

Chapter four. Isaiah and the Servant.

The theological influence of Isaiah.

We have seen that the prophecy of Isaiah is probably the major influence on Paul's thinking.¹ The prophet clearly determined his theology of salvation. For Isaiah, the key figure in his message of hope was someone known as the Servant of the Lord. I want now to explore the extent to which Paul was influenced by the prophet's perspective of the Servant figure. The prophet's theological understanding on this issue was supreme amongst the OT writers, especially his contribution to understanding Israel's call to servanthood. Porteous has noted that: "Isaiah is the theologian par excellence of the Old Testament, but his importance for theology lies, not so much in any abstract formulations he may have reached about the oneness and creative power of God, as in the way in which he seems to have given living embodiment to his understanding of Israel's call to be God's servant in the world."²

The reason for choosing to examine this theme at this point in the study is that it illustrates how Hellenism has determined the way the NT is read. We will see that once the Greek control has been appreciated, previously unrecognised OT theology breaks out of the NT text. This discovery ought then to give us confidence and hopefully appetite for exploring other strands of OT theology in the writings of Paul.

The concept of the servant in the Old Testament.

Because Isaiah's understanding of the Servant of the Lord gives embodiment to the concept of Israel being God's servant in the OT, I shall limit our investigation to that book. Furthermore Isaiah is the ideal place to begin for, as we have seen, it had a profound influence on the understanding on Paul's doctrine of salvation of which the Servant figure was an essential part.

An examination of the OT Hebrew text of Isaiah shows that *ebed*, servant, was a title applied to a wide range of people. There were no alternative titles available for the OT writers, so the variations in meaning had to be derived from the context in which the individual word was used. *Ebed* was used for kings,³ prophets,⁴ the nation of Israel,⁵ the Messiah⁶ and even ordinary Israelites.⁷ What can be said of *ebed* is that it spoke of someone who was subordinate in some way to another, whether to God or man, as master.

The source of confusion.

Confusion arose when the OT was translated into Greek. A study of the

¹ Dinter, "Paul", 48 says that: "In this matter, above all, his searching of the prophet Isaiah enabled him to understand the words of the prophet as directly revelatory of his own life and as the essential factor in his framing of "God's gospel promised beforehand through his prophets."

² Porteous, art *Theology*, *PCB*, 157. The influence of Isaiah on the NT is evident in that Isaiah is quoted more often in the NT than all the other OT prophets put together, Young *Introduction* 205.

³ Isa. 37:24.

⁴ Isa. 20:3.

⁵ Isa. 41:8, 9.

⁶ Isa. 42:1.

⁷ Isa. 65:13-15.

Hebrew text alongside the Greek (LXX) shows that there was no consistency in the minds of the translators as to the choice of an appropriate Greek word for a particular type of *ebed*. The two principal terms available were *doulos* and *pais*. The evidence shows that *pais* was used not only of the ideal servant, but also of Israel, and in such a way as to remind her of her unworthiness, for her 'unadopted' name Jacob is used in parallel to this term.⁸ *Pais* is also used of individual prophets.⁹ The problem is rendered even more complex when we realise that this same term is applied to domestic servants or used generally as a title of anyone who is in an inferior position to another.¹⁰ Confusion is even more confounded in that this same term used in these various ways is paralleled by the use of *doulos* in each respect. So we find *doulos* applied to the ideal servant,¹¹ the nation¹² and to domestic servants.¹³ In the Hebrew text the context was clearly the key to a proper understanding of the particular meaning of the term. The translators of the LXX evidently did not think it necessary to distinguish accurately between the various usages, and hence to designate one particular Greek word to correspond to each particular category of servant.

The apparently arbitrary use of *pais* and *doulos* is not limited to the LXX. We also find the same range of usages for both terms in the New Testament. We find *pais* used for a domestic servant,¹⁴ for Israel¹⁵ and for David.¹⁶ We also find *doulos* being used with an equally wide range of meanings. It was used for a slave,¹⁷ for a domestic help,¹⁸ for a prophet,¹⁹ for Christians,²⁰ and for Christ himself.²¹ It is evident that the arbitrary use of *pais* and *doulos* by the translators of the LXX influenced the practice of the NT writers and it would, therefore, be imprudent to attach any significance to the use of either term without deliberate reference to the context. It is thus the context alone which must determine how a particular use of a word should be understood.

Consequences of confusion.

This confusion has obscured the significance of the repeated use Paul makes of the term *doulos*. It has normally been seen as a reference to a bond slave, someone without legal standing or personal claims, someone owned by another, since that is what the *doulos* was in Graeco-Roman Society. This connection assumes two fundamental points. First, that the Roman idea of *doulos* was the same as Paul's concept, and secondly, that Paul's concept was the same as the OT concept. This latter connection must be assumed to exist

⁸ cf Isa. 42:19; 44:1-2; 44:21; 45:4.

⁹ cf Isa. 20:3, 32:20, 44:26; 50:10.

¹⁰ Isa. 24:2; 36:11; 37:5.

¹¹ Isa. 53:11.

¹² Isa. 42:19; 48:20; 49:3; 49:7.

¹³ Isa. 14:2.

¹⁴ Mt. 8:6,13.

¹⁵ Lk. 1:54.

¹⁶ Lk. 1:69.

¹⁷ Mt. 8:9.

¹⁸ Jn. 18:10.

¹⁹ Rev. 10:7.

²⁰ Rom. 6:17.

²¹ Phil. 2:7.

in Paul's thinking in that his understanding of *doulos* is normally understood to be the same as that of the *ebed/doulos* in the OT. However, it is a point in dispute as to whether Israel ever experienced slavery in the classical Greek or Roman sense amongst her own people.²²

Examples of confusion.

De Vaux summarises the general picture: "Certain writers, and especially Jewish scholars, have denied that real slavery ever existed in Israel; at least they maintain Israelites were never reduced to slavery. There is a semblance of justification for this view if we compare Israel with classical antiquity. In Israel and the neighbouring countries there never existed those enormous gangs of slaves which in Greece and Rome continually threatened the balance of social order. Nor was the position of the slave ever so low in Israel and the ancient East as in Republican Rome, where Varro could define a slave as 'a sort of talking tool', 'instrumenti genus vocale'. The flexibility of the vocabulary may also be deceptive. Strictly speaking *ebed* means slave, a man who is not his own master and is in the power of another. The king, however, had absolute power, and consequently the word *ebed* also means the King's subjects, especially his mercenaries, officers and ministers; by joining his service they had broken off their social bonds. By a fresh extension of meaning, the word became a term of courtesy. We may compare it with the development of its equivalents 'servant' in English or 'serviteur' in French, both derive from *servus*, a slave. Moreover, because a man's relations with God are often conceived on the model of his relations with his earthly sovereign, it became a title for pious men, and was applied to Abraham, Moses, Joshua or David, and finally to the mysterious Servant of Yahweh. By 'slave' in the strict sense we mean a man who is deprived of his freedom, at least for a time, who is bought and sold, who is the property of a master, who makes use of him as he likes; in this sense there were slaves in Israel and some were Israelites."²³

De Vaux then proceeds to make comparison between the Semitic form of slavery and the Graeco-Roman form, to show how the former was much more controlled and humane.

However De Vaux fails to distinguish the essential difference between the Hebrew slave, who is sold into the possession of another, and the slave of Yahweh. It is not merely the status of the owner. The essential difference is one of covenant. The king was the *ebed* of Yahweh because he had been elected, called and appointed to that office, and not because of anything less.²⁴ The ministers of the king in turn represented Yahweh and fulfilled the purpose of the covenant, to establish righteousness. To fail to see this is to miss the whole point of the *ebed* of Yahweh. In social terms it would be equivalent to seeing little difference between the role of a housekeeper and the role of a housewife in Western society today. It would also be foolish to think that the role of the housekeeper could simply evolve into the role of the

²² For Hebrew slavery see Ellison, "Slave", 30-38 also Betz, Galatians, 193 note 94 for literature on Jewish attitudes towards slavery

²³ de Vaux, *Israel*, 80. See also Martin, *Slavery*, 62-3 who argues that *doulos* in the NT means slave contra Edwards, *Romans*, 27.

²⁴ 1 Sam. 10:1; 11:4; 15:1; 2 Sam. 7:8,9.

housewife. Language may evolve, but a covenant relationship does not; it requires a decisive act of commitment and acceptance.

The concept of the servant in the New Testament.

Ambiguity in Old Testament theology inevitably leads to ambiguity in New Testament theology, and indeed this is the very thing we find. For example, Barrett notes an aspect of the problem when, in commenting on Romans 1:1, he says: "Paul describes himself in the first instance as a slave of Jesus Christ. This is a common term with him (cf especially Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1), imitated by other New Testament writers (James 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1). It is particularly status and vocation. The description is more striking in a Greek work, such as this epistle, than in Semitic literature. A Greek did not think of himself as a slave (δοῦλος) of his ruler or king, nor did he think of himself as the slave of his divine king, or God, or speak of his service to the God as slavery. The Semitic king, however, was a slave (e.g. 2 Sam. 9:19). Other distinguished members of the theocracy are described in the same terms (e.g. Ps. 26:42; Amos 3:7). Thus Paul, as the slave of Jesus Christ, appears as a member of a people of God analogous with the People of God in the Old Testament."²⁵

Barrett is suggesting that the Old Testament concept of the servant of Yahweh was based on the analogy of slavery, only elevated from a human situation. But this is not so, as we have seen. Barrett does however move in the right direction when he goes on to say that Paul: "appears as a member of a people of God analogous with the people of God in the Old Testament", but as we have seen, Barrett misunderstands the Old Testament theology of the Servant of God.

Consequences of confusion.

If we follow the trend of de Vaux's and Barrett's arguments, and seek to work out a slave concept in the New Testament, there are some important questions that must be raised. Are we to conclude that Paul not only claims that he has no rights of his own because he is in bondage to Christ, but also that he is serving Christ against his own will? If Paul is saying he has no rights, how can he look forward to a reward or payment for his labour - 'a crown of life'?²⁶ The slave concept totally precludes such a possibility. Furthermore, when Paul's use of the term in Romans 6 is examined carefully we come up against these same problems in specific statements. *Do you know*, he says, *that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or obedience, which leads to righteousness.*²⁷ This slavery begins in an act of offering to someone, and the slave is clearly choosing which master he will serve, something that would never arise in the practice of slavery. It may be argued that this is a reference to the Old Testament practice of the slave choosing to stay with his master when the year of jubilee arrives, and that it alludes to the free decision that the slave takes to have his ear bored and be

²⁵ Barrett, *Romans*, 16, so also Jeremias, *Central*, 37 and Käsemann, *Perspectives*, 44.

²⁶ 2 Tim. 4:8.

²⁷ Rom. 6:16.

the lifetime possession of his master.²⁸ This argument, however, fails to resolve the problem. First, it moves between Hellenistic or classical concepts and the Semitic concept without any indication as to which practice is being followed in which part of the illustration. Also, the basic meaning of *doulos* is that of one born into slavery. Under the controlled form of 'slavery', which the Old Testament permitted for those needing to sell themselves into service for a period of time to recover from debt, children were not born into permanent slavery. In such a case the 'slave' was released, along with all that was his, in the year of jubilee.²⁹ Finally, at the conclusion of the chapter Paul states, *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*³⁰ It is unlikely that Paul would speak of a wage being paid in a slave relationship.

New Testament terms.

Before we attempt to unravel the information available to us, it will be helpful if we clarify the terms found in the New Testament which speak of Christian service, setting them alongside their corresponding Greek terms and assessing their relevance for our present enquiry.

The first term to note is the verbal form of *doulos*, *douleuo*. What becomes apparent from an examination of the use of this verb throughout the New Testament is that it is never used of unwilling service. It always describes service, regardless of the motive which may be either moral or immoral, as willingly rendered. The elder son in the parable of the prodigal son says, *All these years I've been slaving (douleuo) for you and never disobeyed your orders.*³¹ The translators of the NIV may feel justified in rendering *douleuo* as slaving in order to emphasise the bitter feeling of the son at what his unworthy brother is receiving, but he is arguing that it was rightfully his property because the younger son had already taken his portion. In addition he had worked for his father, and what was now being 'misused' he had earned by his devoted work. Paul testifies to the Ephesian Elders: *I served (douleuo) the Lord with great humility and with tears.*³² He exhorts the Romans: *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving (douleuo) the Lord.*³³ The use of the verbal form of *doulos* therefore suggests a situation quite different from a bond slave concept. There are other terms which Paul employs in regard to serving, but these relate to tasks to which one is appointed within the Christian community; i.e. *latreuo*, a task done solely for God, *diakonia*, spiritual ministry and *diakonos*, the position the servant has in relation to those to whom he ministers. The final term is *diakoneo*. It is the verbal form used for the outworking of the position that the *diakonos* holds. So Matt. 20:28, *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.*³⁴

²⁸ Deut. 15:16-17.

²⁹ Lev. 25:39-43.

³⁰ Rom. 6:23.

³¹ Lk. 15:29.

³² Acts 20:10.

³³ Rom. 12:11. See also Luke 16:13; Rom. 6:6; 6:25; 9:12; 12:11; 14:18; 16:18; Gal. 4:8; 5:13; Eph. 6:7; Phil 2:22; Col. 3:24; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:2; Tit 3:3.

³⁴ See also Matt. 4:11; 8:15; 27:55; Mk. 1:13, 31; 10:45; 15:41; Lk. 4:39; Acts 19:22; 2 Cor. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:18; Philemon 5; Heb. 6:10; 1 Pet 1:12; 4:10,11.

All these references to the deacon or minister (*diakonos*) pinpoint his position and the work he does. However, they fail to make specific reference to the relationship that existed between him and the Lord he served. These terms have nothing to say on this. In the LXX *doulos* can have a whole range of meanings, from a slave made so by being taken as a prisoner of war, to one who serves Yahweh in the context of the covenant. We have also seen that in the New Testament *doulos* suggests willing service, and that there are also statements made by Paul, which seem to conflict with a slave situation.³⁵

Paul the servant.

How then did Paul understand the title *doulos*? Did he see it in some 'adjusted' classical sense, as Barrett suggests, or was there some other perspective from which he viewed it? Paul's claim to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews not only points to competence in the Hebrew language, but also a zeal for the Hebrew culture.³⁶ What did he intend to convey to those who could not share directly in his training, but had to be taught through the medium of a common language?

For Paul's biographer, so deeply influenced by Paul himself, Paul was not in a classical mould (which would have been the most natural for Luke as a Greek), but a Hebrew theological one.³⁷ Luke saw Paul's calling to be the shadow of his master, who so clearly fulfilled Old Testament expectation of the ideal servant. In Acts Paul is constantly robed in the mantle of Christ. Paul is separated to do the messianic covenant work spoken of by Isaiah, to be a light to the nations.³⁸ He is rejected, especially by his own countrymen, as was Christ.³⁹ As Bornkamm points out, there is a parallel in the offence of their work. Christ was rejected because he sought to win sinners, Paul because he sought to win Gentiles, who to the Jews were sinners.⁴⁰ The preaching of Christ and of Paul produce the same effects on those who do not believe, blindness and hardening, and both outcomes are based on the predicted results of Isaiah's ministry in Isaiah 6:9-10.⁴¹ Paul's vision in the Temple is acknowledged by some to be based on Isaiah's own vision.⁴² Paul's journey to Jerusalem is certainly paralleled⁴³ by that which Luke had already recorded of one who set his face like a flint to go up and be betrayed.⁴⁴ Both are subjected to similar exhortations to consider the unreasonableness of their

³⁵ Brown, "USE", 732-3 acknowledges the difficulty of Paul seeing himself as an abject slave but seeks to resolve the problem by saying that he compared himself to the imperial slaves who represented the interests of the Emperor. "A slave of the emperor garnered power in a way that almost no other type of slave could". Brown's argument is that the imperial slave spoke for the Son of God, i.e. the emperor.

³⁶ Ellis, *Use*, 38, says "Apart from Christianity itself, it is most probable that Palestinian Judaism was the only determinative influence in Paul's life."

³⁷ Hays, *Echoes*, 14 says: "To read Paul against this background of inner-biblical exegesis is to understand his place in the stream of tradition in a new way. He saw himself as a prophetic figure, carrying forward the proclamation of God's word as Israel's prophets and sages had always done, in a way that reactivated past revelation under new conditions." Also Hays, "Conversion", 394.

³⁸ Acts 9:15; 13:47.

³⁹ Acts 9:29; 13:50; 14:19; 17:13; 22:17-21.

⁴⁰ Bornkamm, *Paul* - see fly leaf review by Bruce, see also O'Neill, *Acts*, 63.

⁴¹ Luke 8:10; cf Acts 28:26.

⁴² Acts 22:17,18.

⁴³ See Filson, "Motif", 68-77.

⁴⁴ Luke 9:51; 13:22; 18:31.

missions.⁴⁵ And finally, like Christ, Paul is misrepresented by the leaders, hounded by the mob and tried by the governor of Jerusalem.⁴⁶ Here the parallel ends, for Christ's death at Jerusalem was foreordained, Paul's was not. What was predetermined for Paul was that he would eventually stand before kings and rulers.⁴⁷ This he did when finally he arrived in Rome.

Wider support.

This picture of Paul as the servant, in the Hebraic theological sense, is no coincidence. It is supported by Paul's own description of his ministry. He considered his call, described in Galatians 1:15, as being set apart from birth, a call which parallels the Old Testament prophets.⁴⁸ In 2 Corinthians Paul was forced to defend his calling as an apostle. In chapters 3-7 he compares the Old and New Covenants and their ministries. In 3:6 Paul says: *He (God) has enabled us to be ministers of the New Covenant.* In 4:1 he says, *Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.* Paul then proceeds to develop his comparison between the two covenants with reference to the motive of his ministry. He says, *Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*⁴⁹ This reference to the death of *once for all* echoes Romans 5:12-19, a passage accepted by some scholars⁵⁰ as referring to Isaiah 53. That this Corinthian passage also reflects that same prophetic passage is borne out in that Paul proceeds to speak of the new creation,⁵¹ which is brought about by this representative death.⁵² This is the very theme of Isaiah, for he too goes on to speak of all things being made new⁵³ in the context of the New Covenant which the Servant's death establishes. Thus Paul sees his ministry as being to proclaim the fulfillment of all that Isaiah had predicted. He is elevated above the evangelical prophet in that he proclaims the fulfillment, and not just the expectation.

Perhaps the most significant passage of 2 Corinthians is Chapter 6.⁵⁴ Paul starts the section, which describes the sufferings into which his work brings him, by quoting from the Servant Songs, and concludes it with a further quotation from the Songs.⁵⁵

As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain - for he says, "At the time of my favour I heard you and on the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of

⁴⁵ Luke 13:31; Acts 21:10-14.

⁴⁶ Luke 23:1; Acts 25:1,2.

⁴⁷ Acts 9:15.

⁴⁸ Thrall, "Origin", 305-313 noted the similarities between Paul's call and that of the OT prophets and claimed the realisation that Christ's call to him had to be seen in the light of Yahweh's call to the prophets and that became the cornerstone of Paul's Christology. So also Bartlett, *Romans*, 13.

⁴⁹ 2 Cor 5:14-15.

⁵⁰ Bruce, *Romans*, 132.

⁵¹ 2 Cor 5:17.

⁵² 2 Cor 5:21.

⁵³ Isa 65:17.

⁵⁴ Which Webb, *Coming*, Iff and Scott, "Use", 73-99 recognise as New Exodus based.

⁵⁵ Isa 49:8 and 52:11.

*salvation.*⁵⁶

*As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*⁵⁷

It is evident that Paul saw his own ministry as a servant of the New Covenant, as Moses, Isaiah and Israel herself, where the servants of the Old Covenant. As the prophets addressed Israel and appealed for fidelity, so Paul appeals to the church at Corinth. The credentials of Paul's ministry, as outlined before his appeal to separation, is that he is fulfilling all that the suffering servant(s) suffered in their ministry to Israel.

Christian suffering

The question is, does Paul see himself in line as a suffering servant because he is an apostle, or because he is a Christian? The importance of this question is this: if it is because he is an apostle, then it follows that his experience of suffering is part of the apostolic office, and need not apply to Christians in general. If it is because he is a Christian, then all Christians are called to this same realm of suffering, and so if *doulos* is applied to Christians, as in Romans 6, it is not to be equated with slavery, but with the covenant figure of the servant of the Old Testament.

Paul never saw his sufferings as being unique, this is beyond doubt They were part of the sufferings to which the corporate servant, i.e. the Church, was called: *For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus. You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.*⁵⁸

Paul warned those whom he visited during his tour of encouraging the churches that they must through much suffering enter the kingdom of God.⁵⁹ Clearly he presupposed the inevitability, if not the necessity, of suffering.

This suffering was not something to be merely endured, for it actually formed part of the will of God.⁶⁰ This suffering is in no way vicarious, as was Christ's passion, but it is essentially the same as the sufferings Christ experienced during his ministry of proclamation. Because of this, Paul frequently links his own suffering, and that of other believers, with Christ's. To be God's servants means being rejected by those who insist on walking in darkness.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to

⁵⁶ 2 Cor 6:1-2.

⁵⁷ 2 Cor 6:16-18.

⁵⁸ 1 Thess 2:14-15.

⁵⁹ Acts 14:22.

⁶⁰ 2 Thess 1:4-5.

*present to you the word of God in its fullness - the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*⁶¹

Such suffering is not endured in isolation, for the believer is part of Christ's body, and Christ is the head. *I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*⁶² Again Paul says: *Its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.*⁶³

For Paul, suffering is not merely a sign of being part of the kingdom of God. It is a means of spiritual maturing and preparation for the glory and splendour of Christ's appearing. This parallels the theme of Isaiah who saw Israel's suffering as necessary for the bringing in of the Messianic Kingdom.⁶⁴

*Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, whom He has given us.*⁶⁵

*Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*⁶⁶

The fellowship of suffering.

There is deep significance in these passages that speak of the suffering of believers. The theme of suffering for the believer in Romans goes back to 5:3-5. Not that that is the first reference to suffering in Romans. In chapter 4:25 Paul has affirmed that Christ: *was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

Some see both 4:25 and 5:15-17 to be reflecting Isaiah 53. Now, if this is so, and Paul links all believers (as he does in 5:12ff) with the suffering of their representative, they will not only be his servants (6:14), but will also share his rejection and suffering. This is the theme of 5:3-5 and also of Romans 8. In chapter 8 Paul emphasises the relationship and its blessings. Believers are in Christ; they have no condemnation, but they do share in his sufferings as the suffering servant.

We may first note how Paul links his own suffering with those of other believers, e.g. *I consider that our present sufferings* (8:18); *the Spirit helps us in our weakness* (8:26); *if God is for us, who can be against us* (8:31); *we are more than conquerors* (8:37). This is an attitude quite different from that which Paul adopts towards the Corinthians and Galatians who had moved from the truth of the Gospel because of its intellectual or religious offence.

⁶¹ Col 1:24-27.

⁶² Acts 9:5.

⁶³ 1 Cor 12:25-26.

⁶⁴ Isa 40:1-10; 53:54.

⁶⁵ Rom 5:3-5.

⁶⁶ Rom 8:17-18.

There he set his sufferings against their allegedly superior position.⁶⁷ He relates to the Thessalonians and the Philippians as he does to the Romans, because they are partakers of the sufferings of the Gospel.⁶⁸

Secondly, Paul in this section (8:36) quotes from Ps. 44:8.⁶⁹ Examination of this Psalm shows that it summarises the message of Isa. 40-66, its message being to those suffering in exile. The same historical background is alluded to, and even the same language is used, not in relation to an individual, as in Isa. 53, but in relation to the nation. Paul seems deliberately to be linking the experience of the Church awaiting the consummation of its salvation with the faithful Jews awaiting their deliverance from exile to return to the place of promise.

That it is no coincidence that Paul selects Psalm 44 is shown by the fact that in Romans 10, where he goes on to describe the work of the Church in proclaiming its message, he quotes from Isa. 52:7, a passage which presents a similar picture to that painted by Psalm 44, but which tells of the work of the faithful remnant, who have waited for God's redemptive act. They are God's servants, chosen to proclaim the message of deliverance and renewal.

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'*⁷⁰

Bornkamm sets the original passage in Isaiah in its context when he says: "In its original context the quotation describes the situation of the few who at the time of the exile stayed on in Jerusalem after it was laid waste and eagerly awaited the return of the exiles from Babylon. Watchmen were posted on the heights surrounding the city and looked forward to seeing the forerunners of the return. At long last the first messenger appeared afar off on the mountains. There upon watchtower the watcher broke into shouts of rejoicing. These passed from mouth to mouth. The forsaken city resounded with jubilation. Their tidings of joy were the dawn of Jerusalem's salvation. This, as Paul sees it, is the condition of the whole world; the message about Christ which sets men free is to sound to the ends of the earth (Rom 10:18) with its citation of Ps 19:6."⁷¹

Thus Paul is not only quoting from but is actually drawing his theology from the prophecy of Isaiah. As Jerusalem was under judgement for its sin, so is the world. As Yahweh reserved to himself a remnant, so he has done so now. As the task of the remnant, isolated by Isaiah from the nation in its

⁶⁷ 2 Cor 10-11; Gal 2:17-3:5.

⁶⁸ Rom 8:22-38; 1 Thess 2:14f; Phil 1:2, 9f.

⁶⁹ There is considerable difference of opinion as to the historical setting of the psalm. The early church fathers of the Antioch school saw it as originating in the Maccabean period, a date also accepted by Calvin. The uncertainty of the date of the psalm does not affect our thesis, for Dodd, *According*, 133 has shown the method of exegesis followed by the early church was not based on a strictly historical parallel, but on expansion, development and application of the original principle. In this case, the psalm speaks of God's faithfulness to his people in the midst of judgement, which is a timeless principle spanning both covenants.

⁷⁰ Rom 10:14-15.

⁷¹ Bornkamm, *Paul*, 165.

faithlessness and given the title servant, was to announce the restoration, so it is the Church's task to prepare men for that Day. God has put all men, Jew and Gentile alike, under judgement. The true remnant is made up of all who have saving faith, which is what distinguishes the true Jew from the mere physical descendant of Abraham.⁷² This argument becomes even clearer when one appreciates Paul's dependence on Isaiah throughout his letter. This is illustrated by the constant use he makes of the prophet to support his argument and of how he uses the quotations as the scaffolding of his letter.

If he is so anxious to use the writings of Isaiah in such a credible manner, being so faithful to the original message of the prophet that he merely adjusts the chronological perspective as to the timing of fulfilment, then we ought to expect him also to have remained faithful to Isaiah's concept of servanthood., and that is what we have found. The threefold use of the 'servant' in the Old Testament, found with particular clarity in Isaiah, is in Paul's mind when he uses *doulos*. Paul sees Christ, the Apostles, and the Church to be cast in the same mould as Isaiah saw the Messiah, the prophets and Israel.⁷³

The servant and Jesus.

It has long been recognised that Isaiah 53 is a key text for Evangelical theology. It has been seen to be the controlling OT text for interpreting Jesus death as a vicarious atonement. The main problem with this argument has been that Isaiah 53 has been so sparsely used in the NT. A text of such importance quoted so little is rejected as being foundational for the early churches theology.

I want to suggest that there was a deliberate avoidance of this text by the NT writers. This was not because they did not view Jesus death as a vicarious atonement, for they certainly did. Despite this they avoided using this key text for interpreting the death of Jesus. This was not because they had not noticed its rich suggestiveness, nor because they were not interested in the subject. The reason they avoided its use is clear once the doctrine of the servant has been understood. As we have just seen, the servant role was not limited to Jesus, but was shared by the whole people of God. It was this fact that made the text impossible to use for the early church. The apostles knew that if they used it to interpret the significance of the death of Jesus the Servant, then it would inevitably be used to interpret the significance of the sufferings of the church, the corporate servant of the Lord. If the Servant's sufferings were vicarious, then so were the church's, for she also was a servant. This was far too great a price for the early church to pay for using a text that would have naturally spoken to them as it has to countless millions throughout the

⁷² Rom 4:12.

⁷³ The dependence of the New Testament writers upon the Old Testament for their interpretation of history is summed up by Dodd, *According*, 109 and 128. "It must be conceded that we have before us a considerable intellectual feat. The various scriptures are actually interpreted along lines already discernible within the Old Testament Canon itself in pre-Christian Judaism - in many cases, I believe, lines which start from their first historical intention -and these are carried forward to fresh results. They interpret and apply the Old Testament upon the basis of a certain understanding of history, which is substantially that of the prophets themselves. Though not stated explicitly in the New Testament, it is everywhere presupposed. History, upon this view, or at any rate the history of the people of God, is built upon a certain pattern corresponding to God's design for man His creature. It is a pattern, not in the sense of a kind of master-plan imposed upon the order of human life in this world by the Creator Himself, a plan which man is not at liberty to alter, but within which his freedom works. It is a pattern, disclosed "in divers parts and divers manners" in the past history of Israel, that the New Testament writers conceive to have been brought into full light in the events of the gospel story, which they interpret accordingly."

church's history.

In saying the above I am not suggesting that either Jesus or the apostles had no theology of vicarious atonement, only that they purposely avoided using this most suggestive texts for their model. In fact, they did not need to use it, for as we will soon see, they had a much more powerful and totally uncomplicated model to use; the Passover. We shall see as this work proceeds that in this model, neglected so long by NT scholars, lies the paradigm, used by both Jesus and the apostles, to interpret his death.

It might be asked if it is any longer inadmissible to appeal to Isaiah 53 for vicarious support. My answer is no, it is no longer appropriate to avoid the text for soteriology. The influx of Greek thought and the loss of the servant theology effectively obliterated the danger of confusing Jesus' vicarious suffering with the significance of the church's suffering. From the second century the passage was applied to Christ's unique suffering of redemption and atonement and because of the Hellenisation process that had taken place in the church's theology. It was spared the consequences of confusing the nature of the church's suffering. The recovery of the servant doctrine with the recognition of the Passover model as the basis of substitutionary atonement ought to mean that there is no need to argue for messianic vicarious suffering from the text of Isaiah 53.

Conclusion.

Thus I conclude that our study has identified a fundamental error in the understanding of scholars regarding the use and meaning of *doulos* in the New Testament. The traditional Hellenistic setting in which *doulos* is set has been seen to be inadequate to explain the theological implications which surround its use. A Semitic setting, however, proves itself authentic for interpreting many of the concepts where Paul has allegedly been lacking in clarity. Paul, nor indeed any Christian, is not a slave of Christ, but is a servant with all of the dignity and privileges that such a calling carries.

In this study we have so far observed how Paul read and used the OT scriptures. In this chapter we have seen that, having been conditioned by a basically Hellenistic humanistic world view, we must make every effort to free ourselves from unrecognised presuppositions which have enslaved Paul in a Greek prison. This is not a challenge for only one school of theology, but for all. Even those who have sought to acknowledge Paul's dependence on the OT have often failed to realise the extent to which they have been influenced by this Greek view of Paul's thinking.