

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 42:1-4, THE MESSIAH SERVANT, PART 1

This is the first of what are called the Servant Songs in Isaiah.

Israel was previously identified as Yahweh's servant (Is. 41:8-16 followed also in 41:19; 43:10; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20). Is the Servant identified here Israel or someone else? Due to the references to Israel as Yahweh's servant, many theologians believe that Israel is the subject of this Servant pericope as well, particularly since verse 19 does refer to Israel as "My servant." "[F]urther in this chapter (v. 19 ff.), 'the servant of Jehovah' is distinctly Israel as a people, about whom the Lord complains that they are blind and deaf, unfaithful and hard of understanding. Many Jewish and liberal Christian commentators have maintained that 'the servant of Jehovah' always refers to Israel, either as a collective body, or to 'ideal Israel,' or to 'a faithful remnant of Israel'" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 343-344]. Older rabbinic scholars recognized this as a messianic prophecy, the Targum does so, but as Christianity grew, the pressure among the Jews also grew to deny anything messianic that pointed to Christ Jesus prompting them to interpret this verse as an identification of Israel as the servant. They do this with Isaiah 53 as well.

In reality, there is probably a bit of a blend between understanding the servant as Israel and as the individual Messiah. It is accurate to view the nation as a collective group of Israelites created by God and appointed to His service (Ex. 19:5-6). At the same time, a servant will be coming out of Israel who is clearly revealed to be an individual person. Keil and Delitzsch used the simile of a pyramid to explain the interconnectedness of national Israel and the God-man who comes out of Israel. "[T]here must be a connection between the national sense, in which the expression 'servant of Jehovah' was used in ch. 41:8, and the personal sense in which it is used here [Is. 42:1]. The coming Saviour [sic] ... appears as the embodied idea of Israel, i.e., as its truth and reality embodied in one person. The idea of 'the servant of Jehovah' assumed, to speak figuratively, the form of a pyramid. The base was Israel as whole; the central section was that Israel, which was not merely Israel according to the flesh, but according to the spirit also; the apex is the person of the Mediator of salvation springing out of Israel" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, 414]. The concept of Israel according to the flesh and the spirit represents the unbelief of national Israel and the fact of unbelieving Israelites mixed with the believing remnant, which the Lord referred to as the wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30).

A number of persons are referred to as "servants" in the Old Testament Scriptures making context key in identifying who or what is the referent. Israel was called the servant 14 times (7 times in Is. 40-55), Moses 6 times, David 21 times, the prophets 9 times, Job 7 times, and Nebuchadnezzar 2 times.

In the preceding verses, idolatry and idolaters are condemned for the foolishness of regarding idols which are nothing and worthless—not harmless, but worthless. It is rebellion to trust in idols rather than in Yahweh. The Servant referred to here will eventually

be identified as the Servant who is the Messiah, and He will not only be the Servant who saves Israel, but He will be the Savior of the entire world. The nations, referring to Gentile nations, are clearly identified in Isaiah 42:1. This Messiah Servant would do what Israel failed to do—reveal God to the world. In Isaiah 42:1-4, Yahweh speaks about this Servant, and in verses 5-9, He speaks to this Servant.

This servant cannot be Cyrus. There are things said of this Servant that can only pertain to a man who interacts with the world and not just with Israel. Waltke claimed that Cyrus was Israel's political savior and the Servant will be Israel's spiritual savior [Bruce K Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: an exegetical, canonical, and thematic approach*, 845]. Certainly, Cyrus was not a spiritual savior, but he did allow the Jews to return to worshiping Yahweh by means of a rebuilt Temple, and he did acknowledge Yahweh even though it is very doubtful that he ever believed in Him. I am more comfortable referring to Cyrus as a type of Christ and of His complete deliverance of Israel than I am to referring to Cyrus as only a political savior because the situation is more complex than that. Christ will be the Savior in total; the Savior *par excellence*; He simply cannot be restricted to being only Israel's spiritual Savior. "The Lord would raise up Cyrus as a mighty conqueror of nations and one whose military power would be irresistible. God's ultimate purpose in raising up Cyrus was the release of His people from their Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.... He conquered Babylon in 539 and decreed that the exiled Jews could return to their land and rebuild the Temple.... Cyrus' release of the exiles foreshadowed a more significant act of salvation, which the Lord would bring about through His special servant" [Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "A Theology of Isaiah" in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck, 327].

After identifying Cyrus as the one who was going to restore the Israelites to Jerusalem and to Temple worship, the pivot is made to identifying the antitype of Cyrus, the Messiah, who will restore the world. "The Lord then draws attention to His Servant, whom He will empower with His Spirit to establish worldwide justice. Speaking as the sovereign creator of the heavens, earth, and humankind, He commissions the Servant, who will be a covenant mediator for people and a light to the nations as He brings forth justice and delivers the downtrodden from captivity. The fulfillment of the Lord's announced plan will demonstrate His sovereign majesty, which he refuses to share with other gods" [Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "Isaiah 42:1-9: The Commission of the Servant of the Lord" in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum, 932].

This Scripture as written must refer to an individual. "In this passage 'the servant' clearly appears to be an individual personality, chosen and appointed by Jehovah to bring salvation to Israel and to be a light to the nations" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 343]. The ultimate confirmation that these verses are a reference to the Messiah Servant is in Matthew 12:18-21 where the apostle quoted Isaiah 42:1-4 and attributed the fulfillment of those verses to be in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 42:1¹ "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold [תִּמְנֶה]; My chosen [בְּחֵיר] one *in whom* My soul [נַפְשִׁי] delights [רָצֵה]. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice [מִשְׁפָּט] to the nations [גּוֹי].

In Isaiah 41:29, the last verse in that chapter, it was introduced by the word translated "behold" which is an interjection designed to call attention to what follows. In this verse, the word is calling attention to the judgment rendered against the idols and those who worship them that they are false, worthless, and empty. Isaiah 42:1 also begins with "behold," but in this verse attention is directed to the Servant identified in these verses. We have a contrast here between the worthless idols and those who worship them with the true Servant of God who will deliver the nations in total. The true Servant is One who will have the Spirit of God on Him, who is upheld by Yahweh, and who will have the Spirit of God upon Him.

Uphold, *תָּמַךְ*, means to grasp, to support, to take hold of referring to keeping or maintaining in unaltered condition; to cause to remain or last. God will empower the Servant to accomplish the mission set before Him despite any trials that could hinder Him. His dependence will be on God alone.

The Lord set aside His divine prerogatives during the incarnation. His mission was to do the will of the Father. Because He did that, He was dependent on the Father and the Spirit to uphold Him and sustain Him. Obviously, if He had not shed His divine prerogatives, He, being God, would have needed no upholding ministry from the Father and the Spirit.

Philippians 2:5–8 ⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

John 5:30 ³⁰"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:38 ³⁸"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Matthew 26:39, 42, 44 ³⁹And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." ... ⁴²He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." ... ⁴⁴And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

God proclaimed His delight in the Servant's work on His behalf. Delight, *רָצָה*, means to be pleased with, to accept favorably, and to take pleasure in referring to taking a high degree of pleasure or mental satisfaction in something or someone. Soul, *נַפְשׁוֹ*, in this context, means soul, living being, and life. The word here represents the very being of God who obviously has a great deal of affection and respect for the Servant to whom He is obviously committed. This suggests an interpersonal relationship between Yahweh and the Servant. "Such strong words of personal approval and divine satisfaction with the servant presuppose a godly character, his willingness to fulfill God's commission, and a close walk with God. This presents a dramatic contrast with God's displeasure or lack of delight with his 'blind servant' Israel" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary*:

An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66, 161]. This certainly suggests that the servant Israel is not the Servant to whom this Scripture is referring.

The fact of the Spirit coming upon the Servant was fulfilled when Christ Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. The Father's delight in the son was audibly expressed at that time as well.

Matthew 3:16–17 ¹⁶After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, ¹⁷and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

The Spirit was both a blessing and an instrument of empowerment for the task to which the Servant had been appointed. No one who witnessed this event should have missed the obvious connection to this Scripture in Matthew and to the Isaiah Scripture revealing the righteous Branch.

Isaiah 11:1–2 ¹Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

The visible manifestation of the Spirit of God should have alerted all who witnessed it to the fact that the Servant was in their midst.

The mission of the Messiah Servant will be to bring justice to the nations. This is an accomplishment that only the Messiah Servant could possibly bring about. Justice, מִשְׁפָּט, is a forensic, legal term meaning judgment or a decision referring to a determination of right and wrong on legal matters. In this context, it is referring to a society put in order in addition to a fair system of justice, civil and criminal, being instituted. "It is well known that Heb. *miš·pāṭ* connotes much more than judicial equity. In its broadest sense it involves societal order in which the concerns of all are addressed. A society in which there is no *miš·pāṭ* is one in which the only rule is brute force used to aggrandize the few. Thus the divine *miš·pāṭ* that the Servant will establish is nothing less than the salvation of God defined in its broadest sense.... It is through the Servant that the lordship of God will be made effectively available to everyone" [John V. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 110-111].

Nations, גוֹי, (plural גוֹיִם) means nation or people, but it specifically is a reference to Gentile nations, i.e., pagan people who are not Israelites.

Justice is not something that comes naturally to the satanic world system. It will only be when this Messiah Servant comes to earth as the conquering King to establish His Kingdom will justice be established throughout the world. This has not happened since the Fall, and it will not be realized until the Kingdom is established and the King is on His throne, and it will be established only by the King. The verb form used here tells us that He will cause justice to go out to the nations implying that mankind, even redeemed

mankind, is not capable of doing this on their own initiative. Presumably, all the people entering the Kingdom will want to see justice on a worldwide scale, they are all believers after all, but they have no experience with perfect societies and legal systems, and they still have a sin nature. The Messiah Servant will have to show the world the way. He will rule justly, but He will also rule with a rod of iron tolerating no sin and no injustice. Righteousness and justice will become standard operating procedure in His Kingdom.

Isaiah 11:4–5 ⁴But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. ⁵Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Isaiah 32:1 ¹Behold, a king will reign righteously And princes will rule justly.

Chosen, בָּחֵר, is regularly translated as chosen, which may be correct at times, but the meaning is not that simple. It can carry the concept of choice and best. We have to examine the concept of Israel and the Messiah in terms of being “chosen” in order to understand the meaning in the context that is before us.

Was Israel chosen by God to be His people? Obviously not. Israel was supernaturally created to be God's choice people and appointed to His service. Israel was not chosen from among the other nations to be special in God's sight; He created them as a special people and nation in His sight. We also need to understand that this was a corporate creation; Israel consisted of believers and unbelievers yet the nation is God's choice nation.

Was the Messiah, the God-man, chosen by God from among various competing personalities for the position? Of course not. God the Son was and is perfect; there can be no thought of choosing Him to be the God-man over anyone else. The Son was the perfect plan among the Godhead from eternity past. But because He was and is perfect, there can be the thought that He was the choice One, the preeminent One who was appointed to do this special work of God that the Messiah was commissioned to do.

The Septuagint uses the Greek word ἐκλεκτός to translate the Hebrew בָּחֵר. “The predominate meaning of the adjective *eklektos* is ‘choice’ or ‘selected.’ It is used of things of best quality: ‘choice judges’ ... *eklektos*, also appears a number of times for Heb. roots connoting loveliness, preciousness, or excellent condition. Here the adj. does not express the fact of being chosen, but in a wider sense factors already present which make choice likely.... *bā·hîr* indicates that the purpose of the choice is some commission or service and can only meaningfully retain its validity in fulfillment [C. Gordon Olson, *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, 3rd ed., 316-317].

In ancient Hebrew, the word was used to mean an examination to determine the choicest which is in harmony with early Greek use of the corresponding Greek words.

“G. Quell confirmed that the adjective connotes choosing ‘that which is choice or excellent,’ ‘what is desired or costly,’ ‘what is costly in the concept of the pure,’ ‘also

emphasizes the choice or excellent element....' Schrenk also confirmed a similar usage: 'choice, select, costly, sterling, purified, profitable, best of its kind, of top quality.' The translators should have referred to Christ as the 'choicest One' in harmony with its usage in Hebrew. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth was never *one chosen from among many* to be the Messiah" [C. Gordon Olson, *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, 3rd ed., 317-318].

This leads to the conclusion that the best translation of our verse concerning the appointment of the Messiah Servant is, "My choice [not chosen] one in whom My soul delights...." (Is. 42:1) who is then the One "I will appoint" as a covenant to the people (Is. 42:6). The point is that Christ Jesus is the perfect, superlative, preeminent One, the choice One, the only One who could be appointed to fill the role of the Messiah Servant. He was not chosen; He was appointed to the position on the basis of His one of a kind superlative attributes as the one and only God-man.

The ministry of the Messiah Servant would be characterized by conduct worthy of a true Servant of God and man.

Isaiah 42:2–3 ²"He will not cry out [צָעַק] or raise [נָשָׂא] His voice, Nor make His voice heard [שָׁמַע] in the street. ³"A bruised reed He will not break [שָׁבַר] And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish [כָּבַהַ]; He will faithfully [אֲמַת] bring forth justice.

The Servant will not make Himself into some sort of ostentatious public figure by drawing attention to Himself. He won't be like pagan kings such as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus who employ brute force to magnify themselves by conquering and subjugating other people and nations whose only offense was living too close to them, continually boast about themselves, and enjoy the fawning attention of the lackeys who flatter them and cater to their immense egos. The Messiah Servant would become known, but He would be known because people would spread the knowledge of Him around the country as the result of His ministry, not the result of any public relations campaign. "He would not serve the Lord ostentatiously, nor would He advertise Himself. His ministry would be quiet, non-aggressive, and unthreatening" [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible: Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:117].

What does this mean? We know that it cannot mean that He would not contend with His adversaries, because the Lord jostled with the Jewish leadership on many occasions, and during those interactions they were highly offended and angered (Mt. 21:33-46 when the rulers grew angry at the revelation of His parable of the landowner, and Mt. 23:13-36, where He pronounced eight woes on the scribes and Pharisees). We know that He cleansed the Temple on two occasions which were anything but non-confrontational encounters (Mt. 12:12-13; John 2:13-22). We know that He did rebuke His disciples on occasion which is not a pleasant task (Mt. 16:21-23, when He said to Peter, "Get behind Me Satan!"). We do have to remember that the Messiah Servant did not come to Israel at the First Advent as a conquering King; He came to offer Himself to the people as the Davidic King who was going to establish the Kingdom of Heaven in Israel. We can understand the concepts of meekness and humility then as representations of faithfulness to the ministry He was sent to Israel to conduct on behalf of Yahweh. "The general idea is that in the midst of the difficulty in establishing justice he will not give up or 'cry out' in

frustration and exasperation just because the responsibility is difficult. Instead, he will be guided by patient endurance, humility, and steadfastness in the face of opposition" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 162].

Cry out, קָרָא, means to cry, to cry out, to call, or to call together (to muster or to summon) referring to crying out with an appeal for something or some action, often done in desperation or difficulty by shouting, complaining loudly, calling for help, or to pleading for relief or justice. The Messiah Servant did none of these things. He came, He ministered, and He became known by word of mouth as He performed the works that were the predicted, identifying markers of the Messiah when He appeared (Is. 35:5-6). The Messiah Servant's call is to draw people to Himself and to the truth, which, if honestly evaluated, should result in faith, which is particularly true for the Israelites who had the prophets and the Scriptures and who therefore should have known the Messiah Servant when He appeared. His ministry does not include browbeating people, cajoling them, or shaming them into accepting Him as Israel's King.

Raise, הִרִיף, means to lift up, to take up. The Messiah Servant will not resort to yelling at people to get them to pay attention to Him. His actions, His personality, and His softly spoken, truth filled words all speak for themselves.

Heard, שָׁמַע, means to hear or to be heard. He did not have to be shouting in the streets to gather an audience.

These three verbs—cry out, raise, heard—are all negated אֵל. These are things the Messiah Servant will not have to do. Instead, His actions, His personality, and His softly spoken, truth filled words all speak for themselves. We cannot discount the wisdom He will have and the oratory skills He will possess to express it. Even the teachers in the Temple court were "amazed at His understanding and His answers" (Luke 2:47). "[L]ike the child of ch. 9 and the branch of ch. 11, God's answer to the oppressors of the world is not more oppression, nor is his answer to arrogance more arrogance; rather, in quietness, humility, and simplicity, he will take all the evil into himself and return only grace" [John V. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 111].

This seems to be the most reasonable explanation for the meaning of these verses, although theologians have come up with other thoughts. Some believe this means the Servant will not cry out in anguish, or it is comparable to the proclamation of a new king who is instituting a new law or making a public declaration that establishes justice in his kingdom, or to a judge who does not shout or raise his voice when making a judicial determination. None of these seem plausible when we consider the meaning of the words used and the context in which they are used.

The Messiah Servant's care for the poor and downtrodden will be very evident. The bruised reed and the dimly burning wick "are symbolic of anybody who is broken, abused, worthless, and about to be discarded. A bruised or crushed reed may not be of much value to some people, but the servant will not destroy the lowly and weak people that others might reject as useless. This attitude of not destroying oppressed and suffering

people reveals the compassionate and true servant perspective of this individual. No one is unworthy of help; no one will be treated harshly or as unimportant and expendable. Instead, by faithfulness to God's principles, the servant will cause God's rule of justice to be proclaimed and prosper.... This verse demonstrates that God's tender care for the weak and oppressed will be exemplified in the servant's behavior" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 162-163].

When John the Baptist was questioning whether or not Jesus was the Expected One, the Lord's answer to Him referred to the authenticating miracles of Isaiah 35:5-6, but also to the fact that the poor had the Gospel preached to them which was also a characteristic of the Messiah Servant's ministry (Is. 61:1).

Matthew 11:5 ⁵the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and *the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.*

Isaiah 61:1 ¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

For those who want to claim this Scripture must pertain to Cyrus or some other pagan king, what pagan king ever considered the cares of the poor and marginalized when carrying out the plans they had for their kingdom? Poor people were nothing to them except as slaves or cheap labor. How much more then, does the Messiah Servant care for such people when He preaches the "good news," the Gospel, to them that affords them the opportunity to choose eternal life?

Breaking and extinguishing are words that represent the cruel ways people deal with those who are already living on the fringes of society and who have been shut out of ways to prosper. That is how the world treats the downtrodden of the world; that is not how the Messiah Servant wants the downtrodden of the world to be treated.

Break and extinguish are strong words indicating the harsh treatment many of the world's people experience at the hands of those in power, but the Messiah Servant will not treat people that way. He will treat people in quite the opposite manner. He won't treat the rich and powerful less well; He will treat everyone the same. All are alienated from God, in rebellion against Him, and must be born again.

Break, *שָׁבַר*, means to break, to break into pieces, to smash into fragments, and to shatter referring to destroying the integrity of something, usually by force, thereby causing it to separate into pieces or fragments.

Extinguish, *כָּבַד*, means to be extinguished, to be quenched, or to go out or to be put out.

"He is not dismissive of others: however useless or beyond repair (*bruised reed*), however 'past it' and near extinction (*smoldering wick*) they may seem. The negative statements imply their positive equivalents: he can mend the broken reed, fan into flame the smouldering [*sic*] wick. The former has been internally damaged, the latter lacks the

external nourishment of oil. The Servant is competent both to cure and to supply" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 260].

So many people are broken, hollow shells of human beings who are simply existing in Satan's world system that in no way represents who they were created to be. Neither were people created to subjugate others, to take advantage of others, and to harm others. The Messiah Servant did not reverse that situation at His First Coming, although He had tremendous compassion on the poor and the abused, but He will reverse it at His Second Coming.

The Messiah Servant will be faithful to do what verse 1 said He would do: "bring forth justice to the nations." Here in verse 3, the reference to the nations is omitted implying that justice will cover the whole world—Jew and Gentile alike. The nations obviously encompass the majority of the world's people and land area, but the Israelites are desperately in need of justice as well, and they will receive it too.

Faithful, אָמֵן, means firmness, faithfulness, truth, and trustworthiness. In terms of the Messiah Servant, it refers to the quality of being faithful. He will be firm and steadfast in the performance of His duties (Is. 11:4). He will operate only within the realm of truth for He is truth (John 14:6). He will be faithful to do the will of God the Father (Mt. 26:39; John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38). He will be the most righteous and just King the world has ever seen.

Isaiah 42:4 "He will not be disheartened [פָּהָה] or crushed [רָצַץ] Until He has established [שָׁדָה] justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

The Spirit empowered Servant will meet every challenge He faces. He will not be deterred, and He will not be defeated. He will resolutely tend to accomplishing His mission which is the establishment of justice on earth. As we noted earlier, justice embraces all areas of life; it is not only about a righteous legal system. When the righteousness and justice of the Messiah Servant that will characterize His reign is imposed on planet earth, every area of Kingdom life will be just.

Disheartened, פָּהָה, means to be feeble, to fail in strength, to be cast down in mind, to grow dim, and to be faint. It refers to someone who becomes weak and is unable to function and to respond.

Crushed, רָצַץ, means to be crushed, to be oppressed, to break down or be broken referring to being broken into small pieces.

People should not think that because He is compassionate for those who are less fortunate, that He is somehow weak and powerless. Quite the opposite is true. There is also a suggestion in the use of these words that the Messiah Servant is going to suffer just as many people on earth throughout history have suffered. He will, of course, triumph through those difficulties; after all, He overcomes the world (John 16:33). We know that He experienced all the temptations of the world that humanity experiences, but He resisted and overcame them all (Heb. 4:15).

Establish, **שָׁדַח**, means to put, to place, or to set referring to moving and setting something into a certain place. In this context, it primarily means to convey, to institute, to enact, or to establish. This does not represent an offer of the law that may be accepted or rejected; the law will not be optional. He is going to establish, set in place, Kingdom Law.

Many theologians are confused and even distressed that the Messiah Servant is going to establish a system of law when He comes, but the Kingdom will operate according to a law system. They fail to understand that Law, properly understood, is not the antithesis of a grace-oriented system. The Kingdom will not operate according to the Mosaic Law, it will operate according to Kingdom Law, but it will be a law system. Strictly law systems operate according to the concept that you do in order to be blessed. A grace-oriented law system operates based on the standard that you have been blessed; therefore, do in gratitude to the One who has blessed you. There is still an operative system of law in effect under grace. In this dispensation, we are under the Law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2), or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). Grace and law are not incompatible when properly understood; how people relate to whatever system of law is in effect at the time is the important factor.

The fact that the coastlands, which represents the entire earth and not just the nations bordering the Mediterranean Sea, are waiting for the establishment of His justice, indicates the longing of humanity to experience justice. The only problem is that ungodly people have differing views on the nature of justice. In the West, we think that representative republics are much more just than dictatorships, but many people think having a dictator king ensures justice. It will only be when the Kingdom is about to begin that the world will be eagerly anticipating His law. At this point in human history, the majority of humanity believes that the human heart is basically good and decent and that true justice can be imposed by using human wisdom apart from God's wisdom. Only when the world system and its leadership is defeated and removed from the face of planet earth, will those who remain and believe in Christ Jesus be eagerly awaiting the imposition of the King's Kingdom Law.

Buksbazen thought the desire for God's law is in the heart of all men, but I think that is overstating the case in terms of those who are in active opposition and rebellion against God and who are firmly entrenched in the world's system. Only when the Lord returns will those believers who are left in the world eagerly anticipate the imposition of Kingdom Law. "The implied thought here is that in the hearts of all men there is an unconscious longing for the manifestation of God's eternal law, for His truth and justice, which the servant of the Lord will reveal to all nations" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 344]. At His First Advent, the Messiah Servant was despised, rejected, and killed (Is. 53:3-5). Those immersed in the satanic world system are not so eager to embrace His Law, but those who believe and therefore belong to Him eagerly await His coming (1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20).

I think there is a big difference between the fact that all people know God because He has placed the knowledge of Him into the heart of everyone (Rom. 1:18-32), and longing for a relationship with God. Kiel and Delitzsch believe that everyone has an unconscious longing for redemption. Granted, people may have an unconscious longing for redemption, but making the leap that they want redemption through Christ Jesus is a

different issue. Many people think they can save themselves, while others think Satan is the true god and look to him for redemption of some sort. "There is ... at work in the Gentile world, as these prophecies all presuppose, in perfect harmony with the Gospel of John, with which they have so much affinity; and it is an actual fact, that the cry for redemption runs through the whole human race, i.e., an earnest longing, the ultimate object of which, however unconsciously, is the servant of Jehovah and his instruction from Zion (ch. 2:3),—in other words, the gospel" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:416].

My conclusion is that this verse is most likely a reference to the end of the Tribulation when saved people throughout the earth will be eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord and the imposition of Kingdom Law.

Amillennial theologians cannot understand the nature of the law in this verse. They do not believe in a literal Kingdom; therefore, in their mind, there cannot be a literal system of Kingdom Law. This reduces them to suggesting that the law mentioned in this verse is not a system of law, rather, it is the Gospel, and it was revealed at His First Advent. This Amillennial doctrine destroys any possibility that these verses are related to end times Eschatology.