

Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah #8: Messiah as the Servant of the Lord

The Messiah is the Servant of the LORD

In the Bible, a servant was a slave, although differing significantly from the black slavery in this country's history. A person could become a slave through conquest, or indebtedness. A person could sell themselves into slavery, but in the Levitical system, they had to be freed after 7 years, and there were many laws pertaining to fair treatment of slaves. The real point to consider here though, is that a servant exists, not to serve his own interests, but those of his master.

Some of the references in Isaiah to a "servant" are obviously speaking of Israel, but there are a few that are speaking of the Messiah himself. The Messiah was the one true servant of God.

42:1-3 – "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Then it continues with what we saw before (shall not cry nor lift up voice in street, doesn't break a bruised reed or quench smoking flax, given as a covenant of the people, light of Gentiles, opens blind eyes and brings prisoners out of prison)

49:3, 5-7 – "And said unto me, Thou are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. ... And now, saith the LORD that formed thee from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst 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."

50:4-10 – After the whole section on Christ giving his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, v. 10 says "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God."

Isaiah 52:7 through all of 53 is Messianic, and 52:13 says "Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." but from there on it describes his sufferings. In fact, chapter 53, which we dealt with in the last study, is commonly called the "Suffering Servant" chapter.

53:11 – "... by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

Christ is a servant in two ways:

1. To the Father

Jn. 4:34 – "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Jn. 5:19 – "...The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

Jn. 5:30 – "... because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

Jn. 8:28 – "... I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. ... for I do always those things that please him."

Jn. 9:4 – "I must work the works of him that sent me ..."

2. To his disciples

Mt. 20:28 – "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jn. 13 – washed the disciples' feet

His servanthood was voluntary, as a result of his Incarnation, and is seen in

Phl. 2:6-8 – "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being

found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

And so should we be. Phl. 2:5 says “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” He is our pattern and example.

Jn. 12:26 – “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”

Jn. 13:13-15 – “... If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

Mt. 20:26-27 – “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”

Also in 2 Tim. 2:24-25, pastors and leaders like Timothy are especially called servants of the Lord. “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth:”

Slavery is also an apt description of our natural condition as fallen men. In Jn. 8:34, “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. But in v. 36 he says “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

This is reinforced in Rom. 6:6-23 – we are dead to sin and alive to Christ, which is the symbolism in water baptism (back in 6:3-5). Therefore we should no longer be yielding our members (mind and body) as tools of unrighteousness, but of righteousness unto God. Verse 16 says that to whomsoever we yield our selves servants in obedience, we are slaves, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. We used to be slaves to sin, but no longer! As we used to yield ourselves to the various forms of sin, now, being new creatures in Christ, we must yield our members as servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 – “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Christ was the eternal Son of God who voluntarily became a man and the role of a servant. We were slaves of sin and corruption who were redeemed by God through Christ, and now are to yield ourselves as servants to righteousness. Yet God does not see us merely as servants, but as sons!

Gal. 4:4-7 – “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. **Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**”

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