

# The Work of Jesus Christ

Isaiah 42:1-4

**The life of Jesus Christ** (Isaiah 42:1-4 cp Matthew 12:14-21; 9:36; 8:20 cp 2 Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 4:15-5:3)

There are four “servant songs” in the book of Isaiah which prophetically depict the Messiah’s coming.<sup>1</sup> These messianic prophecies were penned sometime between 701 and 686 BC. Not every reference to “servant” in the book of Isaiah concerns the Lord. Sometimes it means the nation of Israel. In chapter 41, it speaks of Cyrus. However, where Cyrus rescued Israel from Babylon, the Messiah was to deliver the whole world from the prison of sin.<sup>2</sup>

- **Isaiah 42:1-4 HCSB** "This is My Servant; I strengthen Him, *this is* My Chosen One; I delight in Him. I have put My Spirit on Him; He will bring justice to the nations. (2) He will not cry out or shout or make His voice heard in the streets. (3) He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick; He will faithfully bring justice. (4) He will not grow weak or be discouraged until He has established justice on earth. The islands will wait for His instruction."

**My servant (v.1).** This is a significant term in the book of Isaiah that is used in the sense of a title. It is given to someone who occupies a special position in God’s royal administration of His kingdom, as in “my servant Moses.”<sup>3</sup> In the royal terminology of the ancient Near East, “servant” meant something like “trusted envoy” or “confidential representative.” Here, the “Servant” depicts the Messiah.<sup>4</sup>

**Justice (v.1).** The weakest in His kingdom will enjoy the right to claim the benefits bestowed by the King.

**Bruised reed (v.3).** Someone who is weak.<sup>5</sup> The Servant will mend broken lives. Jesus showed gentleness, encouragement, justice, and truth in His day-to-day life. When we feel like “bruised reeds” or “smoldering candles” (have you been burning the candle at both ends and are about to go out?) we should remember this about our Lord. Through the Spirit’s empowering presence, we should imitate this.

**Until he has established justice on earth.** Obviously, there are still injustices perpetrated routinely on earth. God’s plan has two phases. First, Jesus’ atoning work on the cross established the *means* by which justice between God and man can be established. Second, when He returns and takes the throne in Jerusalem, He will finally enforce justice between men.

Nearly seven centuries later, the following scene took place.

- **Matthew 12:14-21 HCSB** But the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. (15) When Jesus became aware of this, He withdrew from there. Huge crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. (16) He warned them not to make Him known, (17) so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: (18) **Here is My Servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul delights; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations. (19) He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets. (20) He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a**

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12 more or less.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 42:7

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 14:31; Numbers 12:7

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 42:1-17; 49:3, 5-7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 72:2, 4

**smoldering wick, until He has led justice to victory. (21) The nations will put their hope in His name.**

**So that...might be fulfilled (v.17).** This clause is part of one sentence in Greek (vv.15b-17) and so is not related only to v.16. Rather, it is the fact that He withdrew rather than confront, healed all those who sought Him out, and eschewed self aggrandizement.

**Nations.** Indeed the goyim have found great hope in the possibility of being adopted into the family of God, grafted (as it were) onto the righteous root of Jesse.

Jesus dedicated His entire life to serving mankind.

- **Matthew 9:36 HCSB** When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd.

This was no intellectual exercise for Him. It was not driven by a need for self-realization (as it was with the Buddha). Instead, it was driven by a profound compassion for us.

This was so important to Him that He was willing to set aside His rights and (contrary to the health and wealth doctrine promulgated by many forms of cultural Christianity) live a life of poverty.

- **Matthew 8:20<sup>6</sup> HCSB** Jesus told him, "**Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.**"
- **2 Corinthians 8:9 HCSB** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: although He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich.

This profound sacrifice, His willingness to embrace humanity at its lowest, weakest, most vulnerable level uniquely qualifies Him to be our great High Priest.

- **Hebrews 4:15-5:3 HCSB** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. **(16)** Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time. **5:1** For every high priest taken from men is appointed in service to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. **(2)** He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. **(3)** Because of this, he must make a sin offering for himself as well as for the people.

**The death of Jesus Christ** (Isaiah 50:4-6; 53:6-12; John 10:14-18)

Elohim needed someone who would be willing to step into our place on the electric chair. Someone needed to have compassion on our poor souls and pay the penalty of our sins so that we could have some hope of heaven. Jesus stepped forward and raised His hand.

- **Isaiah 50:4-6 HCSB** The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *Me* each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed. **(5)** The Lord GOD has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back. **(6)** I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.

Though He awoke each morning in tune with the Spirit; though He routinely spoke words of wisdom and healing to us; though He was completely obedient to the Father's will in every way imaginable; yet, His back was beaten, His cheeks struck; His beard torn out by the handfuls. He suffered unimaginable physical and psychological torment – all for us.

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<sup>6</sup> Cp Luke 9:58

“Why was this necessary?” you may ask. Isaiah answers that question:

- **Isaiah 53:6-12 HCSB** We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth. (8) He was taken away because of oppression and judgment; and who considered His fate? For He was cut off from the land of the living; He was struck because of My people's rebellion. (9) They made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man at His death, although He had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully. (10) Yet the LORD was pleased to crush Him, and He made Him sick. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see *His* seed, He will prolong His days, and the will of the LORD will succeed by His hand. (11) He will see *it* out of His anguish, and He will be satisfied with His knowledge. My righteous servant will justify many, and He will carry their iniquities. (12) Therefore I will give Him the many as a portion, and He will receive the mighty as spoil, because He submitted Himself to death, and was counted among the rebels; yet He bore the sin of many and interceded for the rebels.

This was not forced upon Him. Jesus volunteered for it because He loved us so much. He said:

- **John 10:14-18 HCSB** "I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me, (15) as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father. I lay down My life for the sheep. (16) But I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd. (17) This is why the Father loves Me, because I am laying down My life so I may take it up again. (18) No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father."

We don't even get to glory (as some atheists like Bertrand Russell attempt to do) in that we "killed God"! He saw that we were headed toward the precipice of hell and took our place. He laid His life down for us.

**The resurrection of Jesus Christ** (Psalm 16:10; Matthew 12:38-40; 16:1-4, 21; 20:17-19; Mark 9:9-10; Matthew 27:50-54)

King David wrote this in the book of Psalms.

- **Psalms 16:10 HCSB** For You will not abandon me to Sheol; You will not allow Your Faithful One to see the Pit.

Implicit in these words is the confidence that, with the Lord as his refuge, even the grave cannot rob him of life.<sup>7</sup> If this is true of David, how much more of David's promised descendent – the Messiah!

This is why Peter quoted verses 8-11 of this Psalm and declared that with these words David prophesied of Christ and His resurrection.<sup>8</sup> So, not only Jesus' death, but His resurrection was predicted nearly 1000 years before it happened!

Jesus obviously knew the Scriptures and He well knew what lay before Him. One day, when He grew tired of the constant, faithless demands for more miracles by the religious leaders, Jesus responded this way:

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<sup>7</sup> Psalm 17:15; 73:24

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:25-28

- **Matthew 12:38-40 HCSB** Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." (39) But He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. (40) For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

At yet another time, He repeated the prediction.

- **Matthew 16:1-4 HCSB** The Pharisees and Sadducees approached, and as a test, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. (2) He answered them: "When evening comes you say, 'It will be good weather because the sky is red.' (3) And in the morning, 'Today will be stormy because the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to read the appearance of the sky, but you can't read the signs of the times. (4) An evil and adulterous generation wants a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then He left them and went away.

In fact, seventeen verses later...

- **Matthew 16:21 HCSB** From then on Jesus began to point out to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

And then again, He detailed the future for them.

- **Matthew 20:17-19 HCSB** While going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the 12 disciples aside privately and said to them on the way: (18) "Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death. (19) Then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified, and He will be resurrected on the third day."

Unfortunately for them, the disciples failed to take the Master's words at their fullest, most literal meaning.

- **Mark 9:9-10 HCSB** As they were coming down from the mountain, He ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (10) They kept this word to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

Even at the moment of His death, we were given a foretaste of not only Jesus' resurrection but our own!

- **Matthew 27:50-54 HCSB** Jesus shouted again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. (51) Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was split in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked and the rocks were split. (52) The tombs also were opened (**think of how awful it would have been for God to neglect THAT particular detail!**) and many bodies of the saints who had gone to their rest were raised. (53) And they came out of the tombs after His resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many. (54) When the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they were terrified and said, "This man really was God's Son!"

**That Jesus actually did rise from the dead was certified by:  
Angels**

- [Matthew 28:5-7 HCSB](#) But the angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. (6) He is not here! For He has been resurrected, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. (7) Then go quickly and tell His disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead. In fact, He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there.' Listen, I have told you."

### **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary**

- [Matthew 28:1 HCSB](#) After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb.
- [Matthew 28:8-10 HCSB](#) So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell His disciples the news. (9) Just then Jesus met them and said, "**Good morning!**" They came up, took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him. (10) Then Jesus told them, "**Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see Me there.**"
- [Mark 16:10-11 HCSB](#) She went and reported to those who had been with Him, as they were mourning and weeping. (11) Yet, when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe it.

### **The disciples on the way to Emmaus**

- [Mark 16:12-13 HCSB](#) Then after this, He appeared in a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country. (13) And they went and reported it to the rest, who did not believe them either.

### **Dr. Luke**

- [Acts 1:3 HCSB](#) After He had suffered, He also presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

### **Peter**

- [Acts 2:23-28 HCSB](#) Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. (24) God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. (25) For David says of Him: **I saw the Lord ever before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (26) Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. Moreover my flesh will rest in hope, (27) because You will not leave my soul in Hades, or allow Your Holy One to see decay. (28) You have revealed the paths of life to me; You will fill me with gladness in Your presence.**
- [Acts 3:14-15 HCSB](#) But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked to have a murderer given to you. (15) And you killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this.

### **Paul**

- [1 Corinthians 15:3-8 HCSB](#) For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (5) and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. (6) Then He appeared to over 500 brothers at one time, most of whom remain to the present, but some have fallen

asleep. (7) Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. (8) Last of all, as to one abnormally born, He also appeared to me.

**Conclusion:**

What is the point of Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection? What should we do about this? Is it merely an historical anomaly; an interesting story to tell at Christmas and Easter? The Apostle Paul was a brilliant, educated man who was not only filled by inspired by the Holy Spirit in a unique way. Listen to him preach on this very matter.

- **Acts 13:30-38 HCSB** But God raised Him from the dead, (31) and He appeared for many days to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses to the people. (32) And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news of the promise that was made to our forefathers. (33) God has fulfilled this to us their children by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm: **You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.** (34) Since He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay, He has spoken in this way, **I will grant you the faithful covenant blessings made to David.** (35) Therefore He also says in another passage, **You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay.** (36) For David, after serving his own generation in God's plan, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and decayed. (37) But the One whom God raised up did not decay. (38) Therefore, let it be known to you, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you,

This is the focus of the Good News: forgiveness of sins and freedom from not just the guilt of sin but from the sin itself are available through faith in Christ to all people – including you. Have you received this forgiveness?