

Serving Others

Key Verse: *"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."*
—Isaiah 42:6

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 42:1-8

A FORETASTE OF GOD'S

plan for future blessings upon all the families of the earth was recorded many years ago in the Old Testament.

Isaiah notes the accomplishment of this grand work through a servant of God's choosing. "He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."—Isa. 49:6

The identity of this servant is not specifically recorded but seems to fit the role of Christ who will administer blessings to mankind at the close of this present period of sin and sorrow.—Isa. 42:1

At his First Advent, Jesus manifested qualities well suited to achieve the Father's purpose. His voice was not "to be heard in the street." (vs. 2) Even though he was a specimen of perfect humanity, he was humble rather than proud. As one filled with sympathy for the oppressed and those of low estate, his ministry touched the hearts of the common people who gladly heard him. He was approachable, and healed many who were sick. His opposition came from the religious leaders who

thought themselves superior to the other inhabitants of Israel.

The compassion of Christ stands out as he notes human frailties in this Gospel Age. (vs. 3) If there is any evidence of smoldering faith, he will nurture that quality, especially in those who desire to become members of his church. When Satan is bound during Christ's thousand-year kingdom, the glorified Lord, along with his church, will constitute a merciful priesthood that will offer every possible opportunity for mankind to turn from sin to righteousness.

Despite the immense task of restoring humanity back to perfection, Isaiah assures us concerning Christ, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." (vs. 4) Our confidence in him should be further strengthened by repeated scriptural declarations that a time of blessing would come upon the human family. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—Acts 17:31

Our Key Verse says, 'I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.'

By virtue of his precious shed blood, Jesus Christ is the "mediator of the new covenant." (Heb. 12:24) His faithful followers of the Gospel Age are accepted as part of his body. (Eph. 1:5-7) How wonderful it is that the church as "able ministers of the new testament [covenant, *Revised Standard Version*]" will share with Christ in blessing both Jews and Gentiles during the coming kingdom of righteousness. (II Cor. 3:6) The prophecy continues and points out the further work of Christ in that kingdom, that he is "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."—Isaiah 42:7 ■