

“Behold the man!”

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

13. A man sent by God

Greg Palmer

IN THIS ARTICLE we will see by the titles of Jesus that he was an ambassador of God. None of the work he came to do was of his own prompting. That is not to say that he was reluctant—far from it—but that he was doing the work of his Father Who sent him. This thought is commonly expressed in the Bible, but is enlarged by the titles of Jesus. In that he was sent, clearly he was subordinate to Him that sent him. That is, God is greater than Jesus. The idea that Jesus was sent by God is found on Jesus’ own lips at least thirty times in John’s Gospel alone. Jesus claimed, therefore, to have been sent by God. This is one of the areas where he received much opposition from the Pharisees. They hated him all the more for declaring that God was the source of all of his work.

Apostle

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb. 3:1). Here the Apostle Paul is using the usual New Testament word that refers to ones such as himself who have been sent forth with a mission from the Master. We are being told that Jesus was sent forth from God with a mission. The mission was to declare the truth of God, to save us from our sins, and to be King. It is evident that he did the first two parts when he was on the earth during his first advent. It must therefore be that God will send him again to fulfil that which was prophesied. The words of Scripture agree with this, as can be seen in many places, for example Acts 3:20: “He shall *send* Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you”. These words tell us that our Lord is still subject to the will of God, and remains His Apostle to send as it pleases Him.

Messenger of the covenant

These words occur in Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way

before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts”. The sense of the Hebrew word translated “messenger” is ‘to dispatch as a deputy or ambassador’. It is commonly used of angels. The reason for the sending of the messenger is connected with the covenant.

We can attribute these words to several men, among whom Jesus is the chief. The words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:8 give us good reason to apply the title to Jesus: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”. In other words, Jesus was sent because of the covenant which God made with the fathers. This is expressed in similar language in Daniel 9, where we are told that Messiah will “confirm the covenant” (v. 27). The covenant made with the fathers refers to the blessing of forgiveness of sins that was made possible through the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:24).

My servant

These words are found several times in the prophecy of Isaiah (and elsewhere also) with reference to Jesus. We are certain that this is so because Isaiah 42:1-3 is quoted in the record of Matthew’s Gospel: “. . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust” (12:17-21).

Jesus, then, is the minister of God sent to accomplish some service on behalf of God. The service Jesus performed is extremely important,

for Yahweh Himself was *personally* unable to do it, and so He achieved it through His Son. The service is explained in Isaiah 53:11: "by his knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities". God Who cannot look upon sin and is totally separate from sin was unable *personally* to identify with us and die for us, and therefore He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

The Apostle Paul describes this, and the extent to which the service went, in Philippians 2:7,8: "[Jesus] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". We

are talking of the greatest man who ever lived, without exception, and he submitted humbly to die for the ungodly that his Father might be glorified and we might be saved.

Shall we complain about our service? Is anything too menial for us? Would we wash the dirty feet of Judas Iscariot? Compared with the quality and extent of service that our Lord offered we are completely unworthy. Do we have the attitude that the Lord said we should have in Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do"? We too are called by God to be His servants; let us strive to be faithful, as was Christ.

([To be continued](#))