

# ISAIAH

## ISAIAH 49:1-4, WORLDWIDE SALVATION, PART 1

In the last section of Isaiah, the call of King Cyrus, king of Medo-Persia, and the deliverance of Israel out of the Babylonian captivity was the focus. This situation was also a type of the end times Babylonian world system that will be destroyed by the Messiah King at the Second Coming. Now, God, through the prophet, focuses on the Messiah, God's Servant, and on the spiritual deliverance of not just Israel, but of the world. Some of what is recorded here is parallel to Isaiah 42:1-13 where worldwide salvation was also the focus. In these verses, the Servant's work seems to be in vain (v. 4), but in the end, He will triumph.

The Servant is not specifically identified in these first two verses, but the context of the entire pericope makes it clear that it must pertain to an individual. This Person was born of a woman; He has a mother (v. 1), which rules out Israel or the believing remnant of Israel as the Servant. Israel the nation is also ruled out as the Servant, because later it is said that the nation abhors this Person (v. 7). There is also a grammatical issue that rules Israel out as the Servant, but most theologians don't address it. Isaiah the prophet does not qualify because he is not equipped to restore Israel or to be a light to the nations that provides salvation (v. 6); restoration and justification salvation are God's job. It is not Cyrus; he uses military might to impose His will on others, but the Servant's words will accomplish His mission (v. 2).

"It [the Servant; Israel] decisively rules out the thought that the individual being spoken of is the prophet himself. No prophet ever thought of himself as the ideal Israel. One can imagine the horror with which such presumption would be viewed by Amos or Jeremiah. It is also hard to imagine any true prophet assigning that role to any other human of his or her acquaintance; it is simply too lofty a concept. Thus when this thought is combined with the lofty role assigned to the Servant in vv. 5-6, it is evident that this person is no merely human individual" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 291].

Due to the concept of progressive revelation, we know that the Messiah is the Word (John 1:1-4, 14), we know that He created all that exists by means of the spoken Word (Gen. 1), and we know that at His Second Coming, He will slay His enemies with the Word (Rev. 19:21). The link between the Messiah and the Word that He speaks to accomplish His will is very strong.

In the first two verses, the Servant's relationship with God is explained, but the first order of business is to issue a command to the world to listen to Him.

Isaiah 49:1 <sup>1</sup>Listen [שְׁמַע] to Me, O islands [אֲי], And pay attention, you peoples [לְאֻמִּים] from afar [רְחוֹק]. The LORD called [קָרָא] Me from the womb [בְּטֶן]; From the body [מִצֶּה] of My mother He named Me.

Island, אִי, means an island or coastland. Its primary reference is to the area of the Mediterranean Sea, in this context, which also refers to “peoples from afar,” it is a reference to the world. It is not unusual for this word to refer to the world at large.

Peoples, לְאָמ, means people or nation referring to a population group of a general kind. The Semitic root points to the concept of togetherness. It may be understood in terms of the human beings of a particular nation, community, or ethnic group. Also, it may refer specifically to Israel or to humanity in general, which is the context here.

Afar, רְחוֹק, means distant or a distant region, far off or far away, or remote. It refers to great spatial distance.

The point to this is that this Scripture is not just about Israel; it is about the nations and the peoples of the world. Israel is included, of course, but it is not limited to Israel either. The people and nations of the world need to listen to and pay attention to this message from the Servant.

The command to “listen,” שָׁמַע, has been used many times in Isaiah, and the word has the connotation of not only hearing by listening, but of obeying what is heard. Pay attention, קָשַׁב, means to listen carefully, to pay attention, to give heed referring to accepting information as true and responding to it in obedience. The expected response is conformity to what is spoken. In terms of obedience to the message, pay attention is the stronger of the two words.

Yahweh has plans for the One speaking, and those plans are revealed to the world. Yahweh called Him even before He was born. In terms of biblical revelation, being called before birth is unusual, but not unheard of. Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5) and Paul (Gal. 1:15) were both called by God to His service from the wombs of their mothers.

Jeremiah 1:5 <sup>5</sup>“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Galatians 1:15 <sup>15</sup>But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace ...

Called, קָרָא, in this context, refers to appointing to service or to assigning a specific task. The sense of the word is to order, summon, or request for a specific duty or activity, work, or role. As an appointment, it refers to being chosen for a task, implying authority or high status.

The womb and the body of His mother both refer to physical birth. Womb, בֶּטֶן, means womb, belly, body, or the internal organs. The basic meaning of the word’s Semitic root is interior; in Hebrew it is lower abdomen. When used to refer to the womb, it may be linked with God’s sovereign care, comfort, and calling of people as it is here. “From the womb” is an idiomatic way of stating “from birth.” “Probably as a polemic against the Babylonian notion that their gods called their kings from the womb, Isaiah proclaims that it was the Lord who formed the Servant and called him from the womb” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “בֶּטֶן,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 102-103].

Body, מִקְעָה, means the internal organs, intestines, belly, womb, and sexual organs. The word is used as a reference to the whole person referred to according to the inner parts of the person.

The Person speaking is nothing other than an individual; it is not the servant nation, Israel.

“He named Me” is not exactly a literal translation of the text. The literal translation is “He caused My name to be remembered [or mentioned].” “The thought is not so much that of naming a person as of designating a person by name. Thus the name denotes the servant’s office and vocation” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:268]. “Called is not used of ‘calling’ a prophet but is used of the Lord making a sovereign appointment.... The thought, then, is not of a ‘calling’ to be a prophet but of sovereign conscription to a special status and function” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 308]. “[C]ause to remember’ carries with it the idea of making something memorable. Thus a name is not merely mentioned, but carefully assigned and recorded” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary of the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 289, n. 21]. The issue concerning this calling is most evident to us in the charge of the angel to Mary to name her son Jesus where the reason for His name is revealed.

Matthew 1:21 <sup>21</sup>“She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Luke 1:31 <sup>31</sup>“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

Jesus, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, means “Yahweh saves” or “salvation is from Yahweh.” It signifies Savior.

He was also named Immanuel, עִמָּנוּ אֵל, “God is with us.”

Isaiah 7:14 <sup>14</sup>“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:22–23 <sup>22</sup>Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”

In verse 2, some metaphors are used to describe the Servant’s ministry.

Isaiah 49:2 <sup>2</sup>He has made My mouth like a sharp [הָדָד] sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed [תָּבֵא] Me; And He has also made Me a select [בָּרָר] arrow, He has hidden [סָתַר] Me in His quiver.

The primary component of the Servant’s ministry will be the proclamation and promulgation of the Word of God. The mouth is used as a figure of speech relating to words and speech which, coming from Him, cut like a sword. We know from New Testament revelation that the Word of God is compared to a sword. The image is one of

something that is razor sharp and has the capability to penetrate and deeply pierce its target.

Sharp, דָּק, means sharp pertaining to the cutting and piercing ability of a sword with the associative meaning of being able to hurt and destroy other persons. The sense is that of having or being made with a thin edge or sharp point which is suitable for cutting or piercing.

The Word of God uses this simile in a number of Scriptures. David wrote that his enemies had swords "in their lips" (Ps. 59:7), and Solomon described an adulteress as one who had lips that were as sharp as a two-edged sword (Prov. 5:4). The tongue is compared to a sword in Psalm 64:3, and Proverbs 30:14 compares the teeth of those who devour the afflicted to teeth like swords. This is an indication that the Servant's Words will be powerful and fully capable of accomplishing the mission assigned to Him. His words are about truth and persuasion, but they are also a force to be wielded when the time is right (cf. Rev. 19:15, 21). "He (the LORD) has made My mouth like a sharp sword, referring to His dynamic spoken ministry at His first advent (John 7:46) and His conquest over is foes at His second advent (Rev. 19:15, [21])" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1277]. "These images could be the offensive weapons of a kingly decree or a prophetic speech that can pierce the hearts of those who listen to God's words. These concepts broaden the audience's understanding of how the Servant's tools or abilities will enable him to establish justice (42:1-4). They suggest a somewhat aggressive role of confronting the thoughts and beliefs of his audience" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 343]. My opinion is the whole word of God is in view here.

Parallel to the concept of a sharp sword is a select arrow. One, the sword, is for close quarters, hand-to-hand combat, and the other, the arrow, for more distant engagement. The Servant is therefore prepared to operate in any circumstance. Select, בָּרַר, means to be made sharp or sharper, to purify, separate, sever, or to select. Some theologians claim the word refers to polishing the shaft of the arrow, but others reject that thought. In terms of archery, an arrow needs a true shaft to be accurate. Purify, separate, and select suggest to me that the search for the best shaft—straight, polished, and of the correct weight—is the most likely way to interpret this situation. Selecting the best arrow ensures accuracy, near and far. The concepts of sharpness, power, and accuracy are brought together in Psalm 45:5.

Psalm 45:5 <sup>5</sup>Your arrows are sharp; The peoples fall under You; *Your arrows are* in the heart of the King's enemies.

The Servant is concealed in God's hand and hidden in His quiver. This suggests a timing aspect is in play. God has set a time when the revelation of the Servant will take place. This is a truth applicable to the First Advent and to the Second Advent.

Galatians 4:4 <sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, [First Advent]

Matthew 23:39 <sup>39</sup>"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" [Second Advent]

In between the two advents, He is sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 12:2) until it is time for Him to return to earth. This is not to say that He is not ministering to the body of Christ at this time, but it is to say that He is not physically present with the Church and He has yet to assume the Davidic throne in Jerusalem.

Concealed, *הָבֵא*, means to hide or to hide oneself by concealing an object or information so it cannot be known. This verb form is causative; God is causing Him to be concealed.

Hidden, *סָתַר*, means to hide, to be hidden, to hide oneself which pertains to not being able to be known. It refers to preventing something, including oneself, from being seen or discovered. This verb form is causative; God is causing Him to be hidden.

Figuratively, the sword of the Servant's mouth is hidden in His Hand and the arrow is hidden in His quiver. Some theologians believe this suggests that the Servant is being kept ready for use at any moment, but this seems unlikely given God's plan for the revelation of the Servant at the proper times. At the exact time that God has set for Him to appear, the Servant will be revealed. We have noted that is exactly what happened when He appeared to Israel at His First Advent, and it is exactly what will happen when He is revealed to the world at His Second Advent. There is also an element of care and protection for the Servant; nothing is going to thwart God's plan involving the fulfillment of the ministry of the Servant.

Many theologians believe the next verse identifies the Servant as Israel, and the Servant is being appointed to God's service, but that identification is suspect for reasons based on grammar.

Isaiah 49:3 <sup>3</sup>He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory."

Isaiah previously referred to Israel as God's servant nation (Is. 41:8, 44:1, 21, 45:4), but is that the context here? Whatever the specific identity of the Servant in this verse, He or it is God's Servant. Earlier in this lesson we revealed the reasons why this is referring to a specific Person and not to Isaiah, the nation Israel, Cyrus, or anyone else.

We know that the nation servant, Israel, failed in its duty to be God's "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6) to the world.

Isaiah 42:19–20 <sup>19</sup>Who is blind but My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace *with Me*, Or so blind as the servant of the LORD? <sup>20</sup>You have seen many things, but you do not observe *them*; Your ears are open, but none hears.

We also know that the nation swore by the name of the Lord, but not in faithfulness.

Isaiah 48:1–2 <sup>1</sup>"Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are named Israel And who came forth from the loins of Judah, Who swear by the name of the LORD And invoke the God of Israel, *But* not in truth nor in righteousness. <sup>2</sup>"For they call themselves after the holy city And lean on the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is His name.

This is referring to the Word, the Messiah and not to the nation. In a figurative sense, many think this Servant is representing Israel as the nation was created to be. He is not national Israel, but He personifies the ideal that God created national Israel to be. "Yahweh called His Servant 'Israel.' Israel would indeed prove to be an instrument of God by which He demonstrated His glory, but in the context, the Servant appears to be an individual. Messiah was Israel, in that, He was the personal embodiment of the ideal Israel, what the nation should have been but never attained. Furthermore, He was the 'Prince with God' that neither the nation nor its namesake ever fully became. When God referred to His Servant as Israel He was referring to the Servant's function, not His identity. Throughout this book we have seen that the nation Israel was not able to carry out her function of being a light to the nations because she was blind, deaf, and rebellious. God would provide an individual to do what the nation had failed to do" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible: Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:139].

God's glory is the purpose of history, and a major part of that purpose will be fulfilled in the ministry of the Servant. The Servant is going to restore Israel (vv. 5-6) through whose redemption "He shows forth His glory" (Is. 44:23).

There is a grammatical issue in this verse. Earlier, we commented on the fact that the nation cannot be the Servant in this verse, and that is correct. However, could it be that "Israel" is a reference to the nation without being identified as the Servant in this verse?

Contrary to the way most people understand it, Israel could be a reference to the land or to the people where or through whom God will glorify Himself by means of the ministry of the Servant resulting in "Israel who in You I will glorify myself." In this interpretation, "Israel" belongs with the second clause in the sentence and not with the first clause that ends with the words "You are My Servant." This is in keeping with the Masoretic accents in the text, which suggests that is the proper way to understand it. Alternatively, most interpreters, however, understand it to be a reference to Israel the Servant; therefore, translating it as "my Servant, Israel," as the NASB does, or as "Israel, My Servant."

Almost all English translations set Israel off with commas which links it to the first clause. The ASV punctuates it with a semi-colon and a comma which seems to link it with the second clause, which the Masoretic accents suggest is the proper way to interpret it.

Isaiah 49:3 <sup>3</sup>He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory."  
(NASB)

Isaiah 49:3 <sup>3</sup>and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified.  
(ASV)

Isaiah 49:3 <sup>3</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר לִי עַבְדִּי־אֶתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בְּךָ אֶתְפָּאֵר:

If the accent structure is followed, then "Israel" is a reference to the nation, land and/or people, in whom the Servant will be glorified. The Servant is not Israel, and Israel is the location and/or the people through whom the Servant's glory will be revealed. The Servant is not the nation; He is a Person.

I want you to see how replacement theologians have to interpret this verse. They cannot recognize God's purpose for the nation, so they redefine Israel as the "true Church" and then illegitimately force that concept into verses like this one. "Israel then is a designation of the true people of God, the whole body of the redeemed as members under the Head, the Messiah. After mentioning the human body Paul says, 'So also is Christ' (1 Cor. 12:12). Israel, therefore, is the Messiah conceived as the Head of His body, the true Church, although the emphasis at this point falls upon the members of the body. Calvin says, 'In a word, the Lord honours [sic] by this name [Israel] the Church, which is the spouse of Christ, just as the wife is honoured [sic] by bearing the name and title of her husband'" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:270-271].

The Servant expresses frustration with His apparent lack of success.

Isaiah 49:4 <sup>4</sup>But I said, "I have toiled [יָגַעַ] in vain [רִיק], I have spent [פָּלַח] My strength [כֹּחַ] for nothing [תְּהוֹ] and vanity [הֶבֶל]; Yet [אַכֵּן] surely the justice [מִשְׁפָּט] due to Me is with the LORD, And My reward with My God."

It seems strange that the Servant, who is after all, both God and man, should seemingly fail at doing anything. The New Testament bears witness to this situation as well. At His First Advent, He seemingly failed to accomplish His mission.

John 1:10–11 <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup>He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

This lament by the Servant is the result of the rebellion of the nation. He was despised and rejected by those who should have recognized Him and welcomed Him. Buksbazen claimed that "The servant of Jehovah identifies himself with the humiliations and frustrations of his people, and with their apparent ineffectiveness and failure to establish the righteousness of God in a pagan and God-defying world" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 381]. However, this does not seem to be the meaning of this verse. The Servant is not identifying with the rebellious nation; He is lamenting the fact that the nation refused to listen to Him and be restored to what it was created to be. He was not identifying with those who rejected Him; He was calling them back to God, to accept Him, and they refused to heed His call. Yes, the nation failed in its call to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, but the Servant was not identifying with their failure; He was trying to rectify the situation. I do not think this to be a viable way to interpret this verse.

The effort the Servant expends is described as toil and as the complete exhaustion of His strength in so doing.

Toil, יָגַעַ, means to toil or labor, or to grow weary with work. The word refers to a considerable amount of energy that is expended while working. In terms of weariness, it refers to growing tired, to being or becoming in need of rest which is caused by either physical or emotional needs. The idea is that of putting forth great effort and exertion to

accomplish something so that one becomes enervated [drained of energy or vitality] or exhausted.

Strength, **כֹּחַ**, means strength or power referring to the property of being physically or mentally strong. "An exceptionally difficult task, combined with frustration and a sense of failure can also have a debilitating effect. Reflecting on what appeared to him to be the futility of his ministry, the servant of Yahweh lamented the fact that he had spent his strength for nothing and in vain. Unpropitious circumstances can lead to a decline in strength" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "כֹּחַ," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:623].

Several words were used that describe the apparent futility of the Servant's work. These words paint a very dismal picture of the Servant's mindset concerning His work.

Spent, **נִלְקָה**, means to be complete, at an end, finished, and accomplished. It primarily means to consummate or to bring to completion. It is most often used with a negative connotation. In this context, it has the sense of being spent, i.e., completely used up.

Vain, **רִיק**, means void, empty, vain. As emptiness, it refers to the state or condition of a quantity of space not occupied. As vanity or nothingness, it refers to the state or condition of not having any advantage, hence useless, which is the context here in Isaiah. The sense is that of something which is empty and cannot produce any advantage or benefit.

Nothing, **תְּהוֹ**, means formlessness, confusion, emptiness, or that which is wasted referring to something that is worthless or unsubstantial. It refers to formlessness or emptiness that characterizes the state of empty space and so nothingness, not having a shape. It implies a state prior to order and form (Gen. 1:2). This word has a negative and disparaging tone. "It represents chaos, confusion, and disorder, all things that are opposed to the organization, direction, and order that God has demonstrated" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "תְּהוֹ," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1214].

Vanity, **הֶבֶל**, wind or breath, vapor, vanity, emptiness, meaninglessness. It refers to breath because of its transitory fleeting character. In this context, it refers to something that is meaningless referring to the quality of having no value or significance as a result of being futile or insubstantial or absurd or incomprehensible. This word may represent the sometimes-exasperating sentiments of individuals which it does in this verse.

It seems strange to hear the Servant express disappointment concerning the results of His work since we know how successful He will ultimately be. From our vantage point, we consider what He did a success, even if not yet complete. Due to progressive revelation, we do know how disappointed He was that Israel rejected Him, even though He obviously knew that was going to happen. That does not negate His heartfelt disappointment over Israel's continuing rejection of their role in God's plan for history.

Matthew 23:37 <sup>37</sup>"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.



He also knew that He came to die which, humanly speaking, seems like defeat, but it was not.

John 12:27 <sup>27</sup>“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

In this context, “But I said” may also translated, “But I thought” as some interpreters do (NET Bible, TANAKH), but if this is a direct response of the Servant to what God said, then “said” is the more appropriate interpretation. The Servant contemplates the apparent failure of His mission in Israel. He worked hard and expended his time and effort, but the result was empty and meaningless. Certainly, He had a vested interest in Israel’s welfare; He created them to be His priests to the world. Their failure to obey the Mosaic Covenant and their refusal to accept His Kingdom offer had to be disappointing even though it was not unexpected.

“If the Servant described in this passage is more than human, he is not less than human. Frustration and feelings of futility, all too familiar to everyone who inhabits flesh, were part of the burden he came to bear. To become powerless is to experience what the powerless experience, and that is the reality of what the Servant’s blunt retort conveys. No Christian can read these words without relating them to the ministry of Jesus Christ. When he died, what had he accomplished? To all appearances, nothing. By every measure of the world, his life had been futile” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 292].

We have to remember that the Servant is fully God and fully man. He experienced everything that every other human experiences while living life in this sinful, broken, fallen world system which operates according to the dictates of Satan.

Hebrews 2:18 <sup>18</sup>For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

“That beclouding of the Servant’s joy is only momentary, however. As a man, He is tempted in all points as we are and is seeing the trials and rejection He would suffer at His first advent” [Merrill F. Unger, “Isaiah” in *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1278].

“The expression of discouragement is no thought of unbelief, but simply of a genuine modesty borne from a consciousness of one’s own weakness. It is, we believe, Jesus Christ in His humiliation of whom the prophet speaks.... The prophet’s language points forward to the humiliation of our Lord: true man yet sinless; true man yet very God. Before the sublime mystery of the Person of our Lord we can but bow in reverent wonder. The psychological problem we cannot answer” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:272].

But this verse also reveals that what seems to be the Servant's failure is only part of the story. The end result has yet to be realized, and, of course, we now know that result will be complete victory. The second clause begins with an emphatic marker of emphasis, **כִּי** meaning surely! Truly! Indeed! Nevertheless. It is a marker of contrast with the first section of the verse, and it is an emphatic repudiation of what has immediately preceded it. The Servant trusted Yahweh who would see to it that the One He called, equipped, and sent on a mission will accomplish everything He was sent to do. Then the Servant will submit His work to Yahweh who will evaluate the Servant's work and reward Him accordingly. "Nevertheless, the Servant's work would please God, if not men. Man's justice gave Messiah the Cross, but God's justice gave Him the crown. The Servant would commit His work to God and would trust Him for a just reckoning" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah- Daniel, 4:139*]. "The Messiah quickly conquers discouragements with the conviction that He is doing God's will and is expecting God's reward. His faith becomes vocal, despite all appearances to the contrary ..." [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament, 1278*].

Justice, **מִשְׁפָּט**, means judgment or decision having to do with forensic, or legal, matters. In this context, justice refers to making a judgment that is involved in the determination of rights and the assignment of rewards and punishments, but, of course, there is no punishment to be determined for the Servant, but only reward.

In terms of our humanity and the evaluation of our work for the Lord, there is probably an application for us in this verse. "Too often we miss the two-sidedness of what is being said here. On the one hand, we think that to admit feelings of futility is not to trust God. On the other hand, we often believe that if we really trusted God, we would never have feelings of futility. The Servant shows us that neither reality is incompatible with the other. Trust has ultimately to do with the final outcome, and the Servant is fully confident. It is God, the God who called him, equipped him, and is using him, who will make the final adjudication (*mišpāṭ*, justice) concerning the Servant's work. God, not the world, not even the Servant, will make the final decision concerning the worth of that work ..." [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66, 292*].