

64 42:1-4

The passage naturally divides into two parts, one of four verses and the other of three.

Unlike the first reference to the Servant of the LORD (41:8-9), which seemed to be merely an explanation of the reason Israel could be sure that it would be preserved, this passage appears to describe a person. The immediate impression is that it is a description of an individual rather than of an entire nation.

However, this by no means settles the question. Personification is frequent in the Scriptures. The nation of Israel is often personified and referred to by the name of its great ancestor, Israel, or even by his earlier name, Jacob, as in Isaiah 41:8,14; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20. At this point in our investigation, we cannot rule out the possibility that a nation is being described but shall merely notice that the passage gives the general impression of referring to an individual.

The passage deals principally with four main thoughts. The first is the assurance that God will so watch over and empower the Servant that there can be no doubt that his work will be accomplished. The second is a brief statement of the nature of the work that the Servant is to accomplish. The third is the gentleness with which the Servant will accomplish his work. The fourth is the confidence and apparent ease with which the Servant will move forward to perform his tremendous task.

All four of these thoughts are brought out in the first four verses. Some of them are again stressed or further developed in the last three verses of the passage.

The first thought is contained in the very first verse, which declares that God upholds His Servant, that His soul delights in him, that He has put His Spirit upon him, and that as a result the assigned task will be accomplished. Thus our passage is not a presentation of something that ought to be done but of something that definitely will occur. It is not an exhortation but a prediction. Verse 4 declares that the Servant will not fail or be discouraged until the work has been accomplished.

The second subject is the nature of the work that the Servant is to accomplish. Chapter 41 gave no information concerning