

Isaiah's Messiah: Adventist Identity for the Last Days

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Introduction

Adventist identity is based on a number of biblical theological views,¹ but two concepts at the core of Adventism are the central message of Jesus as the Messiah of the OT and the message of salvation—redemption and hope of a better life now and yet to come. The purpose of Adventism in these last days is to proclaim the true Messiah/Servant and to proclaim the truth about salvation.

This article proposes that Isaiah's Messiah is the essence of Adventism and is what Adventists must proclaim in the eschaton. Portraits of the Messiah and His work for the people of God permeate the book of Isaiah. And while Isaiah's Messiah was relevant for the people of the seventh century, the Messiah is portrayed as the One who will deliver and save His people now as well as then. In fact, Isaiah places his message of the Messiah in the realm of the last days.

One portrayal of Isaiah's Messiah is revealed in Isaiah 42:1-9,² the first

¹ For a detailed treatment of the 28 fundamental beliefs, see General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *28 Fundamental Beliefs: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005).

² The delimitation of Isa 42:1-9 is determined by several factors. (See, for more information on the delimitation of biblical passages, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* [8th ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989], 71-77.) First, it is important to note that Isa 42:1-9 is not an isolated text; it flows from what comes before it and what follows. However, Isa 42:1-9 is also a sectional text within its context.

servant song. An exegetical examination of this passage reveals that the Messiah is the Servant of Isaiah 42:1-9. The Servant-Messiah here performs a salvific work. Finally, the theology of this passage suggests that His work provides a theological blueprint for Adventists living in the last days.

Structure of Isaiah 42:1-9

The literary structure of Isaiah 42:1-9 points to the importance of Isaiah's servant, his call, and his mission. This passage contains two chiasmic structures, the first one suggested by W. A. M. Beuken, who sees the structure of Isa 42:1-4 as a chiasm with a juridical literary genre. "The structure of the oracle is quite clear:

- A la Yhwh designates his Servant
- B lb' Yhwh equips his Servant
- C lb" his mission: *mišpāt*
- D 2-3a his behaviour: no shouting, no violence against the oppressed
- C' 3b his mission: *mišpāt*
- B' 4a' his destiny: oppression
- A' 4a"-b his mission: *mišpāt* and *tôrâ*."³

Isaiah 42:1-9 is demarcated by a clear inclusio found in vv. 1 and 9, the word הִנֵּה "behold," which is a grammatical clue of transition to another servant. Second, the repeated word מִשְׁפָּט "justice/judgment" also suggests a switch to a new section. Third, there is a change of verb tense from the imperfect with a jussive (Isa 41:28) to simply an imperfect in Isa 42:1. Fourth, there is a change of direct object: in ch. 41 it is the second person plural (vv. 21, 24) whereas in Isa 42:1-8 the direct object is third masculine singular. Fifth, the tone is different in Isa 41:21-29 versus Isa 42:1-9. Isaiah 41:21-29 has a tone of judgment and accusation, while in Isa 42:1-9 the tone is more gracious, gentle, kind, and supportive. Finally, in Isa 42:1-9, the repetition of the suffix first common singular signals a change of section.

After Isa 42:1-9, the tone again changes in v. 10. A vibrant tone is expressed by the vocative of address using the term שִׁיר "sing" in the imperative. The imperative also reveals a change of tense, which suggests a different section. The subject changes: In Isa 42:1-9 the subject is first common singular, while in Isa 42:10-13 the subject is third masculine plural. Isaiah 42:1-9 reveals a servant's call and mission, while Isa 42:10-13 is a hymn toward God. Thus, based on these factors, the first servant poem is best delimited to vv. 1 through 9.

³ Willem A. M. Beuken, "Mišpāt: The First Servant Song and Its Context," *VT* 22, no. 1 (1972): 3. While I concur with Beuken's structure of vv. 1-4, he does not accept that the first servant poem encompasses vv. 1-9. Therefore, his analysis of the first servant poem is structurally limited in that he does not give an adequate structure of Isa 42:1-9.

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I suggest that the second chiasm, found in vv. 5 to 9, is structured as follows:

A	5	God's creative acts
B	6a	"I Yhwh" demonstrates his character to the servant/you (emphasis on "righteousness")
C	6b-7	The Servant as a covenant to the people and his work
B'	8	"I Yhwh" demonstrates his character to the servant (emphasis on "my glory")
A'	9	God's creative acts by telling the future "new things"

The structure of Isa 42:1-9 suggests two key elements about the servant. The central message of the first chiasm refers to the servant's behavior, which is surrounded by the adjacent verses describing his mission. Then the second chiasm demonstrates how this mission is accomplished in his behavior, the central message of the chiasm, where the servant is given as a covenant to the people.

The servant is designated by God to fulfill God's special act that is found in the behavior of the servant; however, the image of equipping him functions in conjunction with the description of the work that he is doing in v. 7. The notion of bringing justice, referred to as "his mission" of justice, is reinforced in the name of God that is given to the servant: Creator and Redeemer. The Torah is related to God's creative acts in Genesis; both the law and God's creative acts also appear throughout the Pentateuch in the imagery of the sanctuary, in the form of the law found in the Ark of the Covenant, and in the form of the sacrifices revealing God's re-creative power, pointing to something taking place in the future—a "new thing." It appears to me that there is a definite parallelism between the two chiasms, with one reflecting the other.

An exploration of the grammatical and syntactical aspects of the first chiasm—42:1-4⁴—reveals that, at the outset, the first verse emphatically

⁴ I will not exegete all nine verses here, but you can refer to my work: Stéphane Beaulieu, *"Behold! My Servant": An Exegetical and Theological Study of the Identity and Role of the Servant in Isaiah 42:1-9* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015).

Also, there has been some suggestion that "the style and structure of such an oracle are an imitation of the royal initiation oracle by which a king is called, as in Pss. ii and cx, and

makes a connection to two previous parallel passages that also contrast the idols and the servant. “Each passage ended with a dramatic summons (Heb. *hēn*), ‘Look!’ or ‘Behold!’: Isa 41:24, ‘Look at this!—Meaningless idols!’; Isa 41:29, ‘Look at this!—Pathetic idolaters!’ Now, for the third time, the same word rings out (42:1, *hēn*): ‘Look at this!—My Servant!’”⁵ It seems that each of these verses intends to focus the reader’s attention on the message Isaiah wants to convey: a contrast between two subjects⁶—the idols and My Servant.

Overview of the Servant and His Work

While the entire passage of Isa 42:1-9 speaks of the servant, several key words and phrases—“servant,” “grasp his hand,” and “covenant with people and nation”—specifically reveal the servant’s identity and his work. In this section, each of these words/phrases will be analyzed exegetically and contextually.

Servant

The term עֶבֶד⁷ has a wide range of meanings. It is attributed to the relationship between God and God’s people (cf. Ps 19:11) or to individuals such as Abraham (Exod 32:13), Moses (Exod 4:10; 14:31), Joshua (Exod

in the sequel to the present passage (xlii, 5-9), the oracle in which Cyrus is called.” Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (ed. G. W. Anderson; New York: Abingdon, 1956), 90. For further views on the Messiah and his role in these verses, pointing to him as King, see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 109 n. 12. Ivan Engnell concludes that ‘Ebed Yahweh’ is none other than the Davidic Messiah, which is referring to his kingship; see Ivan Engnell, “The Ebed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in ‘Deutero-Isaiah,’” *BJRL* 31, no. 1 (January 1948): 54-93.

⁵ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993), 259.

⁶ Rignell appears to support this view that the word עָבַד suggests continuation and contrast between Isa 42:1 and 41:29. Lars G. Rignell, *A Study of Isaiah, ch. 40-55* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1956), 31-32. See also John Goldingay and David F. Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 211.

⁷ The term עֶבֶד in Isa 40-55 has been seen to refer to a new or second exodus. For example, Hans Eberhard von Waldow, “Message of Deutero-Isaiah,” *Int* 22, no. 3 (1968): 259-287; Rikki E. Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation: Isaiah 40-55 and the Delay of the New Exodus,” *TynBul* 41, no. 1 (1990): 31-59.

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5:14), and David (2 Sam 7:19; 1 Kgs 8:24).⁸ The term “my servant” is also associated with the people of Israel (Lev 25:42) and is also found in Isa 40-55. Prophets were called servants of the Lord (e.g., Ahijah of Shiloh in 1 Kgs 14:18; 15:29; Isaiah in Isa 20:3). The term עֶבֶד can refer to a slave, subject, official, vassal, or a follower of a particular god.⁹ Therefore, only by closely reading the text to determine its function, action, and relation to the other traditional servant poems can one begin to determine what is meant by the servant.¹⁰

Isaiah appears to be intentional when he uses “my servant” with an apposition and when he does not.¹¹ The hypothesis, suggested by some scholars, that Isa 42 refers to Israel seems to be based on the assumption of other passages, such as Isa 41:8. Because “My servant” is found in a nominal clause (v. 1a), scholars may be linking it to a previous use of the

⁸ The title “servant of the Lord” is used twenty-one times about Moses and twice about Joshua. In the HB, “My servant” is used for Moses six times, David twenty-one times, the prophets nine times, Job seven times, and Nebuchadnezzar two times. See Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 319 n. 1; Roger N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (ed. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 71. Also, for more details, see Ringgren, “עֶבֶד,” *TDOT* 10:376-405.

⁹ Ringgren, “עֶבֶד,” *TDOT* 10:376-405.

¹⁰ The term עֶבֶד occurs twenty-one times in Isa 40-50 (41:8, 9; 42:1; 42:19 (2x); 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21 (2x), 26; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3, 5, 6, 7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; 54:17), and twelve of those times it has the first person suffix, as found in Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 49:3; 52:13; 53:11. In Isa 40-50, “my servant” occurs most commonly with the apposition Jacob, four times (Isa 41:8; 44:1, 2; 45:4), although Isa 41:9 could be included since “my servant” refers back to v. 8. It occurs twice with Israel (Isa 44:21; 49:3), which could be considered an apposition as well. The only passage in the servant poems that has an apposition with “Israel” and “my servant” is Isa 49:3. If the word *Israel* is taken, in this particular case, as a description of the individual servant instead of the corporate servant because of its context (Isa 49:5-6), it would resolve the challenge often raised by scholars that the servant in this poem is Israel. (The same approach is used in the book of Numbers with Balaam’s oracles. The first three oracles refer to Israel, but in the fourth oracle, Balaam moves from the plural pronoun used in the first three oracles to a single pronoun, pointing to a prophetic aspect of the one who would fulfill Israel’s role. This also appears to be the case with Isa 49:3-6.)

Yet, the servant poems as a whole do not contain a descriptor that clearly identifies the servant. Moreover, there are only five occurrences of the twelve that use “my servant” without any description (Isa 42:1, 19; 43:10; 52:13; 53:11).

¹¹ It is interesting to note that the Targum refers to Israel in Isa 41:8, 9; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3, and only three passages are messianically interpreted in the Targum of Isaiah: 42:1; 43:10; 52:13. Walther Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God* (SBT 20; Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1957), 67.

word “servant” by translating the clause as “this is my servant”; the subject “this” is demonstrative and is understood to be used in an earlier reference in Isa 41:8-9. However, in fact, in v. 1b the construction changes to a verbal clause, which pushes the reader not to connect it to the servant passage in 41:8-16.¹²

There are two possible reasons for this change in construction: First, Isa 42:1 is a contrast to 41:29. Pagan gods are a false image, reality, and action, while God is the true Creator and reality, and his reported action actually takes place. This parallel also occurs between 40:31 and 41:1, where it states *וְהָלִיפוּ כֹחַ* “they will receive a new strength.” Second, in 41:6-7, the verb *הִזְק* is contrasted also with 41:8-10, demonstrating that other gods are powerless and preparing the way for what is to come through the powerful God in 42:1-9.

Isaiah specifically uses this word (*עֶבֶד*) in contexts where the servant is related to God and also the “Elect One,” but Isaiah does not use the word *עֶבֶד* in the previous two “beholds” in Isa 41:24, 29. Isaiah appears to contrast Israel’s nature of pride to the *עֶבֶד*’s nature of submission to God. Also, the word *עֶבֶד* is in the context (Isa 42:1-9) of the realm of God, while the word “Israel” is found in the context of other gods. Perhaps the term servant, as used in Isa 42:1, suggests the idea of servanthood, portraying a humble servant complying with God’s commands.

Grasp His Hand

God strengthens the hand of the servant. This word *הִזְק* “be strong” is different from *הִמְדָּה* “uphold” in v. 1. Furthermore, this verb *הִזְק* is a *hip ‘il* imperfect, but besides being causative, this verb is also a jussive in the first person singular, which is very rare, although two instances of it are found in Isaiah (41:28; 42:6).¹³ For the simple *hip ‘il*, the meaning would be “seize,

¹² John Goldingay and David F. Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 213-214.

¹³ Both Joüon and Muraoka and Waltke and O’Connor acknowledge that this type of jussive form looks suspicious and may have arisen from textual corruptions or confusion between the groups or may represent traces of an earlier verbal system. Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (SubBi 27; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006); Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 567. However, Emil Kautzsch sees the jussive of Isa 42:6 on rhythmical grounds, because at times the jussive comes immediately before the principal pause. Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (ed. Emil

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grasp,” but if it is taken as a jussive, the meaning is not only causative but would also indicate a type of command or request or wish. Waltke and O’Connor comment that the jussive would refer “to absolute expressions of will.”¹⁴ Therefore, God is taking the hand of the servant as an expression of will. The translation would then be something along the lines of “and I so will/wish to grasp you by the hand” or “and let me grasp you by the hand.”

Furthermore, Max Rogland has observed that in other parts of the HB and in the ANE, “striking a hand” reveals a handshake that seals an agreement between two parties, such as in Prov 6:1.¹⁵ God’s grasping of the

Kautzsch; trans. Arthur E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 323. See also W. L. Moran, “Early Canaanite *yaqtula*,” *Or* 29 (1960): 1-19.

¹⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 565.

¹⁵ Max Rogland, “‘Striking a Hand’ (TQ’ KP) in the Biblical Hebrew,” *VT* 51, no. 1 (2001): 107-109.

Julye Bidmead, in her book *The Akītu Festival*, demonstrates the Babylonian interrelationship of *akītu* in both religion and politics. The *akītu* festival involved the monarchy and the priesthood of Marduk. The most important ritual of this festivity was indicated by “the use of the traditional formula ‘*qātē Bēl šabātum*’ (the grasping of Bēls’ hand), and the overall importance of ‘hand-grasping’ throughout the *akītu*.” Julye Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia* (GDNES 2; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 2.

The hand-holding, Bidmead asserts, acted “as a legal and binding contractual agreement between the king, as representative of the people, and the patron deity.” Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival*, 2, 162. The handshake referred to a “mutual action between two parties,” and it was “a form of oath or contract between the king and Marduk.” Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival*, 156, 160. See also Enrico Ascalone and Luca Peyronel, “Two Weights from Temple N at Tell Mardikh-Ebla, Syria: A Link between Metrology and Cultic Activities in the Second Millennium BC?,” *JCS* 53 (2001): 1-12. The idea of the king and god entering into a legal contract during the Babylon *akītu* demonstrated to the people that the king promised to honor Marduk and his ritual, and in exchange, Marduk promised to protect Babylon and its citizens. Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival*, 162.

Further ideology is also found in the Cyrus Cylinder, where Marduk’s hand took Cyrus and set him as king of the city of Anshan. (See the Cyrus Cylinder where the full text is found: “He took under his hand Cyrus, king of the city of Anshan, and called him by his name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything. He made the land of the Qutu and all the Medean troops prostrate themselves at his feet, while he looked out in justice and righteousness for the black-headed people whom he had put under his care.” “A New Translation of the Cyrus Cylinder by the British Museum.” Cited 6 December 2012. Online: <http://kavehfarrokh.com/iranica/achaemenid-era/a-new-translation-of-the-cyrus-cylinder-by-the-british-museum/>. Also, see Shalom Paul for the Cyrus Cylinder text; Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 15-17.) This text portrays the image that Marduk made Cyrus king by the action of his hand. While it is not clear what the hand may fully represent here, it is

hand of the servant could very well be a gesture that reflects a handshake between two parties—divine and human—for the establishment of royalty and power. This would also work in conjunction with the covenant imagery in the same verse.

Covenant with Peoples and Nations

The center of the second chiasmic structure (Isa 42:6b-7) reveals the mission of the servant both to God's people and to the surrounding nations. The following two prepositions are noted for their Hebrew poetry parallel: לְאֹרֵי גוֹיִם and לְבְרִית עַם. These prepositional clauses are central to the act of installing a person with the servant's call, yet they are "difficult to grasp in [their] precise significance,"¹⁶ more particularly לְבְרִית עַם.¹⁷ The second clause certainly helps to clarify the nature of the first clause. If the second clause is taken as an objective genitive, the sense of "light to (of) the

important to note that the idea of a hand between gods and human beings was a well-established notion in biblical times, which suggests that it was not a foreign concept for Isaiah. (This also can be observed in Egyptian history when two gods led a newly consecrated king by the hand. See Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* [trans. Timothy J. Hallett; New York: Seabury, 1978], figs. 272-273, 346, 414.)

¹⁶ Karl Elliger, *Deuterocesaja* (BKANT 11; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978), 120, 232, 286; Charles Francis Whitley, "Deutero-Isaiah's Interpretation of Sedeq," *VT* 22, no. 4 (1972): 469-475.

¹⁷ See Klaus Baltzer and Peter Machinist, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (ed. Peter Machinist; trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermenia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, ed. Frank Moore Cross et al.; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 131.

North lists four ways that this clause has been rendered by scholars: (1) Covenant-people, (2) Covenant (-bond) of the people (i.e., of Israel), (3) Covenant (-bond) of the peoples (i.e., of the nations), and (4) Splendor of the people(s). Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 132. However, as North demonstrates, all these attempts have some problems, perhaps not so much with how to reconcile the word "people" as with the understanding of the word "covenant."

J. Fischer insightfully analyzes the servant's role: "The 'or *goyim* is the touchstone for the correctness of the interpretation of the *berit 'am*. . . . *Berit 'am* and 'or *goyim* are the Ebed's professional titles; on the one hand the Ebed has received from God the assignment to mediate the covenant with Israel, to restore the covenant relationship; on the other hand he has been given the task of illuminating the gentile world—of passing on the light to them." Johann Fischer, *Isaias 40-55 und die Perikopen vom Gottesknecht: ein Kritisch-Exegetisch Studie* (ATA 6; Munich: Aschendorff, 1916), 86-87. However, Fischer does not go far enough in explaining what type of covenant the servant is making.

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nations” would be “in order to bring light to the nations,” in turn changing the interpretation of the first clause from “covenant to (of) the people” to “the one who bring[s] the covenant to the people.”¹⁸

A question remains about the meaning of the words *בְּרִית* “covenant” and *אֹר* “light”: Why would the servant bring a covenant to one group of people and light to another group of people? Is the servant accomplishing a different type of work with each group? The word *בְּרִית* appears many times in the OT and its basic meaning refers to a covenant between people or between a deity and people. However, a more sophisticated meaning could refer to “bond of obligation”¹⁹ or a “legally binding relationship between two parties.”²⁰ Roy Gane offers a similar definition: “a legally binding relationship contracted between two parties.”²¹ The covenant suggested in Isa 42:6 is that I (God) “make you [servant] the covenant of the people,” as the servant would be the covenant for the people. Thus, the servant is the sacrifice for the covenant in binding a relationship contracted between God and the people.

There is a common denominator in how the words *בְּרִית* and *אֹר*²² are used in Isa 42:6. The word *בְּרִית* signifies a legally binding relationship contracted between God and his people. This relationship is sealed by the blood of the servant, since the servant is given as a sacrificial lamb (cf. Isa 53),²³ a contract between God and his people. The covenant implies a salvific aspect of a relationship that was broken (cf. Isa 41:21-29) and restored by the doings of the servant. In turn, *אֹר* reveals more than merely

¹⁸ See Fischer, *Isaias 40-55*, 86-87.

¹⁹ Baltzer and Machinist, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*, 131-132.

²⁰ Moshe Weinfeld, “Berit—Covenant vs Obligation,” *Bib* 56, no. 1 (1975): 120-128.

²¹ Roy Gane, “Covenant, Law, Sabbath” (Class syllabus in my possession; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1997), 15. There is again a correlation of this word “covenant” between Isaiah and Exodus, suggesting a new exodus.

²² The word *אֹר* with the preposition *ל* occurs nine times in Isaiah (Isa 5:20; 42:6, 16; 49:6; 51:4; 59:9; 60:3, 19, 20). In both Isa 49:6 and 51:4, the light is used metaphorically to refer to salvation for the nations. In Isa 60:1, the same word is used but without the preposition *ל*, again giving the sense of the salvation for you [people], and v. 3 describes the nations coming to the light as a source of salvation.

²³ But interestingly, the servant is also given as an *'asham*, “reparation offering,” an expiatory sacrifice that was especially for sacrilege in Lev 5:14-6:7 (in contrast with Exod 24, which has burnt and well-being offerings). This agrees with Jer 31:34, where the “new covenant” is based on forgiveness for having already failed. I am indebted to Roy Gane for suggesting these concepts.

daylight; in Isaiah, the word refers to salvation extended beyond the covenantal group of people to nations other than the seed of Abraham (Isa 42:16; 49:6; 51:4; 60:3, 19-20; cf. Gen 12:1-3; Rom 4:16-18; Gal 3:23-29). Therefore, the use of both these terms provides a complete understanding of the servant's salvific message to the world.

In v. 6, the servant brings covenant and light. In v. 7 the first word begins with *qal* infinitive לִפְקֹחַ, which complements the last verb in v. 6, נָתַן. The preposition לְ reveals the purpose of the verb נָתַן of v. 6; the literal translation of לִפְקֹחַ עֵינַיִם עֲרוּחַ “to open the blind eyes” should be translated as a purpose with the preposition לְ “in order that to open the blind eyes,”²⁴ emphasizing the two previous clauses in v. 6 and “the blind eyes.” Thus, the resulting clause expresses consequences and can be translated with “and so, so that,” which would render this phrase as “so that he opens the blind eyes.”²⁵

The prepositional phrase לְהוֹצִיא מִמִּסְגַּר אֲסִיר “to bring out a prisoner from the dungeon” continues the list of the servant's actions. This *hip'il* infinitive, like the previous infinitive, complements the last verb in v. 6, נָתַן.²⁶ However, I would suggest that not only does this infinitive complement the verb, but the preposition also serves as a complement of type as seen with the previous infinitive.²⁷ In this particular instance, the preposition indicates the purpose of the action denoted by the main verb (נָתַן) in v. 6. Thus, the purpose clause expresses a consequence and can be

²⁴ See Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 606-607. See also, John C. L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1994), 129.

²⁵ The verb פָּקַח appears only twenty-one times in the OT in eighteen passages (Gen 3:5, 7; 21:19; 2 Kgs 4:35; 6:17, 20; 19:16; Job 14:3; 27:19; Ps 146:8; Prov 20:13; Isa 35:5; 37:17; 42:7, 20; Jer 32:19; Dan 9:18; Zech 12:4). In Isaiah this verb occurs four times: three in the *qal* (Isa 37:17; 42:7, 20) and once in *nip'al* (Isa 35:5). Often this root is associated with the noun עֵין “eye,” except in Isa 42:20 where it is connected with the noun אָזְן “ear.” In Isa 42:7, the one who does the opening of the eyes is God through the working of his servant. In both Isa 35:5 and 42:7, God is the subject of opening the eyes, and in Isa 37:17 Hezekiah pleads with God to have his eyes open and see what Sennacherib is doing (cf. 2 Kgs 19:16). In all these instances, the opening of eyes reveals deliverance from something. In the case of Isa 37:17, Hezekiah wants the people to see that God is the deliverer of Jerusalem from physical war, while in Isa 35:5 and 42:7 the deliverance comes in the form of the salvific phase—spiritual war. See Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 180.

²⁶ See Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 606.

²⁷ See *ibid.*

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translated with “in order to, in order that,” rendering this phrase as “*in order to* bring out a prisoner from the dungeon.”

Thus far, we have seen that the servant plays an important role in the redemption of Israel, in the mission that the servant has toward Israel as well as to the nations in general. Furthermore, the servant here is more than a representation of Israel; he represents the real identity of God in the world. The theology of the servant, discussed in the next section, further discloses the identity of the servant and reinforces the nature of his mission.

Theology of the Servant

The theology of this first servant poem further reveals the identity and the mission of the servant. It also portrays a theological blueprint for the church in the last days, revealing the identity the Adventist Church should embrace in its effort to continue advancing the servant’s mission.

Servanthood

Isaiah’s conceptualization of servanthood relates to the nature and character of the servant of the Lord.²⁸ In this section, I focus on both the action of servanthood and who the servant “is” as a being.

Israel has been called the servant of God (cf. Isa 41:8-9), meaning a peculiar people (cf. Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17), a close people of God (cf. Exod 3:10; 7:4), and a child of God (cf. Isa 49:15). However, that servant of God has not always been a good child, trustworthy, reliable, and in good standing with God (cf. Isa 1:2-9). That servant has broken ties with God—spiritually (Isa 41:22-29), and it (Israel) was in need of redemption (cf. Isa 40:1-11).

Yet Isaiah uses the same word and imagery to refer to the servant of God in 42:1-9. The first servant of the Lord has the characteristics of a genuine servant of the Lord: humble (42:2), obedient (v. 1d), trustworthy (v. 4), kind (vv. 1-4), loving (v. 6), patient (v. 3), self-sacrificing (vv. 6-7),

²⁸ See Kaiser on the concept of what he calls “corporate solidarity.” He points out, from the Pentateuch’s perspective, this phenomenon in the passages pointing to the Messiah: “He [Paul] was carefully observing that the divine revelation had distinctly chosen the collective singular word over the plural in order to provide for the single but inclusive concept of corporate solidarity between the one and the many.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 48-49. See also Paul Joyce, “The Individual and the Community,” in *Beginning Old Testament Study* (ed. John Rogerson; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1982), 77-93.

careful (v. 3), and gracious (v. 3). In other words, Isaiah reveals to his audience that there is a servant of the Lord who is superior to the one who was called the servant of the Lord in Isa 41:8-9 (Israel). This individual servant of the Lord has been called for a special mission (42:6-9), that is, to deliver Israel from its sinful condition.

Servanthood is also demonstrated by the fact that God seizes the hand of the servant (Isa 42:6) and in response the servant also seizes the hand of God. This shows a willing acceptance of servanthood on the part of the servant. This servant is not a servant on his own but God directs him, giving this servant superiority in doing his task.

The Character of God Revealed in the Servant

The servant of the Lord in Isa 42 reveals a portrait not only of the servant but also of God. The servant exhibits the uniqueness of God's character. First, God appears as the instigator since the subject "I" appears ten times, either in the form of the first person common singular of the verbs or by the use of the personal pronoun *אני*; this is an amazing number of occurrences for these few verses (Isa 42:1-9). Second, the clauses "I am the LORD" (42:8) and "I the LORD" (v. 6) suggest that the God of this servant is not like the gods whom Israel worshipped (cf. 41:21-29).²⁹ Isaiah 42:8 particularly demonstrates the divine self-predication "I am the LORD."³⁰

²⁹ Moreover, Isa 40-66 reveals that "God predicates uniqueness upon himself through the insistent claim: 'I am God and there is no other' (43:10; 44:6; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21, 22; etc.)." Wann M. Fanwar, "Creation in Isaiah" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2001), 149.

³⁰ Divine self-predication permeates the book of Isaiah in at least six different ways: "I am" *אני* (42:8; 47:8, 10), "I am God" *אני אל* (43:12; 45:15; 46:9), "I am your God" *אני אלהיך* (41:10), "I am" *אני יהוה* (41:4; 42:6, 8; 43:15; 45:3, 5, 6, 18; 49:23, 26; 60:16, 22), "I am your God" *אני יהוה אלהיך* (41:13; 43:3; 48:17; 51:15), "I am your God, the Holy One of Israel" *אני יהוה קדושכם* (43:3), or "I am your Holy One" *אני יהוה קדושכם* (43:15). M. L. Phillips provides an excellent discussion on the use of the divine self-predication formula in Isa 40-55. He suggests that the formula consists of a first-person pronoun with a proper noun or another pronoun. This formula has six variations and most likely had cultic uses. He also observes that the same formula used elsewhere in the OT has two components: first, covenant renewal (cf. Gen 15:1-21; the Decalogue; Exod 6:2-8), second, covenant complaint (cf. Deut 32; Ps 50; 81; Jer 14:17-22; 1 Kgs 18:35). Morgan L. Phillips, "Divine Self-Predication in Deutero-Isaiah," *BR* 16 (1971): 32-51. Walther Zimmerli has also discussed this formula with variations; see Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (ed. Walter Brueggemann; trans. Douglass W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 17-19. Fanwar observes this formula in Isaiah: "Significantly the formula is employed primarily in Isa 40-55. It does

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God, through the servant of Isa 42:1-9, uses self-predication to reveal to his people Israel that he is unique, unlike any other gods. God has the ability and power to save his people, while the other gods cannot. This ability is demonstrated by the way the mission of the servant is applied to both Israel and the nations (Isa 42:6). But this raises a question of why the self-predication of God is so important. When God asks, “To whom will you compare me?” (40:25), Isaiah follows with another question, “Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?” (40:26), thus deliberately pointing to God as the Creator. Why does Isaiah assign such a high claim to God? The answer is found in Isaiah’s description of the servant. This Creator image of 40:25-26, referring to God, is also portrayed in the servant in the next two chapters (Isa 41, 42). In addition, the two pericopes (Isa 41:21-29 and Isa 42:1-9) are linked with הן “behold” (41:24, 29; 42:1), suggesting that both servants, the corporate servant (Isa 41) and the individual servant (Isa 42:1-9), were intended to reflect the image of God.

This association of the Creator image with both God and the servant is further intensified in Isa 42:8 where Isaiah shows that God’s image under the term שמי “my name” is not given to any other person except his servant. Again, God gives his “glory” (כבודי) to no one other than the servant whose life represents the name of God (cf. 42:6). Thus, the servant may display a divine-human personality in how he responds and acts toward God.

Servant as Deliverer

Isaiah’s theology also reveals the servant’s role as a redeemer. The individual servant’s task is to be a savior and mediator (42:6-7), while the corporate servant’s condition is to be delivered from sin (41:21-29). Isaiah proposes that the individual servant is to reveal to Israel and the nations that God is merciful toward humanity even though they have sinned; God has a solution to the sin problem.

The first servant poem has as its purpose to mediate the covenant with Israel and to establish a pathway for justice in the Gentile world. With the term “justice” (צדקה), referring to a covenant trial to hold his people accountable, Isa 42:1-4 reveals that Israel has a problem, the sin of idolatry,

not appear in chaps. 1-39 and is used minimally in chaps. 56-66. The concentration of themes and ideas in chaps 40-55 is evident from every angle.” Fanwar, “Creation in Isaiah,” 150 n. 1.

for which God is to bring justice on them.³¹ God will keep his part of the covenant (cf. Gen 12; 15; 17; Exod 19-24), and his character is kind, patient, and gracious (cf. Exod 34:6-7); he will give himself through the servant of the Lord to rescue his people and the nations (cf. Isa 53:12). Thus, the servant is the means of rescuing people.

The servant is seen as accomplishing his mission of redeeming in two ways. The servant as a deliverer is clearly stated by Isaiah: first, he is given “for a covenant of people” (לְבְרִית עַם) (42:6); second, he is a deliverer because he is given “for a light of the Gentiles” (לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם) (v. 6). In these two phrases, the servant is performing the action of delivering Israel and the nations.³²

Covenant

The first servant poem also incorporates covenant theology. Covenant theology is most prominent in the latter part of Isa 42:1-9, where the mission of the servant is elaborated upon (vv. 5-9). In v. 6 the servant is called “in righteousness” for the purpose of being “given” for a “covenant of the people.”

³¹ According to God’s law, Israel’s sin makes it worthy of the punishment of death (cf. Gen 18:20; Deut 21:22; 24:16c; 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Chr 25:4). If God does not intervene for Israel and the nations, they will receive their due consequences (cf. Isa 1:15-18; 2:12; 5, etc.).

³² Israel could not redeem itself, even though some scholars suggest that some Israelites would help other Israelites by being a light and witness so that they could be saved. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 189; James M. Ward, “The Servant Songs in Isaiah,” *RevExp* 65, no. 4 (1968): 433-446; Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 150-152. On other views, see Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 260-261; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66* (NAC 15b; Nashville: B & H, 2009), 344-345; Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66* (NICOT 3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 270-271.

But the text does not give any indication that some of the Israelites would be deemed righteous enough to be considered as potential redeemers for other Israelites. Doukhan provides clear evidence that “the use of the first person plural in the book of Isaiah reveals that whenever the first person plural is used (‘we,’ ‘us,’ ‘our,’ etc.), it always refers to Israel or Judah. On the basis of these observations in our text and in the general context of the whole book, it is reasonable to conclude that the speakers in Isaiah 53 are the people of Israel, and by implication the listeners are the nations. The Servant is, therefore, someone distinct from Israel, as is evident from the following verses: Isa 53:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.” Jacques B. Doukhan, *On the Way to Emmaus: Five Major Messianic Prophecies Explained* (Clarksville, MD: Lederer, 2012), 114-116. Isaiah states: “The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider” (Isa 1:3), suggesting that Israel as a whole is faulty.

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This covenant is important for both God and the Israelites. It is important for God, because it reveals that God has not abandoned his people; he still pursues them and is willing to make a contract with them. It is important for Israel, because they have been responsible for breaking the covenant with God. Therefore, this covenant demonstrates that God is faithful and trustworthy and also reveals the responsibility that the people need to live by obedience.³³

The covenant in Isa 42:6 also suggests theologically that the servant is “given” as a mediator between God and the people. The servant is the embodiment of the covenant, “a cause, source, mediator, or dispenser of covenant realities.”³⁴ In parallel with covenant, a similar idea is found in the next clause where the servant is “for a light of nations” (v. 6). Again, the servant is not literally a light, but he is an illumination to the nations.

Malachi 3:1 picks up the idea of a covenant being transmitted by a servant of the Lord by referring to a “messenger of the covenant,” that is, a covenant mediator. Jeremiah also speaks of the covenant theme where he suggests that a servant of God is a mediator of the New Covenant with Israel (Jer 31:31-34; cf. Isa 54:10; 55:3; 59:20-21; 61:8; Ezek 16:60-63). The servant as a covenant appears to be a stretch of the definition of a covenant. However, Lev 24:8 enlightens us somewhat: The “bread of the Presence,” consisting of 12 loaves that represented the 12 tribes, constituted an eternal covenant between God and his people. This seems to mean that the bread was a token of the divine-human bond.³⁵ Therefore, this could imply that the servant represents the covenant in the sense that the divine and human are bonded in him.

The servant is “given” “for a covenant of the people,” suggesting that the servant is the covenant embodied in a promissory bond (cf. Exod 24:8; Lev 24:5-9).³⁶ Another indication in Isa 42:6 of the covenant image is the fact that God “grasps” the servant’s hand. This is how ancient Near Eastern kings sealed a covenant between the gods and themselves. Also, in the OT,

³³ See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 434.

³⁴ F. Duane Lindsey, *A Study in Isaiah: The Servant Songs* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1985), 54.

³⁵ See Roy Gane, “‘Bread of the Presence’ and Creator-in-Residence,” *VT* 42, no. 2 (1992): 179-203.

³⁶ See Helmer Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (SBT 18; Chicago, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1956), 41.

the king is responsible for the covenant between God and his people (2 Kgs 23:3). Here, the servant has sealed a covenant with God, followed by the sealing of a covenant with the people. Thus, the servant would still act as a mediator, but even more than a mediator, since he is “given” as a covenant for the people.

The servant’s covenant is not only related to Israel, but it is extended to the other nations also. The servant appears to fulfill the mission that was given to Abraham where God promised to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) that all the nations of the world would be blessed because of him.³⁷ God made a new start with Abraham after the downward spiral of Gen 3-11. Now the servant gives to both Israel and the nations a new start.

God and the Future

Isaiah 42 reveals a theology not limited to past events or the present; it suggests a theology of a God who knows the future. This concept may appear to come only at the end of the first servant poem (v. 9); however, there are hints earlier in the passage suggesting that God foreknows the future. The first indication is the use of the imperfect verb governing this pericope (אֲנִי) (v. 1). While the first verb is translated in the present, it really has a future tone. The next two verbs are perfect (יָצַח and יָצַח) and are translated in the past tense, but following these verbs, the tone of this servant poem is projected as a future event, even though it can be argued that the perfect verbs (v. 1) refer to a past event. The perfect verbs serve to strengthen the foreknowledge of God, that God had already chosen and placed his Spirit on the servant in the past, but yet the servant events are to occur in the future (Isa 42:6; cf. Gen 3:15; Col 1:15-18).³⁸ Thus, Isa 42:1d-4 strongly implies that the servant’s mission is in the future.

The previous chapter also points in the same direction regarding the judgment coming upon Israel (Isa 41:21-29). God is announcing what will

³⁷ See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 247-248; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 58.

³⁸ See T. Desmond Alexander, *The Servant King: The Bible’s Portrait of the Messiah* (Leicester, England: IVP, 1998), 111. Also Doukhan, *On the Way to Emmaus*, 17, 20.

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be taking place in the future if Israel does not change its behavior. For this reason, Isa 42:9 bridges what God has done and what he will do.³⁹

However, Isaiah's perspective regarding the chronological fulfillment of all the events that God is showing him is also limited. Isaiah sees only the top of the "divinely revealed mountain peaks of the future events";⁴⁰ the details found in the valleys are not perceived. Thus, Isaiah outlines some of the details about the first servant's work but remains ambiguous regarding whether the servant's work includes a one-phase event or a two-phase event, that is, whether it will occur in the near future, in the distant future, or even whether it is an eschatological event. As Schultz states, "The sending of the Messiah is first and foremost a demonstration of God's sovereignty."⁴¹ In light of v. 8, where Isaiah begins with the words "I am the LORD," Ulrich Simon comments: "This Name points to revelation. In prophecy YHWH predicts the future as an authentic sign of Lordship, now to be further manifested by the call of the Servant and the operation of the new Covenant."⁴²

While Isaiah leaves the first servant poem ambiguous about eschatology, there are enough details both in this pericope and in the context of this passage for the reader to discern its true meaning. I would suggest that the first servant poem encompasses a local historical fulfillment of the distant future coming of the servant yet also hints of an eschatological completion of the servant's work, using the word "new things" (Isa 42:9) to refer to what the servant will do at his distant future coming (cf. Isa 53) as well as to a new creation (cf. Isa 65-66). The first servant poem of Isa 42:1-9 is indeed a prophetic text pointing to the Messiah's first coming,

³⁹ Lindsey states: "Isaiah's view of 'things to come' demonstrates his view of the incomparable, holy God who through judgment and deliverance/restoration establishes His sovereign rule through all the earth, and over Israel in particular." Lindsey, *A Study in Isaiah*, 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Richard Schultz, "The King in the Book of Isaiah," in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite et al.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 164.

⁴² Ulrich E. Simon, *A Theology of Salvation: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (London: SPCK, 1961), 89-90.

contrary to the opinion of many scholars who suggest that the servant here represents a corporate servant.⁴³

Adventist Identity for the Last Days

Our Adventist identity was born in the prophetic Millerite movement where people took the Bible seriously and spent hours studying to ascertain the truth. Our pioneers—such as, for example, William Miller, O. R. L. Crosier, Joseph Bates, and James White—became well known for preaching about last-day events. The books of Daniel and Revelation were the focus of much interest regarding the judgment, the sanctuary, and Christ’s return. Thus, Adventist identity can be said to have been formed from a deep understanding of last-day events.

While Adventists must continue to teach biblical prophecy as handed down to us by our pioneers, we also must continue to investigate other biblical prophecies. For instance, many scholars have taken for granted what the first servant poem reveals,⁴⁴ when in reality the first servant poem

⁴³ Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 18, 184. S. Leyla Gürkan, *The Jews as a Chosen People: Tradition and Transformation* (RJSS; New York: Routledge, 2009), 9-10. Solomon B. Freehof, *Book of Isaiah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), 218. Laurence E. Brown, *The Messianic Hope in Its Historical Setting* (London: SPCK, 1951), 29-36; John Goldingay, *God’s Prophet, God’s Servant: A Study in Jeremiah and Isaiah 40-55* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984). Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Dennis T. Olson and Sharon H. Ringe; trans. David Green; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 407-408. Michel Remaud, *Israel, Servant of God* (trans. Margaret Ginzburg and Nicole Francois; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 59.

See also Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979). For example, Isa 42:1; 52:13. Driver and Neubauer, *The “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah: According to the Jewish Interpreters*, 2:37-39. See also Rashi, “The Complete Jewish Bible with Rashi Commentary.” Cited 29 March 2012. Online: http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15973/showrashi/true/jewish/Chapter-42.htm; Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah*, 13.

⁴⁴ Rabbi Saadia ben Joseph (892-942 B.C.) believed that the servant of Isa 53 referred to the prophets or to Jeremiah. A. van Hoonacker professed the servant to be Jehoiachin. R. Kraetzschmar believed it was Ezekiel. E. Sellin identified Zerubbabel. W. von Erbt suggested Jehoiakim, whereas A. Bertholet implicated the Maccabean hero Eleazar. K. F. Bahrdt and J. Konyonenburg interpreted the servant as being Ezekiel. C. F. Stäudlin advanced Isaiah as servant. G. L. Bauer followed Stäudlin, but for Isa 42 suggested Cyrus. and J. C. W. Augusti professed Uzziah. Other scholars hold further diverging views of the servant. See Joseph Sarachek, *The Doctrine of the Messiah in Medieval Jewish Literature* (New York: Hermon, 1968), 37; Albin van Hoonacker, *The Servant of the Lord in Isaiah XL ff* (Expositor 11; ed. W. Robertson Nicoll; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), 11:210;

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reveals Christ's identity and soteriology—demonstrated in both his first coming and his second coming.

Isaiah portrays the condition of Israel before the Messiah's coming and emphasizes Israel's need of a redeemer. Isaiah prophesies exile for Israel, yet a savior would deliver them from their enemies, a savior called Cyrus (Isa 45:1-5). However, Cyrus exhibits only some characteristics of the servant in the first servant poem. This suggests that another savior would come, bringing a greater deliverance from another exilic event. The Messiah fulfills all the characteristics of this savior outlined in Isa 42:1-9.

Furthermore, Isaiah's first servant poem also leads the reader to see that the Messiah was not simply coming at a certain point in time for the salvation of Israel alone; intertextually, Isa 42:1-9 insinuates the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Isa 65-66).⁴⁵ Even in Isa 42:1-9, Isaiah suggests the idea of God doing something in the future (v. 9).⁴⁶ This suggests that this savior–Messiah's role included a more holistic salvific

Richard Kraetzschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel, übersetzt und erklärt* (HKAT 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), 46; Sellin, *Serubbabel*, 148-182; Wilhelm von Erbt, "Die Chronologie des ersten nachexilischen Jahrhunderts," *OLZ* 21, no. 2 (1918): 35; Alfred Bertholet, *Zu Jesaja 53: ein Erklärungsversuch* (Friedburg i. B.: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), 23-32; Karl F. Bahrdt, *Die Kleine Bibel, Erster Band; Geschichte von Erschaffung der Welt bis auf die Zerstörung Jerusalems durch die Römer* (Berlin: n.p., 1780); Heinrich Corrodi, *Freymüthige Versuche über verschiedene in Theologie und biblische Kritik einschlagende Materien* (Berlin: Bey Friedrich Nicolai, 1783), 99-144; C. F. Stäudlin, *Neue Beiträge zur Erläuterung der biblischen Propheten* (Göttingen: 1791); G. L. Bauer, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum. 9 Posteriolem Iesaiæ Partem Complectens* (Norimbergae: Grattenauer, 1795), 204, 327; Johann C. W. Augusti, *Apologien und Parallelen theologischen Inhalts* (Gera; Leipzig: Illgen, 1800), 1-40; Johann C. W. Augusti, *Ueber den König Usia, nebst einer Erläuterung Jesaja 53* (Ueber den König Usia 3; Helmstädt: C. G. Fleckeisen, 1795), 282-299.

Other views on the servant vary widely, from being the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, to Moses, Zerubbabel, Cyrus, or a myth. See Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord*, 12-19; Katharine J. Dell, "The Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah: Jeremiah Revisited," in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. Katharine J. Dell et al.; VTSup 135, ed. H. M. Barstad et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 119-134. See Gillet for a short list; Gillet, *Communion in the Messiah*, 94; North, *The Suffering Servant*, 2; Herbert Haag, *Der Gottesknecht bei Deuterocesaja* (EdF 233; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 15-24; William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 36-46.

⁴⁵ Isaiah also has a similar idea in chapter 11 where he talks about the Messianic passage and then moves on to a new earth and new heaven scenario.

⁴⁶ Beaulieu, "Behold! My Servant": *An Exegetical and Theological Study of the Identity and Role of the Servant in Isaiah 42:1-9*, 224-266.

aspect to his mission. Table 1 shows how the second coming of Christ is imbedded in the first servant poem.⁴⁷

Isaiah portrays the coming of the servant in the context of the eschaton, particularly in Isa 42:9, where “new things” will be done. In v. 5 Isaiah already reveals God as the Creator who is in charge of the servant, and in v. 9 the servant is part of the “former things have come to pass, and new things I declare”: a complete removal of sin and a completed restoration.

Table 1. Historical, Inaugurated, and Consummated Fulfillment of the First Servant Poem

Historical Fulfillment of the First Servant Poem	Inaugurated Eschatology Fulfillment of the First Servant Poem	Consummated Eschatology Fulfillment of the First Servant Poem
Literal, Local, Partial Fulfillment	Literal, Local, Complete Fulfillment	Glorious, Final Literal Fulfillment
Cyrus	First Coming of Messiah/Christ	Second Coming of Christ
Political King	Spiritual Servant/Lamb/Prophet/Priest/King	Spiritual and Political Servant/Lamb/Prophet/Priest/King
Isa 44:28; 45:1-4; cf. 2 Chr 36:22-23	Isa 42:1-9; 49:1-12; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; cf. Isa 61:1-3; Dan 9:24-27; Matt 12:18-21; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 8:32-33	Rev 19:11-16; 20:11-15; 21:2-3, 22

As Adventists who profess to live in the last days of earth’s history, we should, first, continue to study the Bible to discover what Christ is doing for his people and for a lost world. Second, we should continue advancing the mission of Christ, bringing a message of hope to the captives and assurance

⁴⁷ For more information, see Beaulieu, “Behold! My Servant”: *An Exegetical and Theological Study of the Identity and Role of the Servant in Isaiah*, 303-311.

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to the blind around us. Third, we need to be like Christ, not simply in a theoretical sense, but in a spiritual sense; that is, Adventists should exhibit an aura of Christ-like servanthood to each other, not having a caste system where some are above others. Servanthood is the identity of this servant poem.

Conclusion

Exegetical and theological analysis shows that the servant of Isa 42:1-9 is a different servant from the one found in other places in Isa 40-55. The servant of the first servant poem has a Messianic identity and brings salvation first to his own people and then to the other nations.

In contrast with the characteristics of the servant representing Israel, the servant in the first servant poem acts with maturity and dignity and is humble, self-sacrificing, and kingly (Isa 42:1-9). Israel as servant, on the other hand, is portrayed as a proud, immature, unwilling, and sinful nation (Isa 41:8-9; 42:16-25).

The servant of the first servant poem is a pattern for Adventists in the last days to continue to proclaim Jesus' coming in deed as well as in word. It is critical that in our relations with fellow humans, our actions—like those of the servant—epitomize respect, equality, and transparency. The characteristics of the servant reveal what should be the ultimate identity of the church: The last-day church will have a high regard for Jesus' salvific truth and will live out that life-changing truth in all aspects of life.

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