

Isaiah's Songs of the Servant
Part 3:

The Commitment of the Servant in Isaiah 50:4-11

F. Duane Lindsey

The first two of Isaiah's songs of the Servant placed emphasis on the ultimate success of Yahweh's Servant-Messiah. In Isaiah 42:1-9 Yahweh introduced His Servant and predicted the Servant's faithfulness in accomplishing His divinely appointed mission of bringing salvation and establishing a proper order on the whole earth.¹ In the second song (Isa. 49:1-13), although a new feature of apparent initial failure by the Servant was introduced, His ultimate success was predicted not only in fulfilling an expanded mission to bring salvation to the Gentiles; but also in restoring Israel both to the land (physically and politically) and to Yahweh (spiritually).²

The third Servant song (Isa. 50:4-11)³ amplifies the sufferings and patient endurance of the Servant, which were only hinted at in the previous songs. All of this is in preparation for the magnum opus of the fourth song (Isa. 52:13-53:12), in which the Servant-Messiah's suffering and His consequent exaltation are revealed with equal emphasis. "Common to both [the third and fourth songs] is the new conception of the Servant as *sufferer*, here [50:4-9] at the hands of men, there [Isa. 53] at the hands of men and God alike."⁴ As in the previous songs, the Servant can be neither Isaiah himself (who nowhere else in the book is described as suffering) nor the nation Israel (whose humiliation and sufferings were neither voluntary nor [to anticipate Isa. 53] vicarious or substitutionary).⁵

Like the preceding Servant song, the third song (50:4-11) begins a cycle that culminates in a powerful message of salvation (51:1-52:12).⁶ The short trial speech in Isaiah 50:1-3 forms somewhat of a transition from the preceding Servant-song/salvation-oracle cycle (49:1-26) to the current cycle in 50:4—52:12. In this trial speech Yahweh proves the unreasonableness of His rejection by Israel. The speaker in these verses is Yahweh, not the Servant.⁷ Thus they are not part of the Servant song, although some good reasons have been given for regarding all of chapter 50 as a literary unit.⁸ The oracle of Yahweh in 50:10-11 is closely connected in thought to the preceding verses, and so they should be included in the third Servant song.

The message of 50:4-11 is fairly clear: The righteous but rejected Servant of Yahweh indicates that Yahweh who disciplined Him will also vindicate Him. This is the basis for Yahweh's exhortation for the faithful to walk by faith even in darkness, and His threat to the self-righteous wicked regarding eventual judgment. Except for the wicked who are addressed by Yahweh in verse 11 (and possibly the potential adversaries in v. 8), the primary audience throughout seems to be the faithful disciples of Yahweh's Servant, as identified in verse 10. As will be indicated below, the Servant is the speaker in verses 4-9 and Yahweh is the speaker in verses 10-11.⁹

The third Servant song is thus composed of two units: (1) the Servant declares that Yahweh who disciplined Him will also vindicate Him (50:4-9), and (2) Yahweh contrasts the obedient walk of the Servant's disciples with the judgment to come on the wicked (50:10-11).

The Servant Declares That Yahweh Who Disciplined Him Will Also Vindicate Him (50:4-9)

⁴The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

⁵The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears,
and I have not been rebellious;
I have not drawn back.

⁶I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.

⁷Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,

I will not be disgraced.
 Therefore have I set my face like flint,
 and I know I will not be put to shame.
⁸He who vindicates me is near.
 Who then will bring charges against me?
 Let us face each other!
 Who is my accuser?
 Let him confront me!
⁹It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
 Who is he that will condemn me?
 They will all wear out like a garment;
 the moths will eat them up.¹⁰

In this section the righteous but rejected Servant indicates that Yahweh who has disciplined Him will also vindicate Him, and implies that by His rejection He has learned to comfort the weary.

Some writers have incorrectly identified this literary unit as a lament psalm of the individual. Verses 4-6 do have some resemblance to the lament motif (including the protestation of innocence) and verse 7 is certainly an expression of confidence (another lament motif). But the absence of the vital motif of petition rules this out as a lament psalm. It could more properly be called a psalm of confidence.¹¹

The Servant is the speaker, who, as in 49:1-6, appears without any introduction.¹² The addressees are not identified except in verse 8 which is a challenge to potential adversaries. The remaining verses (vv. 4-7, 9) appear to be addressed primarily to the obedient disciples of the Servant (cf. v. 10).

This "autobiographical confession"¹³ of the Servant includes two parts: (1) the committed Servant reports His past obedience and sufferings as the "Disciple" of Yahweh (vv. 4-6) and (2) the rejected Servant expresses confidence that Yahweh will vindicate Him (vv. 7-9).

THE SERVANT REPORTS HIS COMMITMENT TO YAHWEH WHO DISCIPLINED HIM (50:4-6)

The Servant asserts His role as the Disciple-Prophet of Yahweh (50:4). Before amplifying the daily discipling process whereby Yahweh taught Him, the Servant states the results of that process: "The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary" (v. 4a). It is Adonai Yahweh ("the Sovereign LORD") who has given His servant the ability to speak eloquently and encouragingly. This longer title of Yahweh (occurring four times in this song, always at the begin-

ning of a verse, cf. vv. 5, 7, 9) stresses the sovereign superiority of Him who disciplines the Servant.

The Hebrew word **לְמַנְדִּי** translated “instructed” (NIV) occurs again at the end of this verse where it is translated “one being taught” (NIV). Comparable to the English word “scholar,” it can refer to one in the educational process (“a learner”) or to one who has completed or is at least well advanced in that process (“one who is learned”). Hengstenberg is representative of those who translate both occurrences in this verse as “disciple” (“a disciple’s tongue” and “a disciple’s ear”), indicating that “He who hears the Lord’s words, also speaks the Lord’s words.”¹⁴ Other scholars translate the first occurrence as “an expert tongue,”¹⁵ that is, “a tongue adapted to deliver effectively the message that is given him to communicate.”¹⁶ Care should be taken to avoid a disjunction between the two occurrences, or between the educational process and the educational product. True, the first use probably identifies “the Servant’s endowment with prophetic eloquence,”¹⁷ but this endowment is made effectual by the daily learning process which requires a disciple’s ear. As a disciple the Servant’s word which He proclaims is not His own—it is a word which He has received from His Teacher (cf. John 17:7-8). Since His Teacher is the “Sovereign LORD,” the Servant-Disciple thus enters into the role of a prophet, delivering God’s word to “the weary.” Westermann concludes that this is “the utterance of a man whose being is governed by hearing and speaking. In both respects he is ‘like a disciple,’ which means that in both his hearing and his speaking he is concentrated on God, and that these have God as their source.”¹⁸

While the passage is clearly messianic—fulfilled in the prophetic office of Jesus Christ—it is not the intent of the passage to direct attention to the uniqueness of the Servant (as Pieper suggests¹⁹). Instead the purpose is to identify the Servant as a Disciple and Prophet of Yahweh. Obviously the Messiah-Servant fulfills these functions in a unique manner.

Yahweh has a purpose in the schooling of His servant: “to know the word that sustains the weary.” It is experiential knowledge of the divine word that enables the servant to sustain the weary. The word translated “sustains” (**נָעַם**) is a hapax legomenon. Many commentators have identified the verb with the word for “time” (**נָעַם**) and translated it “to speak seasonably.”²⁰ Some modern writers have related it to an Arabic root meaning “to help.” This does seem to give a better sense in the context. In

Isaiah 40:27-31 the “weary” are Israel. A similar identification here would support the view that the Servant is an individual distinguished from Israel.²¹ Since the Servant’s mission is not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles (cf. 42:1, 6; 49:1,6-7), the “weary” may have a broader reference, as suggested by Leupold: “Israelites laboring under the burden of the law and finding no peace, and Gentiles laboring under the oppressive burden of idol-religions that afforded no peace to the burdened conscience of the sinner.”²²

The Servant next explains His preparation by Yahweh to minister to the weary with a sustaining word: “He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught” (v. 4b). Since Yahweh is the subject of the verbs in this sentence, the discipling process described is actually that of prophetic revelation. Delitzsch interprets the phrase “morning by morning” as a reference to the Servant receiving revelation after He has awakened, in contrast to those prophets who received visions or dreams by night.²³ Rather, the repeated term “morning by morning” indicates the daily repetition of the awakening, which is probably not so much physical as spiritual, indicating His receptivity to the message from the Holy Spirit.²⁴ This is supported by the fact that the “ear,” not the eye, is awakened. “The ear with its function of hearing plays a major role in the psychology and anthropology of both O. T. and N. T. It was the organ par excellence whereby man responded to the divine revelation.”²⁵

Thus the Servant asserts claim to a disciple’s ear in preparation for His exercise of a disciple’s tongue. There is a direct relationship between the two: The Servant listens to God as a learner, and He speaks to others eloquently, effectively, and encouragingly as a disciple who has learned His lessons well.

The Servant affirms His obedience to the will of Yahweh (50:5). Verses 5 and 6 both refer to the Servant’s submission, but each in a different direction. The Servant’s voluntary submission to suffering at the hands of men (v. 6) is a result of His willing submission to the plan of Yahweh (v. 5; cf. John 8:28-29). The Servant first testifies positively regarding His obedience to Yahweh’s will: “The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears” (v. 5a). The phrase “opened my ears” is similar to “wakens my ear” in verse 4. Pieper refers both phrases to the Servant’s “inner, moral preparation for learning.”²⁶ The meaning is simply “to instruct” or “to reveal”²⁷ (cf. 1 Sam. 9:15; Ruth 4:4; Isa. 48:8). The expres-

sion may be viewed as a synecdoche of the part for the whole (i.e., “ear” represents the whole “body” or “person,” given over to knowing and doing God’s will; cf. the similar expression in Ps. 40:6-8 as extended to “body” in Heb. 10:5-7).²⁸ Alternately, it may be viewed as a metonymy of cause for effect, the organ of receptivity (the ear) being used for the act of reception.

The Servant’s positive statement of receiving divine instruction is followed by a twofold negation: “I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back” (v. 5b). The Servant is characterized neither by an inner attitude of rebellion nor by an outward manifestation of hesitancy. In this regard He is unlike Yahweh’s other servant—the nation Israel (cf. Isa. 3:8; 59:4; 63:10; Jer. 4:17; Ezek. 20:13). “Drawing back” can convey the idea of apostasy (Ps. 44:18) or unfaithfulness (Jer. 38:22). Comparison may be made to “a yoke of oxen, who go backward instead of forward, and will not suffer themselves to be guided.”²⁹ In contrast, the Servant did not refuse to receive and proclaim the prophetic word—He was obedient to Yahweh’s call and commission. Having an attitude of submission to the word and will of Yahweh, He obediently proclaimed comfort to the weary. But His message also offended the self-righteous, for not all responded positively to His word (v. 6).

The Servant attests His submission to suffering (50:6). The Servant’s testimony turns from His underlying obedience to Yahweh to His outward submission to suffering at the hands of men: “I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting” (v. 6). The active verbs indicate the Servant’s conscious and willing submission to His sufferings. This submission to suffering is indicated in the Gospels in such passages as John 10: 18, “No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

Leupold claims that all the forms of ill-treatment mentioned in verse 6 were traditional ways of treating criminals (cf. Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Neh. 13:25; Matt. 26:67; 27:30).³⁰ “I offered my back to those who beat me” probably denotes in this context a public punishment, at least a beating or scourging by authorities (cf. Deut. 25:2-3; Jer. 20:2; 37:15).³¹ Pulling out the beard was a sign of contempt (Neh. 13:25), as were “mocking and spitting” (Deut. 25:9; Num. 12: 14; Job 30:10). Thus these sufferings are “a startling anticipation [prophecy would be a more accurate term] of the maltreatment of Christ on the morning of the

crucifixion.”³² While there is no indication in Isaiah 50 that the sufferings culminate in death, the prophecy prepares the way for the full details of Isaiah ⁵³.

THE REJECTED SERVANT EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE THAT YAHWEH WILL VINDICATE HIM (50:7-9)

Having reported His obedience and sufferings as the committed “Disciple” of Yahweh, the rejected Servant yet expresses confidence that Yahweh is on His side and will vindicate Him. Thus verses 7-9 take on the form of a confession of trust (cf. Isa. 42:4; 49:4-5).

The Servant asserts His determination because of His confidence in Yahweh’s aid (50:7). The Servant expresses His trust in the vindicating aid of Yahweh—“Because the Sovereign Lord helps me” (v. 7a). The verb **אָזַר** (“help, support”) frequently refers to military assistance, either by human armies (Isa. 30:7; 31:3) or by divine intervention (2 Chron. 14:11; 25:8; 26:7). The word also refers to personal assistance of a nonmilitary nature (e.g., Ps. 22:11; 107:12; 119:173, 175).³³ It is normally interpreted in this verse as divine enablement of the Servant to endure His sufferings, especially the contempt and scorn of the preceding verse.³⁴ Pieper suggests that “it is not so much outward, physical support, as spiritual support for His soul; it is preservation in obedience, in patience, in the holy will.”³⁵ However, since the expression of confidence in Yahweh’s help is asserted again in verse 9 in a legal context, that may affect the meaning here. The verb may have a legal nuance in both verses, referring to the help of a judge or advocate at court.

In view of Yahweh’s expected help, the Servant confidently proclaims, “I will not be disgraced...and I know I will not be put to shame” (v. 7b, d). Westermann points out the apparent contradiction between this statement and that in verse 6, “I did not hide my face from mocking” (lit., “shame,” from the same root as “disgraced” in v. 7b). Westermann contends:

This contradiction must not be resolved by making it simply a matter of succession in time—“I take this shame upon me now, but God will take it away from me later.” Even if such a succession in time is implied, what is emphasized is that God is to bring the past and present acts of hostility and abuse into constructive connection with the Servant’s justification.³⁶

However, the fact that the Servant’s sufferings culminate in His substitutionary death for sinners (Isa. 53) and are fulfilled in the

sufferings and death of Jesus Christ requires a more explicit understanding of the time factor involved in the Servant's vindication. This matter will be pursued further in the treatment of verses 8-9.

The Servant's confidence in Yahweh's help and implied future vindication give Him fresh strength to endure the sufferings at hand: "Therefore have I set my face like flint" (v. 7c). These words of resolute determination convey "a common description of firmness and determination as expressed in the countenance"³⁷ (cf. Luke 9:51). While the expression can describe determination to do evil (cf. Jer. 5:3; Zech. 7:12), it is obvious that obedience to Yahweh's will looms paramount in the Servant's determination.³⁸ Leupold suggests that the Servant "will not give his adversaries the satisfaction of seeing him flinch when maltreated."³⁹

The Servant challenges His adversaries and anticipates vindication by Yahweh (50:8). The Servant's defiant challenge to anyone to step forward and participate in a legal contest⁴⁰ with Him is prefaced by His confident assertion that Yahweh will vindicate Him: "He who vindicates me is near" (v. 8a). Charged with guilt by His adversaries (thus the punishment rendered in v. 7), the Servant anticipates that in the face of unjust accusations, Yahweh will not only conduct His case but will also secure and pronounce His acquittal.⁴¹ It is a question of the guilt or innocence of the suffering Servant. Yahweh, who called, commissioned, and disciplined His Servant, will also justify Him, declare Him to be in the right, vindicate Him.

But when did the vindication occur? Since the Servant's sufferings led on to death (Isa. 53:5, 8-10), this would appear to be a sort of postmortem inquest (cf. Isa. 53:11). Blocher thus speaks of His "acquittal by resurrection."⁴² (Ps. 22 supports this view with the resurrection of Messiah understood as occurring between vv. 21 and 22:) Hengstenberg says, "It took place and was fulfilled, in the first instance, in the resurrection and glorification of Christ, and, then in the destruction of Jerusalem"⁴³ (see 1 Tim. 3:16). Any fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is dubious except as it anticipates the attack on the city near the end of the future Great Tribulation and the return of Yahweh's Servant to establish the messianic kingdom.

Thus in terms of historical fulfillment the vindication of the Servant takes place in two stages: (1) the threefold exaltation described in Isaiah 52:13 (fulfilled in the resurrection, ascen-

sion, and present session of Jesus Christ), and (2) the final enthronement of the Servant over the millennial kingdom following His second advent. Both stages of this vindication demonstrate the error in the Servant's adversaries' view that He was deserted by God as punishment for His own sin (Isa. 53:4b; cf. Ps. 22:7-8).

In view of His certain vindication by Yahweh (the Servant is innocent!), He challenges His adversaries: "Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me!" (v. 8b). The term "accuser" (lit., "owner of my case") is found only here in the Old Testament, and refers to "the one who possesses a judgment against him."⁴⁴

The Servant expects the defeat of His adversaries (50:9).

The Servant summarizes and restates His confidence in and vindication by Yahweh (as already referred to in vv. 7-8): "It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me?" (v. 9a). Since Yahweh the sovereign Creator of the universe is the One who helps the Servant as advocate or judge, who can possibly win a verdict against Him? The rhetorical question calls for only one answer, the negative reply being amplified in a description of the would-be adversaries by a simile ("They will all wear out like a garment") and a metaphor ("the moths will eat them up," v. 9b), "common images of gradual but inevitable destruction."⁴⁵ Pieper suggests that "the picture is not to be understood as referring to physical disintegration (although that too would not be out of place); but the meaning is that the accusations of the enemies will collapse before the righteous judgment of the Lord and be put to shame like the moldering of a moth-eaten garment."⁴⁶

In summary of the first two strophes of this song, four features stand out regarding the Servant: (1) The Servant is a righteous Sufferer (vv. 4-5), (2) the Servant is a voluntary Sufferer (v. 6), (3) the Servant has learned submission from Yahweh (vv. 4-5), and (4) the Servant retains confidence in Yahweh despite suffering (v. 9).⁴⁷

Yahweh Contrasts the Obedient Walk of the Servant's Disciples with the Judgment to Come on the Wicked (50:10-11)

¹⁰Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the word of his servant?
Let him who walks in the dark,
who has no light,

trust in the name of the LORD
and rely on his God.

¹¹But now, all you who light fires
and provide yourselves with flaming torches,
go, walk in the light of your fires
and of the torches you have set ablaze.

This is what you shall receive from my hand:
You will lie down in torment.

This difficult unit is composed of an exhortation (v. 10) and a warning or threat (v. 11). The judgment aspect of this unit is related to the preceding verses as follows: “The judgment against the faithless needs the portrayal of the servant as a faithful disciple who teaches God’s word.”⁴⁸

Difference of opinion exists as to the speaker’s identity in these verses. One view regards the Servant as still speaking throughout verses 10-11.⁴⁹ Engnell agrees with this except that he attributes the final line of verse 11 (“This is what you shall receive...”) to Yahweh.⁵⁰ Whybray regards the servant (whom he sees as the prophet) as speaking in verse 10 with Yahweh speaking in verse 11.⁵¹ However, others correctly view Yahweh as the speaker throughout verses 10-11. Muilenburg thus affirms that “the speaker throughout is Yahweh; the shifts from third to first person are characteristic of prophetic style.”⁵²

The content of Yahweh’s speech thus draws a contrast between the righteous and the wicked: (1) Yahweh exhorts the Servant’s disciples to walk by faith in the darkness (v. 10), and (2) Yahweh warns the unfaithful that their self-centered efforts will result in judgment (v. 11).

YAHWEH EXHORTS THE SERVANT’S DISCIPLES TO WALK BY FAITH IN THE DARKNESS (50:10).

A major problem in this verse is the grammatical structure. Is the opening pronoun in the Hebrew text (ׁו) interrogative (“Who?”) or indefinite (“Whoever”)?⁵³ If interrogative, how far does the question extend (i.e., are the second and third lines subordinate or independent)? The English versions have placed the question mark at the end of different lines in the verse. The RSV continues the question to the end of the verse, subordinating the second and third lines as descriptions of the “servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the LORD....” The AV places the question mark after the second line, thus subordinating the second line to “you,” and making the third line independent (“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...”).⁵⁴ Those translations (such as the NIV) that place the question mark at the end of the first line and translate the remaining independent clauses as exhortations, give the smoothest sense to the passage.⁵⁵

Consequently the addressees in verse 10 (“Who among you...”) are the faithful in contrast to the unfaithful “you” of verse¹¹. Yahweh inquires concerning the identity of the faithful who are obedient to the word proclaimed by Yahweh’s suffering but vindicated Servant: “Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant?” (v. 10a). Reverential awe of Yahweh and obedience to His Servant’s word are complementary. As Pieper states, “He who honors and fears the Lord, honors His Messenger also, John 5:23. The proof of the fear of the Lord lies in giving ear to the word and voice of the Servant, and yielding obedience to Him, for the Servant’s word is God’s Word.”⁵⁶

Yahweh’s exhortation to those who walk by faith and not by sight (“who walks in the dark, who has no light” [v. 10b]) is clear: “Let him...trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God” (v. 10c). This is an exhortation to the righteous to do what the Servant has done, to be His faithful disciples. Thus “the verse is an admirable summary, and application, of vv. 4-9.”⁵⁷

YAHWEH WARNS THE UNFAITHFUL THAT THEIR SELF-CENTERED EFFORTS WILL RESULT IN JUDGMENT (50:11)

The movement from exhorting the faithful to rebuking satirically the unfaithful is clear in this verse. But “the metaphors are no longer clear to us.”⁵⁸ The judgment pronounced at the end of the verse makes it transparent that the ungodly are addressed. They are described as “all who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches” (v. 11a) and are exhorted, apparently satirically, to “go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze” (v. 11b).

The reference may be to the self-righteous schemes of the ungodly who seek to provide their own light for the path of life rather than trusting Yahweh to provide light in the darkness (cf. v. 10). Thus Barnes comments:

The idea probably is, that all human devices for salvation bear the same resemblance to the true plan proposed by God, which a momentary spark in the dark does to the clear shining of a bright light like that of the sun. If this is the sense, it is a most graphic and striking description of the nature of all the schemes by which the sinner hopes to save himself.⁵⁹

An alternate interpretation of the figure is that the wicked somehow fall into the trap which they have set for the righteous, the destruction they intended for the Servant and His disciples being turned back on them by Yahweh.⁵⁰ In any event they are marked out by Yahweh for judgment on their schemes: “This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment” (v. 11b). North understands this last phrase as “‘a place of (fiery) torment,’ very nearly ‘Gehenna.’”⁶¹

Hengstenberg sets the contrast of these two verses in vivid metaphor: “The pious walk patiently through the darkness, until *Jehovah* kindles a light for them. The ungodly kindle a fire *for themselves*; but the fire, that should light and warm, consumes them.”⁶²

Conclusion

The committed Servant-Disciple of Yahweh reports not only His past submission to the plan of Yahweh but also His voluntary sufferings at the hands of men, and implies that by His rejection He has learned to comfort the weary. In the wake of this rejection, He expresses confidence that Yahweh who has disciplined Him will also vindicate Him. Consequently Yahweh exhorts the Servant’s disciples (following the Servant’s example) to walk by faith in darkness, but threatens the unfaithful that their self-righteous efforts will end in judgment. The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the sufferings and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and the response of the righteous and the wicked to Him.

Notes

1 Cf. F. Duane Lindsey, “Isaiah’s Songs of the Servant. Part 1: The Call of the Servant in Isaiah 42: 1-9:’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (January-March 1982): 12-30.

2 Cf. F. Duane Lindsey, “Isaiah’s Songs of the Servant. Part 2: The Commission of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1-13:’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (April-June 1982): 129-45.

3 “Although the word ‘servant’ ...is not used, the similarity of the passage with the second ‘Song,’ together with the use of the first person sing., leaves no doubt that it belongs to the same series” (R. N. Whybray; *Isaiah 40—66*, New Century Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981], p. 150).

4 J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters XL-LXVI* (Cambridge: University Press, 1951). p. 113.

5 Cf. Allan A. MacRae, *The Gospel of Isaiah* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p.119.

6 Likewise, the fourth song (Isa. 52:13-53:12) introduces a message of salvation (54: 1-17). Cf. Robert B. Chisholm. “Toward a Form Critical/Structural

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- Analysis of Isaiah,” student paper for 158 Old Testament Theology III, Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall 1980, pp. 62-63.
- 7 This is in contradistinction to several older interpreters such as T. R. Birks, *Commentary on the Book of Isaiah* (London: Rivingtons, 1871), p. 256.
- 8 James Muilenburg, in “The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:579.
- 9 The literary genre of the Servant’s speech and Yahweh’s speech will be mentioned individually.
- 10 All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) unless designated otherwise.
- 11 Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40—66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 226-28; cf. Ivan Engnell, “The ‘Ebed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in ‘Deutero-Isaiah!’” *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* 31 (January 1948): 70-71. Engnell calls 50:4-9 “a royal psalm of confidence” (p. 70), but the Servant appears in this passage more in His prophetic role.
- 12 See Lindsey, “The Commission of the Servant,” p. 131, note 9, citing Blocher.
- 13 Muilenburg, “Isaiah,” 5:579.
- 14 E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*. 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1956). 2:251.
- 15 H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), 2: 193; Christopher R. North, *The Second Isaiah: Introduction. Translation. and Commentary to Chapters XL-LV* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1964), p. 203.
- 16 Leupold, *Isaiah*, 2:193.
- 17 Skinner, *Isaiah*. p. 113.
- 18 Westermann, *Isaiah 40—66*. p. 228.
- 19 August Pieper, *Isaiah 11: An Exposition of Isaiah 40—66*, trans. Erwin E. Kowalke (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1979), p. 388.
- 20 Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*. 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953), 2:250.
- 21 However, Melugin contends, “It would not be unseemly at all for Israel to have a prophetic mission to her own weary” (Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40—55* [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976], p. 154). See Lindsey, “The Commission of the Servant,” p. 129-45.
- 22 Leupold, *Isaiah*, 2:193.
- 23 Franz Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 2:277.
- 24 See Pieper, *Isaiah II*, p. 390.
- 25 Muilenburg. “Isaiah...40—66,” pp. 583-84.
- 26 Pieper. *Isaiah II*. p. 390; cf. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction. Exposition, and Notes*, 3vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. 1965, 1969, 1972), 3:299.
- 27 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 2:252.
- 28 Personal correspondence from Kenneth L. Barker, March I, 1982.
- 29 E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions* (reprint ed. [2 vols. in 1 I, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1970), p. 227.
- 30 Leupold, *Isaiah*, 2:194.
- 31 North, *Second Isaiah*. p. 203; Whybray. who misidentifies the Servant as “Deutero-Isaiah, “thinks the servant had been arrested and put on trial (cf. v. 8) by the Babylonian authorities (Whybray. *Isaiah 40—66*, p. 151).
- 32 Ibid.

- 33 *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v. “1598 e⁶⁷f,” by Carl Schultz, 2:660-61.
- 34 E.g., Albert Barnes, Isaiah, in *Notes on the Old Testament Explanatory and Practical* (reprinted., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 2:222.
- 35 Pieper, *Isaiah II*, 2:392.
- 36 Westermann, *Isaiah 40—66*, p. 231.
- 37 Alexander; *Isaiah*, 2:252.
- 38 Young, *Isaiah*, 3:301.
- 39 Leupold, *Isaiah*, 2:295.
- 40 Numerous legal terms are in this verse: “to draw near” (cf. Isa. 41:1), “to justify, vindicate” (cf. Deut. 25:1), “to condemn, bring charges” (cf. Deut. 25:1), “to face another” as before the judgment seat (cf. Num. 27:2, 5), “adversary, accuser” (a hapax legomenon; cr. Exod. 24:14).
- 41 North, *Second Isaiah*, p. 204. Westermann (*Isaiah 40—66*, p. 231) holds the strange view that the Servant has already conceded His defeat by submitting to punishment, so that in the adversaries’ eyes the case is already decided and the Servant has lost.
- 42 Henri Blocher, *Songs of the Servant* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p.50.
- 43 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 2:254.
- 44 Young, *Isaiah*, 3:302.
- 45 Skinner, *Isaiah, Chapters XL-LXVI*, p. 115.
- 46 Pieper, *Isaiah II*, p. 394.
- 47 Mark A. Arrington, “The Identification of the Anonymous Servant in Isaiah 40-55,” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1971), pp. 40-44.
- 48 Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40—55*, p. 73.
- 49 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 2:254; cr. MacRae, *The Gospel of Isaiah*, p. 119.
- 50 Engnell, “Ebed Yahweh Songs,” p. 71. Engnell identifies the speech in verses 10-11 b as “in the typical royal third person style.”
- 51 Whybray, *Isaiah 40—66*, p. 153.
- 52 Mulenburg, “*Isaiah...40—66*,” p. 587.
- 53 Pieper regards the pronoun as indefinite, introductory to noun clauses in the first and second lines, with the third line constituting an independent clause (“Let him trust...”) (*Isaiah II*, p. 394). cr. Young, *Isaiah*, 3:303, and cr. the translation in the Jerusalem Bible.
- 54 cr. Leupold, *Isaiah*, pp. 196-97.
- 55 The NEB places the question mark after the first line but regards the rest of the verse as the answer to the question.
- 56 Pieper, *Isaiah II*, p. 395.
- 57 North, *Second Isaiah*, p. 205.
- 58 David F. Payne, “Isaiah,” in *The New Layman’s Bible Commentary*, eds. G. C. D. Howley, F. F. Bruce, and H. L. Ellison (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 806.
- 59 Barnes, *Isaiah*, 2:225.
- 60 cr. Whybray, *Isaiah 40—66*, p. 154; Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 2:280-81.
- 61 North, *Second Isaiah*, p. 206.
- 62 Hengstenberg, *Christology* (one-volume ed.), p. 229.

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Dallas Theological Seminary
3909 Swiss Ave.
Dallas, TX 75204
www.dts.edu

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: thildebrandt@gordon.edu
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