

difficult for the disciples to understand. Readers in Isaiah's day may have been puzzled by some of its statements, but certain thoughts stand out very clearly in it. (1) It has much in common with 42:1-7, since it too declares that the Servant of the LORD is to be a light to the Gentiles. (2) Verse 3 says, "You are my Servant Israel," thus still equating the Servant with Israel in some respects, though, as we have seen, the term could not possibly designate the entire nation. (3) Although the Servant is called Israel, He is here clearly differentiated from Israel, since verses 5-6 say that He is to bring Jacob back to God, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore those preserved of Israel. Thus this passage makes it clear that the Servant is an individual, apart from Israel, even though He is to fulfill Israel's responsibility.

In these seven verses it is obvious that the Servant Himself is the speaker, though a great part of what He says consists of telling what the LORD has said to Him.

The first two verses have a tone very similar to 42:1-7. The attention of the distant lands is called to the fact that the speaker has been set apart for a very special task and has been given divine preparation and divine protection. The last part of the first verse was fulfilled when the angel told Mary, long before the birth of her Son, that she should call His name Jesus (Luke 1:31), and later gave the same command to Joseph (Matt 1:21).

Verse 2 begins, "And he made my mouth like a sharp sword." This points to the inexhaustible teachings of Christ, who spoke with authority and not like the scribes (Matt 7:29; Mark 1:22). Paul said that when the Lord returns He will smite the wicked one "with the spirit of his mouth" (2 Thess 2:8). John saw Him in glory with a sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth (Rev 1:16; 19:15, 21).

The second and fourth clauses of verse 2 describe the divine protection of the Servant. Its third clause, "he made me like a polished arrow," points to His special preparation for His work and to the fact that like a polished arrow He will speed unerringly to the goal for which He came into the world.