

SERVANT OF YHWH

Servant: ebed עֶבֶד

Slave, servant, to an officer close to the king, or to the chosen leader of God's people.

In the royal terminology of the Ancient Near East, a servant was a "trusted envoy," a "confidential representative," or "one who is chosen."

There are many occurrences of individuals calling themselves or someone else Yahweh's servant:

Moses called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob "servants of the Lord" (Exod. 32:13).

"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants ..."

David refers to himself as the servant of the Lord (2 Sam. 7:20-21)

“Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant.”

This title is applicable to heroes of faith

- to the patriarchs (Gen. 26:24; Ezek. 28:25; 37:25)
- to Moses (Ex. 14:31; 1 Kgs. 8:53, 56),
- to David (2 Sam. 7:26–29; Jer. 33:21–26; Ezek. 37:24)
- and his descendants (Hezekiah—2 Chron. 32:16, Eliakim—Isa. 22:20, Zerubbabel—Hag. 2:23),
- to the prophets (Elijah --2 Kgs. 10:10; Jonah 14:25), other faithful Israelites, such as Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:24; Josh. 24:29; Judg. 2:8).

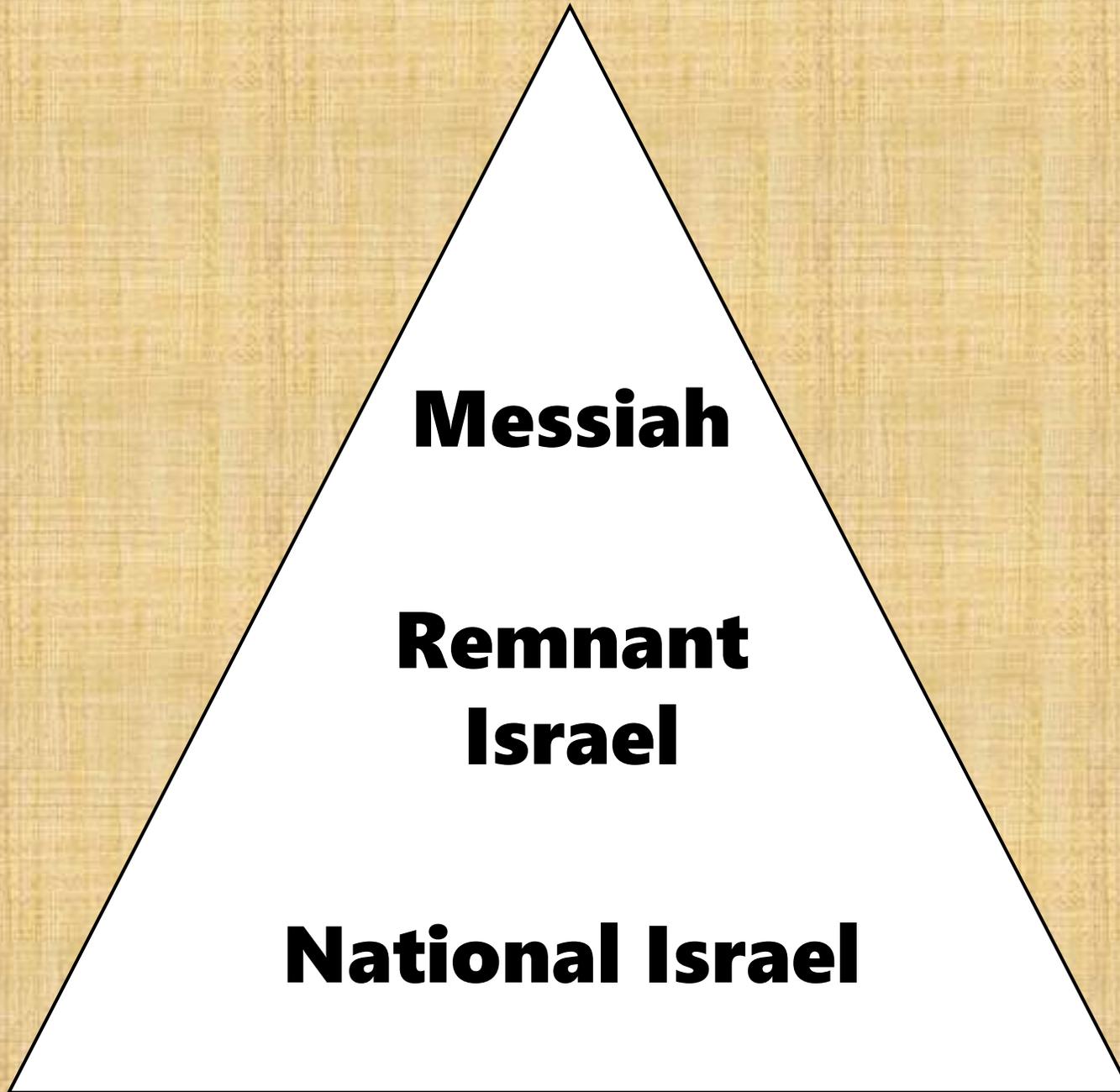
- Sometimes the servant of the Lord is a reference to the nation of Israel;
- Sometimes to the believing remnant in Israel.
- The phrase often refers to the servant figure who appears in the Servant Songs of Isaiah, and this is a reference to the Messiah.

To be the servant of God is something granted by God's grace:

“But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen ...; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, ‘You are my servant. ...’ ” (Isaiah 41:8–9 RSV).

Isaiah's use of the term "servant"

1. Sometimes the term "servant" refers to Israel the whole nation. (Isaiah 41:8-16; 42:18-22; and 43:10).
2. Sometimes the term "servant" refers only to the faithful remnant, the believing element within Israel as a whole (Isaiah 44:1-5; 44:21; and 65:8-16).
3. Sometimes the term "servant" refers to the Messiah (E.g., 42:1-9; 49:1-7; and 52:13– 53:12).



Messiah

**Remnant
Israel**

National Israel

Zechariah 3:8: “Hear, O Joshua, the high priest,
You and your companions who sit before you,
For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am
bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.”

Isa. 11:1: “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Jer. 33:15: “In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth”

The servant of YHWH, par excellence, is the Messiah, seen vividly in four passages in Isaiah designated as the Servant Songs.

Isa. 42:1–9;

Isa. 49:7-12;

Isa. 50:4–11;

Isa. 52:13–53:12.

A “servant Christology” pervades Acts (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30), along with numerous allusions in the Gospels.

Act 3:13: “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus,”

Jesus himself quotes Isaiah 53 explicitly in Luke 22:37

Luke 22:37: “For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’ For the things concerning Me have an end.”

Peter not only emphasizes vicarious, redemptive suffering (1 Pet. 2:21–25; 3:18) but seems to highlight the theme of Isaiah 53 in summing up Old Testament prophecy (1 Pet. 1:11) as predicting “the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”

1 Pet. 3:18: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,”

Acts 3:13: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.”

Peter’s description of Jesus as a “servant” is accurate for at least four reasons:

- 1) Jesus always did the will of the Father (John 4:34; 6:38).
- 2) Jesus never sought to please Himself but always to please the Father (John 5:30).
- 3) Jesus finished the work that God sent Him to do (Jn. 17:4).
- 4) Jesus came to glorify the Father (Jn. 13:31; 17:4).

Peter's reference to Jesus as the "servant of God" would have brought to the minds of his Jewish hearers the passages in Isaiah that describe the Messiah as the "Servant of the Lord."

Heb. 10:7: "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come-- In the volume of the book it is written of Me-- To do Your will, O God'."

Philippians 2:5-9

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery
to be equal with God,
7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a
bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.
8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled
Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the
death of the cross.
9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him
the name which is above every name,