

The Servant of the Lord Introduced

THE TERM "Servant of the LORD " is familiar to everyone who is interested in the great Messianic passages of the book of Isaiah. The greatest Old Testament passage about the atonement, which runs from Isaiah 52:13 to the end of chapter 53, begins with the words, "Behold my servant." Its next-to-last verse includes the statement, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many" (53:11).

This terminology does not begin with Isaiah 53. There is a long series of passages in this section of Isaiah in which such a phrase as "the LORD's servant" or "my servant" occurs. Chapters 42 and 49 each contain a long passage either describing this Servant or quoting his words. It is quite obvious that these two groups of verses are related to the long passage from Isaiah 52:13-53:12. As we shall see later, this section contains still another passage of several verses that should properly be placed in the same group.

The word *servant* is used far more in this section of Isaiah than in any other part of the book, and most of the instances seem to belong together. There is no verse in any other section of Isaiah that uses the word *servant* in a way similar to its use in these passages. ^9 Thus it becomes evident that the idea of "the Servant of the LORD" is one of the outstanding themes in this part of Isaiah, briefly introduced in 41:8-9 and reaching its great climax in 52:13-53:12.

In the Old Testament, an idea is sometimes introduced by brief hints or incidental suggestions and then is later elaborated and clarified. After the entire revelation on a particular subject has been given, it may be possible to see that important aspects