

Matthew 12:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

'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.' Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1, identifying Jesus as God's chosen Servant. 'Behold' (ἰδοὺ/idou) commands attention—something significant. 'My servant' (ὁ παῖς μου/ho pais mou) indicates both servanthood and sonship. 'Whom I have chosen' (ον ἡρέτισα/hon hēretisa) echoes election language—God sovereignly chose Jesus for this role (though voluntarily accepted). 'My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased' echoes baptismal declaration (Matthew 3:17) and transfiguration (Matthew 17:5)—Father's approval of Son. 'I will put my spirit upon him' prophesies Spirit's anointing at Jesus's baptism (Matthew 3:16). 'He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles' (κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ/krisin tois ethnesin apangelei) can mean 'announce justice/judgment' or 'bring right judgment.' Jesus establishes God's justice and extends salvation to Gentiles—breaking Jewish exclusivism. Reformed theology sees this affirming Christ's deity (Spirit-anointed), election (chosen), mission (servant-redeemer), and universal scope (including Gentiles).

Historical Context

Isaiah 42:1 introduced the Servant who would bring God's justice to nations—shocking in context of Israelite nationalism. Jews expected Messiah to exalt Israel and judge Gentiles destructively. Isaiah predicted different pattern: Servant would

bring justice gently, extend salvation to Gentiles, suffer for sins. Jesus fulfilled this: His ministry included Gentiles (Matthew 8:5-13 centurion, Matthew 15:21-28 Canaanite woman), He commissioned universal gospel proclamation (Matthew 28:19), and early church opened to Gentiles (Acts 10-11, 15). The Spirit's anointing occurred at Jesus's baptism—heaven opened, Spirit descended as dove, Father declared approval (Matthew 3:16-17). This inaugurated Jesus's public ministry, demonstrating His identity as Spirit-anointed Messiah (Acts 10:38). Early Christians used Isaiah 42:1 to defend Gentile inclusion against Judaizers. Paul extensively argued Gentiles are co-heirs in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22, Galatians 3:28-29). Isaiah's prophecy demonstrated this was always God's plan, not Peter's innovation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus being God's 'chosen servant' combine divine sovereignty in salvation with Christ's willing obedience?
2. What does the prophecy that Messiah would 'show judgment to Gentiles' teach about gospel's universal scope from the beginning?
3. How should understanding Christ as Spirit-anointed Servant shape Christian ministry—combining power with humility?

Interlinear Text

Ἰδού, ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἡρέτισα ὁ ἀγαπητός μου
Behold G3588 servant my whom I have chosen G3588 beloved my
G2400 G3816 G3450 G3739 G140 G27 G3450

εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχή μου θήσω τὸ πνεῦμα
in whom is well pleased G3588 soul my I will put G3588 spirit
G1519 G3739 G2106 G5590 G3450 G5087 G4151

μου ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ
my upon him and judgment G3588 to the Gentiles he shall shew
G3450 G1909 G6846 G2532 G2920 G1484 G518

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:1 (Judgment): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Luke 4:18 (Spirit): The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Acts 10:38 (Spirit): How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

John 3:34 (Spirit): For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Isaiah 52:13 (Parallel theme): Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Isaiah 11:2 (Spirit): And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

1 Peter 2:4 (Parallel theme): To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

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