



THE SUFFERING SERVANT

December 10, 2025 | *Isaiah 42:1-7; Philippians 2:5-8*

Joseph and Jesus

Joseph is a familiar character to us (*Gen. 37:50*). But did you know that Joseph was another picture of Christ? Consider some of the similarities.

Both were hated by their brothers (*Gen. 37:4; Jn. 7:5*).

Others conspired against them (*Gen. 37:20; Jn. 11:53*).

Their robes were taken from them (*Gen. 37:23; Jn. 19:23*).

Both were once dead (*Gen. 37:31-34; Matt. 27:50*).

They ended up in Egypt (*Gen. 37:25; Matt. 2:14-15*).

They were betrayed for money (*Gen. 37:28; Matt. 26:15*).

Both were tempted (*Gen. 39:7; Matt. 4:1*).

They were falsely accused (*Gen. 39:7; Matt. 26:59-60*).

Both were bound in chains (*Gen. 39:20; Matt. 27:2*).

They were placed with two prisoners. One was saved, and one was lost (*Gen. 40:2-3; Lk. 23:32*).

Both started formal service at age 30 (*Gen. 41:46; Lk. 3:23*).

They forgave their oppressors (*Gen. 45:1-15; Lk. 23:34*).

They were made Lord of all (*Gen. 45:8-9; Matt. 28:18*).

Both saved people from death (*Gen. 45:7, 11; Matt. 1:21*).

They were resurrected (*Gen. 45:26-27; Matt. 28:1-8*).

They reunited with their father (*Gen. 46:49; Jn. 20:17*).

The similarities are eerie. Joseph and Jesus were despised and betrayed. They suffered as servants, and even though innocent, they were arrested. But “what others meant for evil, God used for good” (*Gen. 50:20*), to save the lives of many.

Suffering Servants

There are other suffering servants in Scripture who foreshadow Jesus.

Here are God’s directions regarding slaves. “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh, he shall go out as a free man without payment. But if the slave says, ‘I love my master... I will not go out as a free man,’ then his master shall bring him to God, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl (tool); and he shall serve him permanently.” *Exodus 21:2-6*

Although this slave had the freedom to walk away from serving his master, he chose to serve forever. He loved his master so much that he was willing to be pierced for life and voluntarily submit to his master’s will.

Jesus did the same thing for us. Although “He existed in the form of God (He was free), He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (*Phil. 2:5-8*).

Remember when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane? He had a choice to walk away, but He chose instead to do His Father’s will, go to the cross, and be pierced for our transgressions (*Lk. 22:42*).

The Lord also spoke through the prophet Isaiah, foretelling of His suffering servant. Here is what He said.

“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One in whom My heart delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish. He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth...”

The prophecy continues, “I am the Lord, and I have called You in righteousness. I will hold You by the hand and watch over You. I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in

darkness from the prison.” *Isaiah 42:1-7*

The Suffering Servant is, of course, Jesus, who fulfilled these prophecies.

Notice that the Father delights in the Servant and puts His Spirit on Him. At Jesus’ baptism. “The Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (*Lk. 3:22*).

Jesus is also the gentle one who “would not break a bruised reed or extinguish a dimly burning wick.” He said Himself, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (*Matt. 11:28-30*).

When Jesus started His ministry in Nazareth, He entered the synagogue, and the book of *Isaiah* was given to Him.

The Bible says, “He opened the book where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.’ Then, He closed the book, sat down, and said, ‘Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing...’” (*Lk. 4:16-21*).

While the passage that Jesus referenced was from *Isaiah 61* (v.1-2), it closely resembles *Isaiah 42*, especially the part where He would open blind eyes and release those trapped in darkness from their prison.

Jesus was the ultimate Servant. He did the will of another, His Father, and brought glory to Him alone (*Jn. 4:34; 6:38; 13:31; 17:4*). He never sought to please Himself (*Jn. 5:30*), and He completed all that He was given to do (*Jn. 17:4*).

In *Acts 3:13*, Jesus is called the Servant of God. Jesus said Himself that He came “to serve, not to be served, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (*Mk. 10:45*). He proved it the night that He washed the disciples’ feet, then submitted to being arrested, tortured, and brutally sacrificed on the cross.

What Child is this in the manger? He is the Suffering Servant who “gave His life as a ransom for many.”

Ponder and Pray

As followers of Christ, we are His servants. What does that require of us?

Ask the Lord to give you opportunities to serve Him and others.

**Have you missed some days?
Click [here](#) to access previously emailed devotions.**

The reading plan and devotions were developed by Aaron Ferguson, one of our Elders and author of the *Study Guide and Daily Reflections for the One Year Chronological Reading of the Bible and the New Testament*. For more details, visit his website at BiAY.org.



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