

## 61 The Servant of the Lord Introduced

that go far beyond these great services. The four longer passages, taken in conjunction with the extensive series of more or less incidental references to the LORD's Servant, show that in this part of Isaiah a very special concept is involved.

The first of these longer passages, which comes at the beginning of the next chapter (Isa 42), gives the very distinct impression that an individual is being described. Yet there are those who suggest that the term "the LORD's servant" in these chapters always represents the nation of Israel rather than one particular individual.

This contention cannot be lightly brushed aside, for many of the related passages seem to state it as a fact. Thus Isaiah 41:8 says: "But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen." Isaiah 44:1 reads: " Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen." Isaiah 44:21 says: "Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant: I have formed you; you are my servant." Isaiah 45:4 says: "For the sake of Jacob my servant and Israel my chosen one." Isaiah 48:20 says: "The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob." Isaiah 49:3 says: "You are my servant, Israel.

Does "the LORD's Servant" mean the nation of Israel, or does the phrase indicate a specific individual? At first sight the two statements would seem to contradict each other, so that if one were true the other would have to be false. Yet on closer examination we find that both can be considered true, since the idea may be viewed from two different sides, that of responsibility and that of accomplishment.

From the viewpoint of responsibility, the Servant of the LORD is the entire nation of Israel. God called Israel in order that Israel might be His Servant to do a particular work. In this first aspect all Israelites are included. Even if they are wicked, even if they turn their backs completely on the LORD, even if they have no desire to fulfill His will in any way - still the responsibility rests upon them, since it is for this purpose that God called Abraham in the first place. It is for this purpose that He protected Jacob. It is for this purpose that He made Jacob's descendants into a great nation and preserved it through