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See, My Servant Will Act Wisely, He Will Be Lifted Up and Exalted 52: 13-15

See, My Servant will act wisely, He will be lifted up and exalted **DIG: This is the last of the four Servant Songs (see 42:1-7; 49:1-13; 50:4-9). To whom is this song intended? In what sense is this the Gospel. The songs in Chapters 42 and 49 indicated that the Servant would be a light to the Gentiles. How is that idea communicated in these opening lines?**

REFLECT: What is your opinion of the TaNaKh prophecies fulfilled by Jesus? Could they have been written after they had already occurred? Do they make any difference in what you believe? Do they increase your faith? Are you in the wheelbarrow? Why or why not?

This is a far eschatological prophecy to Jews just before the Second Coming. The purpose of **the Servant** is stated simply and clearly: **For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).** One of the ways that we **believe** in **the Servant** is through knowledge of prophecy. Prophecy is history written in advance, and the TaNaKh gave precise details about **the Servant of the LORD**. Among other things, it predicted that **He** would be supernaturally conceived (**7:14**), born in Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2**), be Semitic in the line of Abraham and of **David (Genesis 9:26, 22:18; Second Samuel 7:13)**, and be of the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49:10**). In **His** death **He** would be executed by rulers (**Psalm 2:1-2**), forsaken by **God (Psalm 22:1)**, betrayed by a friend for **thirty pieces of silver (Psalm 41:9 and Zechariah 11:12)**, have **His beard plucked** out and be **spit upon (50:6)**. In **His** resurrection **He** would **rise in three days (Hosea 6:2)**, **He** would not experience decay of **His** flesh (**Psalm 16:10**), and would **conquer death (25:8)**. All of these prophecies came true in the life of **Yeshua**. The probability of *all* of these prophecies being fulfilled while being given centuries in advance, leads us to the undeniable conclusion that **Messiah** was indeed sent from **God the Father** and **He** would accomplish **His** purpose. Our

faith is based on the tangible evidence of the person and life of **Christ**; it is based on who **He** is and what **He** did (**First Corinthians 15:3b-4**).

In **52:13 Isaiah** starts out with the word **see**. Whenever the prophets used that word it was always to call attention to a new context that is going to be more important than other writings within that chapter. Thus **God**, speaking through **His prophet** says: **My Servant will act wisely**. The Hebrew word could mean that, but I think a better translation would be **My Servant will accomplish My purpose**. **Isaiah** is not saying here that **the Servant** will be a wise man. But **he** is saying that **the Servant** will know and do the right things in order to accomplish the purpose for which **He** was called (**42:1; 49:2-3; 50:7-9**). Whatever the frustrations on **His** part (**49:1-4**), or the failure on the part of the nation of **Isra'el** to see **Him** for who **He** really was, the **Servant will accomplish the Father's purpose**. This very same word is used in **Jeremiah 23:5** where **he** writes: **The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will accomplish My purpose** (or reign wisely), **and do what is just and right in the Land**. Here **Isaiah** is picturing the **Messiah** sitting upon **David's** throne and ruling over the Messianic Kingdom.

The next three phrases in **52:13** give us a summary of **His** activities during the messianic Kingdom. First: **He will be raised up**, referring to **His** resurrection. Secondly: **He will be lifted up** and this refers to **His** ascension that took place forty days after the resurrection (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Mr - The Ascension of Jesus**) Thirdly: **He will be highly exalted** or honored by being seated at the right hand of **God the Father interceding** for us **day and night**. But **the Servant** would not only **be raised and lifted up and highly exalted**, **He** would also **be** humiliated. We can see these two opposite extremes in these three verses without a break. Paul's great hymn in **Philippians 2:5-9** is almost certainly a reflection of this passage. So the exaltation of **the Servant** here is contrasted with the humiliation of **the Servant** in the very next verse.

The way **Jesus** looked on the cross will be in stark contrast with **His** appearance at the Second Coming. The nations, the **many who were appalled at Him**, will be speechless by what they see in **Him**, something they were not expecting. **He** will be **so disfigured** that **He** will not resemble a **man**. So as people looked upon the cross in the closing hours and minutes of **His** life, **His form** would be **marred beyond human likeness (52:14)**. Evidently **His** beating was so severe, that after the resurrection, *no one* recognized **Him** at first. But even before the resurrection,

by human standards **Jesus** was not attractive when **He** was on the earth (**53:3**).

Author Henri Nouwen tells the story of a family he knew in Paraguay. The father, a doctor, spoke out against the military regime there and its human rights abuses. Local police took their revenge on him by arresting his teenage son and torturing him to death. Enraged townsfolk wanted to turn the boy's funeral into a huge protest march, but the doctor chose another means of protest. At the funeral, the father displayed his son's body as he had found it in the jail - naked, scarred from electric shocks, cigarette burns, and beatings. All the villagers filed past the corpse, which lay not in a coffin but on the blood-soaked mattress from the prison. It was the strongest protest imaginable, for it put injustice on grotesque display. Isn't that what **the Lord** did at Calvary? The cross that held **Jesus'** body, naked and marked with scars, exposed all the violence and injustice of this world. At once, the cross revealed what kind of world we have and what kind of **God** we have: a world of gross unfairness, a **God** of sacrificial love.

But when the nations see **Him** at **His** Second Coming, those who did not consider **Him** important will be absolutely astounded. They will see **Him** from a new perspective.²¹⁵ **His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dripped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of ADONAI, God of heaven's angelic armies (CJB). On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING of kings and LORD of Lords (Revelation 19:12-16).**

In **52:15** the victory of **the Servant** will **startle many** nations. The word **sprinkle**, used by some translations, is not a good translation; a better word would be **startle**. The people, who were once astonished by **His** disfigurement, will now be **startled** at **His** exaltation. To go from the humiliation of the death of a common criminal to being exalted in all the earth and the heavens is indeed **startling**. The **kings** of the earth **will shut their mouths because of Him** out of respect. When you are talking and a man of greatness comes by, there is silence in the room out of respect. Why? **For what they were not told, they will see. They** will understand what they **were not told** about the inhuman treatment that **the Messiah** went through at **His** crucifixion. This verse is quoted in **Romans 15:21: Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.**

For **the Servant, Yeshua**, to accomplish **His** purpose, faith is needed. The writer to the **Hebrews** said: **and without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)**. Therefore, if there is anything that is clear in the Bible, it is that a person is saved by **faith**. However, if there is anything that is unclear today, it is the nature of **faith**. So it is vitally important that we understand **faith**. The Greek New Covenant word for **faith** most commonly used is *pisteuo*. It has a wide semantic range and can be translated **faith, trust, or belief**. This Greek word has two basic elements: mental assent and reliance. But these two elements also assume knowledge. Thus, **faith** consists of knowledge, mental assent, and reliance.

Faith, trust, and belief assumes knowledge, that is, recognition of some information. Before we can **believe** anything, we must know about it. If **faith** assumes the understanding of knowledge, what does a person need to know? The object of faith in the New Covenant is **Yeshua Messiah**. If you were to look up all the occurrences of **believe** and **faith** in the New Covenant to see what a person must know about **Christ**, you would discover that a person must **believe** four things: (1) that **Messiah** is **God (John 20:31)** and yet (2) **a real man (First John 4:2)**; (3) that **He** is the one who died for sins (**Romans 3:25**) and (4) **rose from the dead (Romans 10:9)**. Those last two facts are called the Gospel. So the object of **faith** is **Jesus Christ**, the **God-man**, who **died** and **arose**. It is not just any **“Christ.”** The object of **faith** must be **Messiah** who is revealed in the Bible.

The second element of **faith** is mental assent. The knowledge received about **Messiah** must now be accepted as true. The most basic meaning of *pisteuo* is to *accept something as true*. A person could have knowledge and not accept the information as true. In other words, he or she could not **believe**. However, if there is both knowledge and acceptance, there is **belief**. For salvation, a person must know that **Jesus Christ**, the **God-man**, died for sin and arose from the dead, and accept that as factual and true. **Faith** does not mean **believing** when there is no evidence; faith is **believing** the evidence. **Faith** is not built on ignorance, but on knowledge.

The third element is **trust, belief, and faith**. These words refer to *resting in, relying on, or depending upon something or someone*. Often the New Covenant emphasizes this and makes it even stronger by adding a preposition after **believe**. For example **John 3:36** says: **He who believes in the Son has everlasting life**, and **Acts 16:31** says: **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be**

saved. You may believe a bridge is safe, but you do not **believe** in the Biblical sense until you drive onto the bridge. You may **believe** an airplane can fly you from your hometown to England, but you do not **believe** in the New Covenant sense until you buckle up and the plane takes off. If your clothes were on fire, you may **believe** that jumping in the swimming pool will save you, but you are not saved until you jump in the pool. That's what **faith** is like, acceptance plus reliance. **Faith** in and of itself does not save. **Faith** is not magic; there is no saving virtue in it. **Faith** is merely the means by which the benefits of **Christ's** death are applied to you. The New Covenant does not teach that you are saved on account of **faith**, but rather, you are saved through **faith**. The saving power does not reside in the act of **faith**, nor in the nature of **faith**, but exclusively in the object of **faith** - **Jesus Christ**.

Imagine a ship filled with people crossing the Atlantic. In the middle of the ocean there is an explosion. The ship is severely damaged and slowly sinking. Most are dead, and the rest are rushing for the lifeboats. Now suppose one man doesn't know about the lifeboat, so he does not get aboard. He doesn't have knowledge, so he is not saved. Suppose another man knows about the lifeboat and believes it will save him, but he is grief-stricken over seeing his wife killed, so he chooses not to get aboard and dies with his wife. He has knowledge and mental assent, but he is not saved. Others believe the lifeboat will save them, and they get into the boat. They are saved by **faith**, that is, they have knowledge, mental assent, and **trust**. However, it is not their **faith** that saves them, no matter how much **faith** they have. It is the lifeboat. Therefore, saving **faith** trusts **Christ**, and **Messiah** saves.²¹⁶ You are saved by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Messiah** alone.



Around 1900, before the days of rock stars and sports heroes, some of the most famous people were known for daring feats, like climbing mountains, escaping from chains and vaults, and swinging on the flying trapeze. None was more famous than the great Charles Blondin of France, the greatest tightrope walker in the world. One



time he walked the tight rope across Niagara Falls in Ontario, Canada. He would walk across with a balance bar, he would ride across on a unicycle, and sometimes, with someone with a lot of **faith** in him, he would carry a trusting soul across on his shoulders. One day he wheeled a woman across in a wheelbarrow. Everyone saw it and cheered. The woman put her life into Blondin's hands. That is what **faith** is, putting our life in **Christ's** hands. When Blondin got to the other side of Niagara Falls, he asked the crowd if they believed he could do it again and go back across. They said, "Yes, we believe you can do it." At that he said, "Then get in the wheelbarrow." That is **faith**. As far as **Christ** is concerned, are you in the wheelbarrow?

If you have accepted **Yeshua Messiah** by **faith**, see my commentary on **The Life of Christ [Bw](#) - What God does for Us at the Moment of Faith**.

This is the first of **five messages** in this section, **My Servant will accomplish His purpose**, where **God** contrasts the **Servant's** lowly death on the cross with **His** being lifted up **and given a name that is above every name (Philippians 2:8-9)**. But having mentioned **His** humiliation, **Isaiah** will now detail it in the next section.