

Isaiah OT651-Essay
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Jay Harper-3/26/23

The one new idea that was brought home was the ministry of the Servant. There were three aspects that Oswalt talked about (Oswalt p. 474-475). The first aspect was to restore God's right order to the world. Salvation is much more than the salvation or saving of the world it is also to restore order on all levels of society. Secondly, Oswalt states the Servant's ministry is for the whole world so the only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ. Isaiah 42:1-9 is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. Many people believe we can get to God through religion or good deeds. But Jesus says everyone that has come before him is "thieves and robbers" (John 10:8). It's the third aspect of the Servant's ministry which is most needed for our time and the one I would like to focus on. At a time when the church is plagued by disunity and selfishness, the act of humility is a defining mark of Christian character. Jesus is the supreme example to imitate. "The Ancient Near Eastern, kings boasted about the ferocious ways in which they brought justice to their kingdoms and about the heavy yokes they imposed on any whom they conquered."¹ According to Jaruzelska, Izabela; "The legitimacy of political power consists in recognition of a ruler's right to demand the obedience of subjects to fixed commands. It has four characteristics: 1.) power is acquired according to accepted rules; 2.) power is exercised according to accepted standards; 3.)

¹ John N. Oswalt, "The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah, Grand Rapids, MI 2003 pg. 475

subjects perform public acts of recognition or acknowledgment of the ruler's authority; and 4.) the rules for acquiring and exercising power are justifiable on the basis of beliefs shared by both rulers and subordinates."² Nebuchadnezzar in his arrogance and pride thought he was the reason for his greatness. But God caused him to lose his sanity until he realized that "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan-KJV. 4:28-37). This King is a "Servant". He doesn't rule with an iron fist. This Servant brings about order to the nations not with strength but with weakness. That doesn't make sense. How can a king bring about the order if it's not from a position of strength? Isaiah 42:3 says, "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out". Oswalt says, "Christ disarmed his enemies with love, grace, and gentleness."³ As Christians, we must have the same attitude as Christ. Unfortunately, everybody wants to be important. Everybody wants a title. We want people to bow down to us and to cater to our needs because I'm the boss. Our attitude is give me what I want and if you don't I'll take it. Pharaoh refused to humble himself and God sent ten plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 10:3). The children of Israel refused to humble themselves and they wandered in the wilderness for forty years (Deut. 8:2). Isaiah says God looks to those in favor who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2). One of the churches greatest ways to witness is when we display the Servant's ministry of humility. What

² Jaruzelska, Izabela. "Lightening the Yoke": The Exercise of Power and Royal Legitimacy in the Ancient Near East" *Orientalia*, 89 no 2 2020, p 196

³ John N. Oswalt, "The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah, Grand Rapids, MI 2003 pg. 475

can galvanize a church hindered by internal dissension? The humility of service toward others rather than oneself. The apostle Paul summarizes this attitude with the poem in Philippians 2:5-8, “5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage: 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross! May God help us to die to ourselves and become more like Christ.