

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Servant Songs, Session 2, Video Overview Podcast

Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Welcome to the Explainer. Today, we're actually going to put on our detective hats to solve a really ancient mystery from the Book of Isaiah. So, for centuries, people have been completely captivated by these prophecies about a figure known only as the Servant.

But who is he? That's been the big question. Now, there's a ton of debate. Some scholars and Jewish tradition identify the Servant as the nation of Israel itself.

But the New Testament writers, well, they present a very different candidate. And today, we're going to unpack the case they made. And this Servant? Well, he's not your typical conquering warrior.

Far from it. He's described as being incredibly gentle, just, and restorative. Okay, let's dive into this.

Our investigation really kicks off in the New Testament. This is where the Gospel writers start laying out the evidence, piece by piece, arguing that Jesus of Nazareth is the one who fulfills these ancient songs. All right, check this out.

The first big clue drops right at Jesus' baptism. Think about it. When Jesus starts his public ministry, he doesn't show up like a king on a warhorse.

Nope. Instead, he identifies with regular people, with sinners, by getting baptized. And that act, right there, is our first major clue.

And this is where it gets absolutely fascinating. That voice from heaven? It mashes together the language of a king from Psalm 2 with the language of the Servant from Isaiah 42. So, in one single sentence, Jesus gets identified as both a royal king and a humble servant.

Incredible, right? And this pattern just keeps popping up. Throughout his whole ministry, the Gospel writers are constantly connecting what he does- you know, healing the sick, deliberately avoiding the spotlight. They're linking it all directly back to that prophetic profile of the Servant.

Okay, let's dig into our next piece of evidence. And this one, this one's a real puzzle, coming straight from the second Servant song in Isaiah chapter 49. So, get this.

The prophecy straight up calls the Servant Israel. But at the same time, his main job is to rescue the nation of Israel and bring them back to God. So, how can that be? How can the Servant be Israel and also be sent to Israel? It sounds like a total contradiction, doesn't it? Well, here's the key to cracking this puzzle.

The New Testament writers saw this as a kind of typology. The idea is that Jesus is acting as the ideal Israel. You see, where the nation as a whole had failed, described as being spiritually deaf and blind in exile, he succeeds.

He's the one who perfectly fulfills God's mission where the nation couldn't. But here's the thing. This mission for this ideal Servant was never just about restoring one nation.

No, it always had a much bigger global vision in mind. And this lays out the two-part plan perfectly. First, call his own people, the tribes of Jacob, back to God.

But that's just step one. Step two, extend that same salvation to the entire world, becoming a light for all the nations, bringing deliverance to the, quote, remote regions of the earth. All right, it's time to bring all these clues together.

Let's look at the final verdict on the Servant's identity and, you know, what his ultimate role in this whole story really is. Okay, so the prophecy says the Servant will be a covenant mediator. Now, what does that mean? It means this isn't just about patching up an old relationship with God.

This is about forging an entirely new one. You know, when you put it all together, all the evidence seems to point to the Servant being a kind of new Moses. Think about it.

Moses led the people out of physical slavery in Egypt and delivered that first covenant. The Gospels argue that this Servant leads a much bigger spiritual exodus from sin and establishes a new and even better covenant with God. So in the end, the detective work of the Gospel writers leads to one conclusion.

Jesus is the answer to Isaiah's ancient mystery. He's the humble, suffering Servant who is also, paradoxically, the messianic king that even rulers would one day honor. It's just a powerful reminder, isn't it, that understanding the past can unlock such a deep level of meaning in the present.

And it really makes you wonder what other prophetic puzzles, what other incredible connections are just waiting to be discovered, hiding right there in plain sight.