament confirms the Servant Songs as prophecies of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as the head of a body which together would bring salvation to the nations.

CHAPTER IX

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF VARIOUS VIEWS OF THE SERVANT

CHAPTER IX

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF VARIOUS VIEWS OF THE SERVANT

A. INTRODUCTION

The various views of interpretation concerning the servant were given briefly in Chapter II to establish and define the problem. Yet, a historical treatment is necessary for several reasons. The first presentation was limited to only one area, that of the problem of interpretation. There is a need for a review of these and other interpretations in the light of the exposition of the four servant songs examined in this study.

Since the literature written on this subject is voluminous and much of it in the German language, this study is limited to discussion made in this area by other scholars. The most valuable of these include C.R. North, W. Zimmerli, J. Jeremias, H.H. Rowley, and Curt Lindhagen. Two basic patterns of treatment are followed by these scholars. The first is chronological, treating the views in each period of time. The second is a classification of the views into major interpretations and listing the various scholars in these major areas. A combination of these two classifications is also used and is the classification followed in this study.

There is general agreement that the songs are Messianic, both from Jewish as well as Christian sources. The New Testament interpretation likewise definitely associated these passages in Isaiah to Jesus Christ, as the Messiah; but is the Messiah to be regarded as a collective body or as an individual? It is with this question

that the various views are directed.

B. MESSIANIC IDEAS IN OLD TESTAMENT

Three ideas of the Messiah in the Old Testament have been noted by Knudson. First, the ideal king which came as an expression of the youthful nation, secondly the suffering servant, a result of the affliction in exile, and thirdly, the son of man concept introduced at the close of the Old Testament period by Daniel.¹ To this must be added the prophetic ministry noted in the earlier of the songs as well as the priestly concepts emphasized in the servant's atoning and interceding ministry. How these developed or were revealed is not the concern of this study. That they exist in the Old Testament prophetic writing is established beyond question.

C. LATE JUDAISM AND ITS INTERPRETATIONS

Tables I and II listed on page twelve show the LXX's use of the term, Servant of God. Writers differ as to the interpretation expressed by the LXX And nothing conclusive can be stated. The one thing generally noted is the insertion of the name "Jacob" in Isaiah 42:1, which infers a reference to Israel as the servant. The last song can definitely be regarded as a reference to an individual figure.² North and Zimmerli both show that in five places the Old

¹Albert C. Knudson, The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1918), p. 377.

²Zimmerli, The Servant of God, Op. Cit., p. 41.

Testament calls the Messiah by the title of "my servant", Ezekiel 34:23f; 37:24f; and Zechariah 3:8.¹ The Apocrypha and Pseudegrapha follow the pattern of the term, son of man, as well as showing certainly more than verbal similarities with the descriptions of the servant in Isaiah.² The Targums give witness to Messianic interpretations of the servant, especially of Isaiah 42:1 and 52:13 and the whole of 52:13 to 53:12.³

To summarize late Judaism and its interpretations, three points are made by Zimmerli. First, the Messianic interpretations concerning the servant of Deutero-Isaiah in Judaism in Palestine was limited to the four sections, or four servant songs. The New Testament agrees with this interpretation. Secondly, for Isaiah 42:1ff and 52:13ff, Messianic interpretation is constant from pre-Christian times. Thirdly, the interpretation of the suffering of the servant as Messianic can also be traced back to pre-Christian times.⁴

D. JEWISH INTERPRETATIONS

The Christian interpretation remained the same from New Testament times until the eighteenth century. It was not until there was a suggestion of a Babylonian Isaiah that scholars began to adopt the view of Jewish scholars referring the servant to the nation Israel.

¹Ibid., p. 49.

²North, The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 11. ⁴Zimmerli, Op. Cit., p. 77.

According to Rawlinson, the Messianic interpretation of the servant was universally acknowledged by the Jews until the time of Aben Ezra, (about A.D. 1150). All of the early church fathers assumed the Messianic interpretation as indisputable. Later pressure of the Christian controversy caused the Jews to abandon the traditional interpretation. They then applied the prophecy to Jeremiah, or to Josiah or to the people of Israel.¹

The Jews contend that Christianity was able to rapidly expand because of the Jewish expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Concerning Jesus, the Jews say that the disciples clung to his Messiahship with increased tenacity after his death and to account for their belief, evolved the theory of the "suffering Messiah" in accord with the prophetic promise that the Messiah should first suffer, be wounded, and executed. The return to inaugurate the kingdom of God upon earth naturally follows from literal fulfillment of the prophecy about his sufferings.² On the other hand, the Jews interpret their own views of the servant as the nation of Israel. Israel is eternal and therefore must continue to expect and hope for the Messiah to come. Both Christianity and Mohammedism will help prepare for the Messianic hope, but only when they return to the parent (Judaism), the true stem, will that hope be realized.³

¹Rawlinson, The Pulpit Commentary, Op. Cit., p. 53.

²Julius Greenstone, Messiah Idea in Jewish History (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1906), p. 78.

³Ibid., p. 139.

E. COLLECTIVE VIEWS SINCE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Since the eighteenth century the interpretations fall into two major divisions, the collective, or the individual interpretation. Within both of these there has been a wide variety of modification. North traces the earliest divergence from the traditional view to the work of J. S. Semler who first denied the Isaianic authorship of chapter forty and following. Doderlein and Eichhorn followed with similar criticism and other views of the servant passages. Doderlein, evidently undecided, printed two versions, a Christian version, and a Jewish antichristian view. C. G. Schuster saw in these passages an allegory of the collective fortunes of Israel. From this came the "corporate personality" concept to interpret the servant. Eichhorn himself interpreted the first song as of Cyrus, the second and third speaking of the prophet himself and the last of Israel. E. F. C. Rosenmuller next follows the collective view as did Gesenius. Hitzig and F. Koster, in their commentaries, followed the same line. J. Wellhausen adopted this view without much discussion.¹

The view that the servant is the ideal Israel was first advocated by J.C.R. Eckermann. Using the collective idea he distinguished between people or citizens, and the state. The individualistic concepts refer to the people, the larger or national concepts to Israel. There was little support of this view until Ewald (1840) powerfully endorsed it. He spoke of the

¹North, Op. Cit., pp. 40-42.

"spiritual Israel" which would restore the dead nation. Davidson was the first British scholar to abandon the Messianic interpretation, according to North, and to follow Ewald's view. In this same viewpoint is S. R. Driver. Dillman and Knobel likewise share the view of the Ideal Israel as the servant.¹

A more narrow view developed, interpreting the servant as the "pious minority" within Israel. A. Kuenen is the most prominent in this period holding this view. Another group felt the order of the prophets was represented in a personification called the servant. Gesenius spoke of this as the servant, who was within the pious minority of Israel. F. W. Umbreit sought to unite the order of prophets with Messianic interpretations, as also de Wette and J. C. K. Hofmann.²

One other view, other than the Messianic, was proposed in the eighteenth century. It is known as the historical individual. Various men suggest a number of historical persons who were the servant. Bahrdt and J. Konynenburg suggested Hezekiah; Staudlin poised Isaiah, followed by Bauer; Augusti named Uzziah; Grotius, Bunsen, and in his earlier days, Dahm held to Jeremiah. Mowinkel felt Isaiah was the servant of the first three songs, but felt another was represented in chapter fifty-three. Zerubbabel and an unknown servant have likewise been suggested, the former by Sellin, the latter by Schenkel.³

¹Ibid., pp. 31-35. ²Ibid., pp. 35-39.

³Ibid., pp. 40-42.

F. MESSIANIC INTERPRETATIONS SINCE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

There is a long list of men who followed the Messianic interpretation during this period, Storr, Vogel, Lowth, Dathe, Michaelis, Moldenhawer, Hesel, Hensler, Dodson, Hansi, Braun, Stoudel, Hengstenberg, Beck, Henderson, McCaul, Schegg, Stier, Bade, Drechsler, Kelly, Rohling, Meteler, Urwick, Nagelsbach, Knabenbauer, and Forbes. These held to the unity of the authorship of all the prophecies of Isaiah and consequently, also to the predictive character of the servant passages. North quotes Reinke:

If all the prophecies in the book are genuine and have the prophet Isaiah for their author, it must be taken for granted that the book contains revelations from God about the future. . . . They cannot, therefore, be simply presentiments, hopes, wishes, and natural conjectures derived from a naturalistic source.¹

The servant passages are to be interpreted as Messianic, according to these scholars, and they find their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

G. RECENT COLLECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Recent collective interpretations present a similar range of variations. The three principle ones consider the servant to be the entire Israelite nation, the pious kernel of the people, or the ideal Israel. K. Budde gave classic shape to the first of these three, the view of the nation as the servant. He grounded his conviction on the unity of the Deutero-Isaiah prophecies, which he considered

¹Ibid., p. 43.

the most complete and best arranged of all prophetic writings. Since Israel is called the servant, it follows that he must be Israel everywhere in Deutero-Isaiah. R. Pfeiffer, E. J. Kissane, Hyatt,

Friedlander, Humbert, Lods, Brewer, and Rignell also hold this view. Bohl asserts that the ideology associated with the monarchy passed over to the people following the exile. The ministry of Judah will bring to the apostate ten tribes a share in the Messianic salvation. F. A. Farley in The Expository Times (1926-27, pp. 521-524), makes a similar suggestion, that Israel, i.e., the prophetic element in the nation, is to be the world's Jeremiah. The sufferings of the servant have their prototype in the tragic fate of Jeremiah.¹

Babb also says that Israel redeemed and purified by its sufferings becomes the servant of God, whose tragic punishment wins the nations of the earth to the cause of righteousness.² Other views include V.D. Erdman's, the pious kernel of the people, I.G. Matthews also; the righteous remnant as J.N. Schofield suggests; or the true Israel suggested by de Boer; or the pattern of the ideal Israelite posed by A.G. Herbert.³ H. H. Rowley has a modification of this view, linked also with the "corporate personality" view. He quotes Wheeler Robinson "The central issue, that between a collective and an individualistic interpretation, is being argued on an antithesis

¹Curt Lindhagen, "The Servant of the Lord", The Expository Times, ed. A.W. Hastings (Edinburgh, T. AND T. Clark), LXVII, 281-282.

²Babb, The Theology of the Old Testament, Op. Cit., p. 263.

³Lindhagen, Loc. Cit.

true to modern, but false to ancient modes of thought." Robinson says the Hebrew concept of corporate personality can reconcile both views as the writers pass from one view to the other in a "fluidity of transition which seems to us unnatural". Rowley agrees with Robinson in principle, but differs in application, for it will not explain chapter fifty-three. Neither Israel nor the prophet himself fits the description. Rowley feels the prophet begins in the first song with the idea of Israel as God's chosen people, proceeds to get deeper insights and in the second song realizes the mission of Israel is not enough. Israel was called to be the servant, but not all Israel rose to fulfill her vocation. This left a loyal remnant. In the third and fourth songs the prophet realizes the servant must suffer, in the latter song the suffering would be the organ of the mission. This narrowed the servant down to a single individual, or the "Remnant that should rise to the full height of this grand but costly mission." It was not just a linear movement from the corporate to the individual, which left the corporate behind, rather what began as collective became individual without ceasing to be collective. The fluidity of the writer expresses his view of the servant rising to its height, carrying the mission to its supreme point.

To help clarify his view, Rowley appeals to the New Testament. He agrees that Isaiah fifty-three is richly significant in relation to the cross; but this is not sufficient in itself. "The mission of the servant was not alone to die for men, but to be the light of the nations, and to spread the salvation of God to the ends of the earth." Rowley says he could only do this as Israel entered into the

mission to share the spirit and sacrifice of the suffering servant. He appeals again to the concept of the early church who felt they were the inherited election of Israel. Just as Christians speak of being "in Christ", and "Christ liveth in me", so they too must share in the mission of the servant. This is the corporate personality, the servant of God for Rowley.¹

S. R. Driver is an expositor for the Ideal theory of the servant. He with A. B. Davidson, contends that it is inconceivable for the term servant to apply to subjects entirely distinct, though he admits of a different emphasis. Jehovah's servant is the ideal impersonation of the theocratic attributes of the nation. He notes the completeness of the figure drawn by the prophet, the gradual unfolding of his character introduced at different stages of the prophecy and concludes that it is no abstract figure. The prophet is a master of the art of personification, hence the distinctness and dramatic force of the delineation of the servant; but Driver goes on to add,

In Christ the genius of Israel found its fullest and most intense expression . . . the work and office of Christ, as Teacher, as Prophet, as Example, as Sacrifice, exhibits the consummation of what was achieved imperfectly and partially by Israel.²

C. Ryder Smith, M. A. Dahl, and W.F. Albright hold similar views. J. Lindblom supposes there are different servant figures in

¹H. N. Rowley, "The Servant Mission", Interpretation, VIII (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, July, 1954), pp. 259-269.

²Driver, Isaiah, His Life and Times, Op. Cit., pp. 177f.

the songs and that they are to be interpreted allegorically of Israel.

In the first a vassal king is described, the second and third refer to the prophet himself, and the fourth to a leper who is wholly a fictitious person. For this view the question is not "who", but "what does the servant represent?"¹ Wordsworth says the servant is simply a development of the idea of the Remnant. In the person of the servant is embodied the true Israel, like the patriarch he is a single person, but is also a spiritual nation that is to grow from him.²

Torrey argues for the unity of Deutero-Isaiah, dating it around 400 B.C. His general view is that the servant is in effect always the same, i.e., the personified nation Israel, or Israel's personal representative. Torrey gives an individual interpretation to chapter forty-two, but a collective interpretation to fifty-three.³

H. RECENT INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATIONS

Recent individual interpretations likewise have some variants. While individual historical theories have clearly lost ground, the Messianic, on the other hand, have won increasing support and in some cases have been combined with the individual historical as well as the collective. Probably the only school which has consistently held to the Messianic interpretation is the so called Uppsala school.

¹Lindhagen, Op. Cit., p. 283.

²W. A. Wordsworth, En-Roeh, The Prophecies of Isaiah The Seer (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1939), p. 302.

³North, Op. Cit., p. 133. See, also, Torrey, Op. Cit., p. 146f.

Great interest has been shown in the problem by Nyberg, Engnell, Widengren, Riesenfeld, Ringgren, and others of this school. The Messianic interpretation has almost been universal in Roman Catholic exegesis. Recently, according to Lindhagen, the Messianic interpretation has been supported by arguments from sacred kingship. It is frequently emphasized, independently of the different lines of interpretation, that the deepest meaning of the servant songs only becomes clear in their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This school shows a strongly conservative treatment of the texts, with great confidence in the Massoretic text. Nyberg's interpretation is that the servant is Messianic, but of an altogether different type from the triumphant figure represented by the ancestor-motif. Such a figure or ancestor took on the features of "adonis", or Lord, which Nyberg says was the motif represented by the servant idea, but not so in the songs. Engnell, by referring to the Psalms of the servant type, as Psalms 18, 22, 49, 88, 116, and 118, supports his thesis that the servant is the Davidic Messiah. Even more recent Roman Catholic exegesis, according to Lindhagen, follows the Messianic-Christological interpretation. Such is true of Feldmann, Fischer, Vaccari, and Van der Ploeg. Others, as Tournay, follow Rowley in asserting that the servant cannot be separated from the mystic body, or the church.¹

Others who hold to the Messianic-Christological view include Calvin, who identifies the servant as Jesus Christ, but also in a collective sense, with the church as the body of Christ. Alexander

¹Lindhagen, Op. Cit., LXVII (July 1956), 301,302.

says that a two-fold application cannot be denied. He contends that it is the only view to be found by exegesis. The servant of Jehovah in Isaiah is the church with its head, or rather the Messiah with the church which is his body. The body is sent by Jehovah to reclaim the world from its apostasy and sin. He suggests Deuteronomy eighteen as an example, where, according to the best interpretation, it is not Christ exclusively, but Christ as the head of the prophetic body who possessed his Spirit. Another illustration is Abraham and his seed, both individual and collective.¹

Although the interpretation of Delitzsch has been referred to previously, a further explanation is in keeping with the purpose of this chapter. Delitzsch holds for the concept illustrated by the pyramid. Originally, Israel was the divinely bestowed name of an individual. First a man was called Israel and then a nation; the name has a personal root and also a personal apex. The servant of Jehovah is Israel in person, in so far as the decree of grace. On this basis and for carrying out this decree, Jehovah made Jacob the father of the twelve tribes, thus fully accomplishing his purpose. The servant in the songs, according to Delitzsch, is seen as the whole people, or Israel. Israel as a nation faithful to its calling is the center of the servant idea, but the personal servant of Jehovah is its summit. The pyramid consists of the nation as the primary servant or the base, the faithful Israel at the center and the personal servant, or the Messiah at the top of the pyramid. Delitzsch

¹Alexander, Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 103.

adds:

We know who, in the historical fulfillment, this servant of Jehovah is. It is he whom the New Testament scriptures also, especially the Acts of the Apostles, calls *τὸν παῖδα τοῦ κυρίου* (the servant of the Lord), Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30. Certainly it is not the Babylonian exile in which the servant of Jehovah came to Israel with the gospel of redemption.¹

The views of Clarke, Young, Cehler, Rawlinson, G.L. Robinson, Fitch, Nagelsbach, Cheyne, and Wyngaarden are all so nearly alike that a single statement is sufficient. Basically, the interpretation is Messianic-Christological, the New Testament being the common ground for the proper understanding of the servant as Isaiah describes his life and work. C.R. North is in general agreement after carefully weighing the evidences. Though he denies any relationship to the Davidic Messiah in the songs, they are Messianic, but not with the strong kingly emphasis as elsewhere. He holds that the Jewish traditional sense of the Messiah was less of a Messianic figure than Jesus was. The reason the Jews failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah was because he was so dominated by the servant conception. For North, the servant is a soteriological rather than a political Messianic figure.²

V. F. Cehler describes the prophet as rising in his vision in the servant addresses, as it were step by step, from the basement

¹Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, Op. Cit., p. 240.

²North, Op. Cit., p. 218.

wall of a vast cathedral to the dizzy height of the spire on which the cross is planted; the nearer it comes to the summit the more clearly does it depict the outlines of the cross; when the summit is actually reached it is at rest, for it has attained what it had in view when it mounted the first steps of the spire. The image is striking. Here in the heart of the book of consolation (Isa. 40-66) the servant reaches the climax of its ascending progress. Before Israel had appeared as the nation over which the Messiah rules, now, however, as the servant of Jehovah, the Messiah stands as Israel's self, personally represented, as Israel's idea completely realizes, as Israel's essence manifested in absolute purity, Israel is the body and He is the head rising over it. The servant of Jehovah in the songs is first a prophet, and comes as a messenger of a new law, and as a mediator of a new covenant. At the end of his appointed work he again receives the homage of kings, while between, as chapter fifty-three discloses, lies his self-sacrifice, on the grounds of which he rules the world beyond. Thus the three-fold application is made of the servant as prophet, priest, and king.¹

¹Delitzsch, Op. Cit., pp. 305-308.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

The problem of this study has been concerning the term "servant" as Isaiah used it. Though a common term used with both a profane and a religious connotation, in this study the word servant was descriptive of a certain individual or of a certain group acting as the agent of Jehovah to fulfill His purpose for His people. Abraham, Moses, David, and each of the prophets were servants of Jehovah. Scripture teaches that the nation Israel also was the servant of Jehovah. Her purpose was to bring righteousness to the nations.

There is a new concept given to the term servant by the prophets, and particularly by the prophet Isaiah. This servant is described in the most lofty terms by Isaiah, descriptive beyond that to which Israel could aspire, or even beyond that to which any of the great prophets themselves could achieve. Even the remnant of Israel which held to a holy life and who alone were the spiritual vocation of Israel, or the true Israel, could not accomplish the mission given to the servant. Even the remnant needed a leader. In the four Servant Songs in chapters 42, 49, 50 and 53, this individual servant is spoken of as the representative of Israel and called by the name of Israel, through whom the genius of Israel comes into full expression.

The first Servant Song reveals the servant as a spiritual deliverer through whom Jehovah will bring deliverance to other

nations. The servant is placed in the most favorable relationship with Jehovah. Jehovah will uphold the servant, place his spirit upon him and will delight in him. The emphasis of the first song is on the newness of what Jehovah will do for the nations through the servant who is given as a covenant and as a light in such a way that he will triumph and establish justice upon the earth. This is an elevation in content from the deliverance spoken of in which Cyrus accomplishes God's design for Israel.

Even though Isaiah follows this first presentation with more references to Israel and Jacob as the servant, he returns to the subject again in the second Servant Song. There the servant is presented as having always existed, yet was to be called and named and revealed in a special ministry. The servant is to minister to both Israel and the nations for Jehovah sees his work as a light to the nations, and the salvation of the nations even unto the end of the earth. A time of hardship and apparent defeat is introduced but the fortune of the servant radically changes because Jehovah will be faithful to his servant.

Wisdom and understanding describe the servant in the third passage. This is attributed to his obedience to Jehovah as a result of close communion with Jehovah. Voluntary suffering appears as part of the work for the servant. Yet, his trust in Jehovah does not waver, and when his adversary has perished, the servant will be vindicated. Even though these lofty descriptions excel the work or life of any and all groups or individuals in bringing salvation to the nations, this element of suffering and apparent defeat is left

unexplained until the fourth passage. It has been noted also that no individual has ever voluntarily suffered thus, much less has Israel.

Few scriptural passages can equal the grandeur and majesty of the fourth Servant Song. This song repeatedly speaks of the mediatorial suffering. The servant of Jehovah goes through shame to glory, through death to life, he conquers by surrendering, he rules after he seems to be enslaved, he lives after he seems to have been killed, completes his work after it seems to have been destroyed. This suffering is not merely a martyr's suffering as that done by the Church, but a representative and atoning suffering, a sacrifice for sin, and here also are the strongest individualistic concepts concerning the servant. Israel speaks of her own rejection and unbelief, including herself among the straying sheep in need of redemption. Israel is therefore not the servant spoken of in these particular passages.

New Testament writers record Jesus' use and subsequent interpretation of Isaiah's prophecies dealing with the servant. Jesus interpreted his mission and ministry in the light of these prophecies. All the New Testament writers, with the exception of James and Jude, apply these servant songs to Jesus Christ. Mark, who writes the gospel of the servant, declares his gospel as that written from the prophecy of Isaiah. Jehovah declared Jesus as this servant on three occasions as a voice spoke from heaven heralding the Messiah, the Son of God. Paul enlarges his interpretation to include the church, the body of Christ as the servant.

From the historical summary of the various views held concerning the servant, the following is noted. The collective views

of the servant, as held by scholars reviewed in chapter nine, are based on the premise that prediction is impossible, that second Isaiah was written either after, or at the time of the restoration from exile, and that these prophecies point to what Deutero-Isaiah foresaw. Israel would be restored to the amazement of nations. The pious kernel of Israel that had remained true to Jehovah thus acted as a remedial agent to restore the nation. In turn, the suffering of the nation enabled Israel to be Jehovah's servant in redemption of other nations who, having seen the miracle of restoration in the life of Israel, were likewise turned to the true and living God in righteousness and true religion. For the collective view, Jesus does not fully satisfy the description of the servant, particularly in relation to the kingly aspects. Jesus interpreted his activities in the light of the prophecies, just as Jeremiah, or even Isaiah, Jehoiachin, or Zerubbabel could have done, as a prophet, a king, or a leader of the people. As Rowley and Robinson suggest, a corporate personality is in the mind of the prophet, an individual is but a representation of the collective group and thus it is not one person, but one group, one collective body that is the servant. Such would be illustrated by Paul's writing regarding the church. Christ is the head, and there are many members of the body, but all one.

The individual views of the servant can be summed up into two major groups, individual-historical, or Messianic-Christological. The former, individual-historical, apply the interpretation to persons who lived, either at Deutero-Isaiah's time, or were involved in the restoration of the Jews from exile. It is generally agreed that Cyrus

is not the servant spoken of in the four songs. The latter, or the Messianic-Christological views, follow the New Testament interpretation discussed in chapter eight and interpret the songs as a direct prophecy of Jesus Christ.

B. CONCLUSIONS

From this study the following has been concluded:

1. Isaiah presents more than one meaning for the term servant. Just as the term is used of both a collective group and of an individual throughout the Old Testament, so Isaiah uses it with both connotations. The servant is brought into sharp focus in the four Servant Songs, where he is presented in clear individualistic conceptions, in contrast to a collective meaning elsewhere in Isaiah's prophecy.
2. Isaiah uses the term servant in the Servant Songs in direct reference to the Messiah. In the New Testament record of the fulfillment of these servant prophecies, Jesus Christ is revealed as the Messiah.
3. Though the servant in the four songs is definitely an individual, there is a sense in which the servant stands as the head of a collective group as Christ stands as the head of the Church. This is the only extent to which a collective interpretation may be given to the term servant in the Servant Songs. Isaiah does use this collective meaning in chapters fifty-six to sixty-six.
4. Isaiah's predictive prophecy in the Servant Songs, though admittedly rising to the peak of prophecy, is not unique, but stands in relationship to the whole of Old Testament prophecy. It is but another part of the revelation of Jehovah concerning his Servant, who suffers vicariously to redeem the nations.

5. This study has contributed valuable evidence of the uniqueness of Old Testament prophecy as it reveals Jehovah's redemptive plan for the human family.

Some of the relationships between the various prophecies of Isaiah have been shown. These relationships contribute to the solution of the problem of the unity of the prophecy of Isaiah.

The greatest value of these servant passages is in the contribution they make to the spiritual enlightenment of all who by faith personally receive Jehovah's servant as the Messiah.

As a result of this study the writer has come to the conviction that the significance of the Servant of the Lord must be realized within the church today. The mission of the church is evangelism. Evangelism is carrying the Good News of the Servant of the Lord to the nations of the earth. Just as Jehovah has called the Messiah to be His Servant to provide redemption, so He has called the Church to be His servant in bearing the message of redemption to the nations.

C. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are two problems which are suggested for further study in relation to this subject of the servant. One is the relationship of the Davidic Messiah described in Deutero-Isaiah to the servant passages. This should be expanded to include the passages in Proto-Isaiah also. The second suggested study is the influence of various motifs on the prophet as he describes the servant. Just how much did these motif concepts determine the concept of the servant? Several Roman Catholic scholars of the Uppsala School have been working on the problem.

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