

## *In Search of The Servant of God*

*(Part 2- Isaiah 49:1-13)*

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**Introduction:** Isaiah is painting an incredible picture of a servant that was to come.

- A. Israel needed to be comforted after Isaiah revealed the great judgment of God that was to come.
  - 1. Babylon would destroy Jerusalem and take them into captivity. **(Isa 39:5-7)**
  - 2. Israel's restoration was also spoken of through Cyrus. **(Isa 44:28)**
  - 3. These events while unparalleled in human history would pale in comparison to the coming servant.
- B. We need to see the incredible power of the word of God and how He works His ways. **(Isa 44:6-8)**
  - 1. I challenge the unbeliever and the believer alike to look into this powerful message.
  - 2. To the human eye that child born in a manger seemed less than insignificant. You need to look again at what the servant of God can do.

### ***I. The fullness of time***

- A. This servant was for a time in the shadow of God's hand. **(Isa 49:1-2)**
  - 1. He was like a concealed weapon, hidden from the enemy until the right time.
  - 2. Satan was a willing tool in his own demise. What he thought was a victory was a defeat! **(Heb 2:14; 1 Cor 2:7-8)**
  - 3. This is the significance of the "mystery" in God's plan. **(Eph 1:9-10)**
    - a. Mystery- "the content of that which has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency"
    - b. This mystery has now been revealed!
- B. Consider the power of revealing Jesus at this time. **(Gal 4:4-5)**
  - 1. The hypocrisy and ultimate destruction of Israel was obvious.
  - 2. From the earlier captivity Jews were scattered all over the world and would be a base for the spread of the gospel. **(Rom 1:16-17)**
  - 3. The Roman government would provide a common government and language as well as a great transportation system. Paul used this to a great advantage.
  - 4. How did the world respond to this servant?

### ***II. The apparent failure***

- A. The ministry of Christ appeared a failure. **(Isa 49:3-4)**
  - 1. John summarized His reception among the people of God. **(John 1:10)**
  - 2. Jesus could look out from the cross and see what appeared to be a failure. **(Psa 22:1-2, 6-8)**
  - 3. At any time men would have said that what they saw with their eyes would amount to nothing. Jesus' own family struggled with this. **(Jn 7:3-5)**

We can prove our faith by our commitment to it and in no other way. Any belief that does not command the one who holds it is not a real belief--it is only a pseudo-belief. It might shock some of us profoundly if we were suddenly brought face-to-face with our beliefs and forced to test them in the fires of practical living. -- A.W. Tozer

- B. Jesus knew success would only come one way, in the glorification of God.
  - 1. Jesus is called Israel in verse 2 because he was closely identified with that nation and would deliver that nation. **(Isa 49:2, 5)**
  - 2. Jesus wanted only one thing, to glorify God. **(John 7:18; 8:50-51)**
  - 3. How was Jesus able to face the cross? He wanted only one thing! **(John 12:27-33)**
  - 4. What could God do with us if we would have that mind?

### ***III. The rejected and despised castaways***

- A. Jesus was to bring back and reunite Israel. **(Isa 49:5)**
  - 1. How could that be? Consider the Assyrian disaster, the Babylonian captivity and the soon to be destruction of Jerusalem?
  - 2. Jesus accomplished this in the establishment of the church. **(Acts 15:13-17)**
    - a. James is quoting this verse as fulfilled. **(Amos 9:11-12, 14)**
    - b. This is the ultimate Israel, the spiritual kingdom of God.
- B. Jesus would unite Jew and Gentile! **(Isa 49:6)**
  - 1. The first seemed utterly impossible. This verse tells us that is nothing compared to what God will do through His servant!
  - 2. Consider the struggle of having Jew and Gentile together. **(Gal 2:11-16)**
  - 3. The greatest display of the power of God is in the changing of men's hearts.
- C. Jesus was a hated reject of the world. **(Isa 49:7)**
  - 1. This is no surprise to those who read the Bible. **(1 Pt 2:7-8)**
  - 2. Jesus did not come in a way to impress men with their artificial standards.
  - 3. Men were often offended in the presence of this servant.
  - 4. Even his enemies recognized that Jesus played no favorites. **(Mk 12:14)**
- D. His followers would also be hated rejects of the world. **(Isa 49:8-9)**
  - 1. They would be in prison to sin and in darkness without hope.
  - 2. When they followed this servant they would be opposed and attacked. **(Jn 15:18-21)**
  - 3. Please do not try to impress the world. You will put out your light in the process and join with our enemies in destroying the work of God.

### ***IV. The impossible highway***

- A. People will come to God from places that were considered unreachable. **(Isa 49:11-13)**
  - 1. Access to God for a sinful man seems impossible!
  - 2. Jesus built that bridge through His sacrificial death.
- B. The gospel makes it possible for people at anyplace and at any time to serve Him. **(Mt 28:18-20)**
  - 1. Have you seen this servant?
  - 2. What would a servant of this servant be like?

**Conclusion:** Is the glory of God our goal?

## *Why I Believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God*

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**Introduction:** What does it mean to believe in Christ? (**Heb 11:6**)

- A. Far too many people are offended by those who have questions in these areas.
  - 1. Those who are offended often think that belief in Christ should just be automatic, like being born. This is false!
  - 2. For any man to have faith they must go through a reasoned process of examining evidence! There are no exceptions. (**Heb 11:1; Jn 5:36; Jn 10:25**)
- B. Rather than being offended, we should welcome such questions and be ready with answers! (**1 Pet 3:15**)
  - 1. We are facing a society that is increasing in its unbelief and ignorance of God's word.
  - 2. Sadly those who claim faith in Christ are quick to retreat in the face of questions. Some say: "Because the Bible says so" and leaves it at that. When you give reasoned answers many are surprised greatly!
  - 3. There are good opportunities waiting! (UAB Discussion on the existence of God)
  - 4. There are some who use doubts as a shield against a root moral problem. (**Jn 3:19-20**)
- C. Another result of these studies will produce a greater faith in us.
  - 1. There are times where we must lay out the evidence for our own good. At these times we must respond like Peter. (**John 6:66-68**)
  - 2. Do you "know the certainty" of these things? (**Luke 1:1-4**)

### ***I. Because of the Character of the witnesses.***

- A. They are accurate in things we can check.
  - 1. Consider the known history and geography of the region. The Bible makes several statements concerning these things. (**Luke 1:5; Acts 11:28**)
  - 2. Consider the testimony of one historian.
    - a. Sir William Ramsay.

"So far is such from being the case, however, that the greatest of all New Testament archaeologists, Sir William Ramsay, who made the most extensive studies anyone has ever undertaken on the authenticity of these data recorded in Acts, finally said (even though he began his studies as a skeptic), "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense,... In short this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians."

- b. Listen to the challenge of another writer.

"On the contrary, no statement in the New Testament has to this date been refuted by an unquestioned find of science or history. This in itself is a unique testimony to the amazing accuracy and authenticity of the New Testament records."

- c. This shows that these men were there. They were acquainted with the facts and were not imaginary men produced by some future writer far removed from the events. (**1 John 1:1-3**)

- B. Testimony of History concerning the life and the Resurrection of Christ.

- 1. The existence and crucifixion is shown by the **Roman Historian Tacitus**.

"Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself... *Annals* (15:44)"

- a. You will not find knowledgeable atheists disputing this fact!

b. Jesus is no myth! Who is he?

2. Consider what the non-Christian, Jewish historian Josephus said:

The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived from A.D. 37 to 95, wrote about the administration of Pilate in his *Antiquities*. Here is what he had to say about Jesus in .3.3.(63): There was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be right to call Him a man; for He was a doer of marvelous works, a teacher of men who received the truth with pleasure; and He won over to Himself many Jews and many of the Greek [race] also. This one was the Christ. And when, upon accusation of the leading men among us, Pilate had condemned Him to the cross, those who had loved Him at the first did not cease; for He appeared to them alive again on the third day, as the divine prophets had spoken these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him. And even until now the "sect" of Christians, named after this one [man], has not ceased.

3. Consider the challenge of two modern historians.

a. Thomas Arnold, formerly Professor of History at Rugby and Oxford, one of the world's great historians, could say:

"I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better, fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair enquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died, and rose again from the dead."<sup>8-1</sup>

b. Consider the conclusion of Simon Greenleaf, the developer of the Harvard Law School.

"It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact."<sup>8-2</sup>

C. The Motive and lives of the witnesses.

1. There was nothing to gain by these men making up lies. **(1 Cor 15:30-32)**
2. These men all died a martyr's death, except John.

## ***II. Because of the Testimony of the Old Testament Prophets***

A. Jesus said the prophets spoke of Him. **(John 5:39; Luke 24:27; 44)**

1. This point is also made by New Testament writers. **(Acts 3:18)**
2. All of these writings were in existence before the birth of Christ. The Dead Sea scrolls prove this.

B. Consider the descriptions of the death of Christ.

1. Here is a detailed description of Christ's crucifixion. **(Psa 22:1, 6-8, 14-18)**
2. Look at the account of the New Testament writers. **(Matt 27:35, 41-46)**

C. There are many other examples like this! (Isa 53)

## ***III. Because of the Miracles of Christ***

A. Jesus pointed to these without contradiction. **(John 5:36; 10:25)**

1. The blind man Jesus healed could see the implications. **(John 9:32-33)**
2. What other answer is possible?

B. Jesus predicted his own resurrection to his enemies. **(John 2:19-21; Matt 27:63-64)**

1. This made the enemies work harder to prevent it.
2. This was "the sign" to all unbelievers. **(Matt 12:39-40)**

***Conclusion:*** "But who do you say that I am?" **(Matt 16:15)**

- A. Yes we can know! Are you willing to weigh the evidence?
- B. When we do believe, this should change our lives. **(2 Cor 4:13-18)**