



## Exodus 14:31

### Servant of the Lord

The highest title of tribute you could give a person in the Old Testament was to call him "the servant of Yahweh" (*'ebed YHVH*).

The Hebrew word for servant, *eber*, denotes "God given authority as the accredited messengers of the Lord." The servant of the LORD was one who was chosen by Yahweh. The origin implies the position of a slave.

### Servant of the Lord in the Old Testament

Abraham is the *sērvant* öf the Lord (Ps. 105:42). Moses is called "the servant of the LORD," and "Moses My servant" more often than anyone else in the Old Testament (Ex. 14:31; Num. 12:7; Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1:1, 15; 8:21, 23; 18:7; 1 Chron. 6:49; 2 Chron. 1:3; 24:6; Neh. 1:7; 10:29). "Moses the servant of Yahweh" is almost the official title of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:5; cf. Numbers 12:7-8). The author of Hebrews describes Moses as a servant in God's house when he writes, "Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant" (Hebrews 13:5). Joshua, Moses "servant," who led Israel into the Promised Land was also called "the servant of the LORD" at the end of his life (Joshua 24:9; Jud. 2:8). Caleb (Num. 12:24), and King David are called the servant of the Lord (2 Sam. 7:5-8; 1 Kings 8:66; 11:36; 2 Kings 19:34; 2 Chron. 17:4).

The LORD speaks of His prophets saying, "I have sent you all My servants the prophets" (Jeremiah 7:25; 2 Kings 21:10; Amos 3:7). Isaiah is called the servant of the Lord (Isa. 20:3; 49:5), Elijah (2 Kings 10:10), and Job (1:8; 42:7). Even Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon is called "My servant" (25:9; cf. 27:6). The old Babylonian king thought he was king of the hill, but in reality, he was only an instrument in the hands of God. The redeemed are His servants, as we would expect according to Psalm 34:22. "The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned."

The nation of Israel was even called the servant of the Lord (Isa. 41:8). It is from this servant nation that God sent His Suffering Servant. God called out a people for Himself so that He could provide a redeemer for the world.

All of God s 'servants, the prophets, speak of the coming of Jesus Christ the true Servant of the LORD.

The angel of the LORD called the coming Messiah a "Servant." "Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you — indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8). The LORD declares to Isaiah the coming

servant the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8). The LORD declares to Isaiah the coming of this same person when he says: "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1).

The last of the four Servant poems of Isaiah presents the exaltation, humiliation, substitutionary sacrifice and extreme exaltation of the Servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12).

The Suffering Servant of the LORD is perhaps the highest title in the Old Testament for God's Anointed One.

### **Jesus is the Servant of Yahweh**

As God's servant Jesus did what Israel could not do. Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 and says the prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus, the Servant of Yahweh, who does the will of His Father perfectly. He is in perfect harmony with the Father's intent and will. His first recorded words reveal His divine Sonship and His mission in life. Even as a youth He said, "I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Again He said, "I came to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38). The climax of His servanthood is declared in His own words: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The Suffering Servant of Yahweh dominated Jesus' whole thought. Jesus Christ is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh.

The apostle Paul referred to the humble attitude of Jesus saying: "although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus Christ is the very essence of God, and in His incarnation was perfect humanity. In the person of Jesus Christ God became a humble household servant. Remember Jesus bowed down and washed the feet of Judas. What exalted humility! "Not My will, Thy will be done!" It was by His own choice that He became obedient and died as our substitute on the cross.

Charles Hodge said, "When Isaiah predicts that the 'servant of the Lord' would suffer, triumph and be the source of blessings to all people, the servant is to be understood to be the Messiah . . ." We know this to be true because of "subsequent explanatory declarations of the Scriptures," and "the fulfilment of the predictions."

The promise of redemption is repeated and amplified from time to time until the Redeemer actually came. The nature of this redemption was set forth with ever increasing clearness with many specific promises.

### **Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh.**

We have every reason to take the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 as the picture of Jesus Christ.

In praise to Jesus the early church called Him, "Thy holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:27, 30; 3:13). We are immediately reminded of the title "Servant of Yahweh" in Isaiah (42:1; 49:6-7; 52:13; 53:11). Only Jesus Christ can be the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. Isaiah 53:11 is fulfilled in the death of Jesus on the Cross bearing our sins and iniquities.

As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see *it and* be satisfied;  
By His knowledge the Righteous One,  
My Servant, will justify the many,  
As He will bear their iniquities.

The prophet Isaiah had a true personal Servant in view. The great fact of Isaiah 53 is vicarious suffering. The fulfilment is in Christ on the Cross. Franz Delitzsch said, "Every word is as it were written under the cross at Golgotha." Compare the following Scriptures: Matthew 8:14-17; with Isaiah 53:4; Matt. 12:14-21 with Isa. 42:1-4; Luke 23:37 with Isa. 52:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21 with Isa. 53:6, 9; 1 Peter 1:19 with Isa. 53:7; 1 Pet. 2:22-25 with Isa. 53:6, 7. The picture the apostle Peter presents in his epistles and preaching in Acts is based on the Servant in Isaiah 53 which stresses the sacrificial quality of the Servant's sufferings (Isa. 53:4-6, 8, 10-12).

Adam plunged the whole human race into sin. We are all guilty of failing to be what God wants us to be. We fall short of bringing glory to God. However, the perfect Servant of Yahweh suffered and died bearing our iniquities on the cross. He is the Righteous One of Isaiah fifty-three. The LORD saw the anguish of His soul and was satisfied. Therefore, the believing sinner is "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*" (Romans 3:24-26). The LORD God applied the substitutionary death of Jesus to believing sinners and declared us justified by faith. The Suffering Servant of God accomplished our salvation. He has declared us right with God.

Four times in Acts Jesus is called the "Servant" in the preaching of the apostle Peter (3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). In these four passages Jesus is being called the Servant of God, not child of God. The Greek word *pais* can be translated "child," "son" as in the KJV or "servant" (NASB, RSV, ASV, Phillips, NEB, and most others). In these passages "Servant" is the best meaning because of the identification of the "servant of God" with the Messiah (Isa. 53 *et al*). All of the best scholars are in agreement that "Servant" is the best translation.

## Exaltation of the Servant of Yahweh

Jesus said that if we are to enter into the kingdom of God we must humble ourselves and become like helpless children. We enter God's kingdom by faith. We come to Him helpless, unable to save ourselves, totally dependent on the mercy and grace of God. The Righteous Servant declares the unrighteous sinner just in God's sight.

Jesus' glory is closely associated with His death. After Judas left the upper room Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately" (John 13:31-32). God the Father was glorified in the death of His Son.

Son.

This lowly Servant was exalted and given a name above every name (cf. Phil. 2:6-8). The word "glorify" is used frequently in John's Gospel (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28; 13:31-32; 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1, 4-5, 10). Jesus is exalted and glorified by God the Father because He humbled Himself by becoming a servant and died for the ungodly (Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:3-4, 8). "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11).

What will He do with us if we humble ourselves in His sight? It is the only attitude God will use. He despises the arrogant. Let's come before Him with a contrite heart, humble and ready to serve Him.

Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfilment of the Servant of the Lord. The Servant Songs of Isaiah imply the equation of the Davidic Messiah and the Suffering Servant.

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