

Isaiah Chapter 42

Verses 1-4

“My servant” is identified here as a person rather than a personification of the nation of Israel.

With all the traits of King, Prophet and High Priest, He is none other than the Messiah, Jesus Christ Himself.

He is also called “mine elect”: (bachir, “the One who brings good news”), and the One in whom “I have put my spirit.”

The New Testament quotes this prophecy as being fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:18-21).

The ministry of the Servant of the Lord will be to bring forth “judgment” (or justice), “to the Gentiles” and “in the earth.”

His kingdom knows no barriers of nationality or race.

Of all the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah saw this fact the most clearly.

While Jesus’ early ministry was to the house of Israel, His ultimate commission extended to the Gentiles as well.

Verses 1-9:

Others deserve the title “my servant” but this personal Servant of the Lord is the Messiah, who was chosen because the Lord delights in Him and puts His Spirit upon Him.

“Judgment to the Gentiles”:

At His second coming, Christ will rule over a kingdom in which justice prevails throughout the world.

The millennial kingdom is not for Israel alone, though the Messiah will reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and Israel will be His glorious people.

In fact, all the nations of the world will experience the righteousness and justice of the Messiah King.

Isaiah 42:1 "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."

We see in this, the prophecy of the coming Messiah.

When we see the word "behold", it is saying, come closer and take a better look.

We know that Jesus was a true servant, even though He was the very Son of God, by the fact that He obeyed the will of the Father.

He said: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Israel had not obeyed God, but Jesus was willing to do exactly as the Father wished.

Jesus had even said that, He and the Father were One.

Jesus and the Father were in total agreement.

The Holy Spirit of God hovered over Mary, and she conceived of the Spirit of God.

Jesus took on the flesh of man, but He was in fact, Emmanuel (meaning "God with us").

The law, until the time of Jesus, was given just to the physical house of Israel.

Jesus brought the opportunity to follow God to "whosoever will".

All believers in Christ have the laws of God written upon their hearts.

Isaiah 42:2 "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street."

"He shall not cry ... in the street":

The quiet and submissive demeanor of Christ at His first advent fulfilled this prophecy (Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Peter 2:23).

Jesus did not go out and seek people to minister to, they came to Him.

He ministered in a quiet, gentle way.

He did not force His message on anyone.

He made salvation available to all who would become His followers, but it was of their own free will that they decided to follow Him.

He came to give His body on the cross, so that all who would believe could be saved.

The name "Jesus" means Savior.

Isaiah 42:3 "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."

“Bruised reed ... smoking flax”:

The Servant will bring comfort and encouragement to the weak and oppressed (40:11; 50:4; 61:1).

Most of His followers did not understand why He did not fight and take the rule away from the Romans.

Jesus did not come as reigning Ruler, when He came as the babe in the manger.

He came as Savior.

When He comes back, He will be King of kings and Lord of lords and rule on the earth for 1,000 years.

Revelation 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Jesus dealt tenderly with all the people, when He ministered to them.

I believe the "smoking flax" represents those who believe in the Messiah.

These will not be overcome, but taken into the fold.

Jesus Himself said He was the Truth.

He alone shall judge the world.

His judgment is just.

Isaiah 42:4 "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

“Judgment in the earth”:

Isaiah looked beyond the first coming of Christ to His second coming.

Jesus fulfilled (verses 1a-3), at His first coming and will fulfill (verses 1b-4), at His second coming, when He rules the earth in perfect justice with “a rod of iron” (Psalm 2:8-9; Rev. 2:27).

There is no weakness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even though He is tender and kind, it is not because He is weak, but because He is strong.

Jesus established Christianity, the only way to heaven, and true happiness.

This is not a religion of a handful of people, but of all people who would dare to believe in Him.

Jesus is the righteous Judge of all the world.

He will separate the people into two classes, those who believe, and those who do not believe.

He is the standard that all will be judged by.

Redemption is for all people on the earth.

Verses 5-16

“God the LORD” is pictured as the Creator who “created the heavens, and stretched them out
“and “spread forth the earth.”

He also gives both “breath” and “spirit” to His “people.”

The ministry of the Messiah is described (in verse 6), as a “covenant” to the Jews and a “light” to the Gentiles.

It foreshadows the twofold purpose of Christ’s ministry to both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Isaiah 42:5 "Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:"

“Thus saith God the LORD, he that created ... walk therein”:

Here God spoke directly of the Messiah, identified as “Thee” (verse 6).

God’s role as Creator of the universe is the basis of certainty for the fulfilling of His will by His Servant the Messiah.

The Word of God created the earth and all that is in it, as we have already learned in these lessons.

He not only created man from the dust of the earth, but He breathed the breath of life into him, and the man became a living soul.

Those that walk in the newness of life with Christ are filled with the Spirit of God. Jesus sent the Spirit to dwell in man to comfort and teach him all things.

The eternal being within each of us is spirit.

We are housed in flesh and have a will, but our everlasting life is spirit.

We read about this spiritual being (in 1 Corinthians).

1 Corinthians 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The part of us which will not die is that spiritual body.

Acts 17:28 "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Isaiah 42:6 "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;"

"I the LORD":

Beginning with (41:13), the LORD's self-identification is frequent (41:13; 42:6, 8; 43:3, 11, 15; 45:5-7, 18; 48:17; 49:23; 51:15).

His personal name is the one He explained to Moses as especially symbolic of the unique relationship He bore to Israel (Exodus 3:15; 6:3).

Here that covenant name guarantees His ministry through the Messiah-Servant.

"Covenant of the people":

The Servant is a covenant in that He personifies and provides the blessings of salvation to God's people Israel.

He is the Mediator of a better covenant than the one with Moses, i.e., the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6, 10-12).

"Light of the Gentiles":

Simeon saw the beginning of this fulfillment at Christ's first coming (Luke 2:32).

He came as the Messiah of Israel, yet the Savior of the world, who revealed Himself to a non-Jewish immoral woman by the well in Samaria (John 4:25-26), and commanded His followers to preach the gospel of salvation to everyone in the world (Matt. 28:19-20).

Certainly, the church, made up mostly of Gentiles grafted into the trunk of blessing fulfills this promise.

As does the future kingdom on earth when the Servant will use Israel to shine and enlighten all the nations of the earth (49:6; 19:24).

The "covenant", spoken of here, is the covenant of grace.

The law was given to the physical house of Israel, but grace was given to all who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:5-8

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

"And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:"

Jesus is the Light of the world.

When He gives us the Light, He gives us Himself.

Luke 2:32 "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Acts 13:47 "For so hath the Lord commanded us, [saying], I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Isaiah 42:7 "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

“Open the blind eyes ... bring out the prisoners”:

Jesus fulfilled these words (9:1-2; Matt. 4:13-16), when He applied them to miracles of physical healing and freedom from spiritual bondage during His incarnation (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18).

Under the Servant's millennial reign on earth, spiritual perception will replace Israel's spiritual blindness and her captives will receive their freedom (29:18; 32:3; 35:5; 61:1).

We must look at some New Testament Scriptures, spoken by Jesus to understand this.

Luke 4:17-21 "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,"

"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,"

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

"And he closed the book, and he gave [it] again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him."

"And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

This leaves no doubt at all that this is speaking of Jesus Himself.

This blindness that Jesus did away with was both spiritual and physical.

He even went into hell (Sheol, the abode of the dead), and preached and brought the captives out with Him.

Nothing in this universe can stand against the Word of God, who is Jesus.

Isaiah 42:8 "I [am] the LORD: that [is] my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

God had told Moses that He was the "I Am", the One who continually exists.

"LORD", in the verse above, is taken from the word Jehovah.

Jesus, in the furthest extension, means Jehovah Savior.

I believe the word "LORD" here, is saying that all the fullness of the Godhead was caught up in the One we know as Jesus.

"Lord", on the other hand, I believe is specifically speaking of Jesus.

LORD is like One in 1 John:

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Verse 8 above, is speaking of the eternity of the Godhead, the separation of God from all false gods.

A graven image is the creation of man's hands.

The One True God is not a creation at all; He is the Creator of all.

The name LORD, Jehovah, or in fact the name Jesus, is a name above all names.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

Jesus, not only was the Word of God, who took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us, but represented the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well.

Colossians 2:9 "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Isaiah 42:9 "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them."

"Former things ... new things":

The "former things" are already fulfilled or about to be fulfilled prophecies of Isaiah (41:22).

The "new things" pertain to the future accomplishments of the LORD through His Messiah-Servant when He comes.

We see that the things God has had His prophets to prophesy have come true.

God does what He promises.

Now, He is proclaiming something brand new.

Salvation through faith and the grace of God is the new thing.

Israel will not only be delivered from their captivity in Babylon, but will soon see the redeemer of all mankind.

The promise of the Messiah will be fulfilled very soon, in their midst.

Isaiah 42:10 "Sing unto the LORD a new song, [and] his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof."

Because this song is sung from the end of the earth, we know this blessing is for all mankind.

When we sing to the LORD, it is a type of praise.

Isaiah is encouraging them to begin to sing praises now, because they know that God keeps His promises.

Isaiah 42:11 "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up [their voice], the villages [that] Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains."

This "song" never before sung, called for by new manifestations of God's grace, will match the newness of conditions created by the Servant's work of redemption in the kingdom, for which earth's inhabitants will also sing "His praise" (2:2; 26:1; Revelation 4:11; 5:9).

This is saying, that those in the villages, and those in the desert, should shout praises to their God for their deliverance to come.

This takes an act of faith to praise, before it happens.

They believe it will happen, because God said it would.

Isaiah 42:12 "Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands."

We see that the glory goes to the LORD, not to some man.

The islands here, perhaps is speaking of faraway places who have no personal need for the Jews to be delivered.

This makes me believe that this is far reaching.

The deliverance prophesied is also the deliverance of all mankind from the bondage of sin, through belief in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 42:13 "The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies."

"Mighty man ... man of war":

As a mighty warrior, the LORD will work through His Servant to overcome all enemies (40:10; 9:7; 37:32; 59:17).

The battle to be fought is to be won by the LORD.

In the sense of the physical house of Israel, He will defeat Babylon and set His people free.

In the sense of the spiritual house of Israel, Jesus defeats Satan and sin on the cross.

He defeated death, when He rose from the grave.

Isaiah 42:14 "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, [and] refrained myself: [now] will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once."

“Holden my peace ... refrained myself”:

From the beginning of creation God remained silent, until the time was ripe to intervene in human affairs.

He has not been indifferent to wickedness in the world, but will send His Servant in “the fullness of the time” (Gal. 4:4).

"Cry like a travailing woman":

This shows the nearness of the birth of Israel again.

It seems to these people, who have been in captivity that it has been a long time.

God says through Isaiah, it is coming soon.

Isaiah 42:15 "I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools."

“Make waste ... dry up all their herbs ... dry up the pools”:

God’s judgment through His Servant will wreak devastation on the earth (Rev. chapters 6-19).

The reverse of that will be His blessing through the same Messiah subsequently in the millennial kingdom (see 35:1-4; 41:18).

We see some of the methods He will use to release them, here.

We know that God controls the elements.

If He wants a flood, He just tells the elements to rain.

All of the elements are completely controlled by God.

Isaiah 42:16 "And I will bring the blind by a way [that] they knew not; I will lead them in paths [that] they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

“I will bring ... lead ... make ... do”:

God’s sovereignty will be evident to all as He guides the blind over previously uncharted courses.

The spiritually blind (9:1-2), will see the way.

We sing a little chorus that says "Open my eyes Lord, I want to see Jesus".

This is what the Scripture above is saying.

Their spiritual blindness will be done away with.

They will see the Light of God and follow it.

In darkness, you cannot see where you are going.

In the Light, we see clearly.

This is speaking of the Light of the world (Jesus Christ), who brings His Light to the world.

Isaiah 42:17 "They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye [are] our gods."

When the Light of Jesus shines forth, they see these graven images more clearly, and know that they are nothings.

Verses 18-24

The Lord charged Israel, His servant, with unfaithfulness.

In an important comparison, positive qualities of the Servant (42:1-7), are personified into an individual, the Messiah.

But terms of reproach toward God's servant (42:18-19, 22-24), are personified in the nation, Israel.

Verses 18-20

"deaf ... blind":

Though they are called "My servant" and "My messenger" and were perfectly fitted with the truth, Isaiah's commission to prophesy highlighted the spiritual deafness and blindness of Israel, (6:9-10; 22:14; 29:11; 32:3).

They were deaf to the voice of God and blind to spiritual reality and duty.

Isaiah 42:18 "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see."

The other part of the little chorus is "open my ears Lord and help me to listen".

Some of us have ears on the side of our head that are just ornaments.

We do not hear or understand with them.

Jesus told the so-called religious people that they had eyes to see and did not see, and ears to hear and they did not hear.

The only way we can truly see or hear, is in the spirit of man.

God must open our sight and our hearing.

Isaiah 42:19-20 "Who [is] blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger [that] I sent? who [is] blind as [he that is] perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?" "Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not."

God is telling them, to serve a graven image is blindness and deafness.

The physical house of Israel (servant), was blind and deaf at this time.

God sent Jesus to open the eyes of the people, and to heal their deaf ears.

We must not just see and hear words, but understand.

Isaiah 42:21 "The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make [it] honorable."

“For his righteousness’ sake”:

In spite of Israel’s deafness, blindness and defective righteousness (verse 24), God will staunchly uphold His principles of righteousness (59:4-17).

We will discover that Jesus did not come to do away with the law, but to fulfill it.

The law was good.

It was the sinful nature of mankind that caused the error.

Isaiah 42:22 "But this [is] a people robbed and spoiled; [they are] all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore."

“Robbed and spoiled ... snared ... hid”:

Exiled and dispersed, Israel was like a caravan in the desert, attacked unmercifully by bandits and imprisoned in caves or dungeons, so that no human deliverer could restore them (63:5).

When God took His hedge from around Israel, they were destroyed by the evil ones around them.

God tells them here, that He knows of their condition, because He allowed it to happen.

Isaiah 42:23 "Who among you will give ear to this? [who] will hearken and hear for the time to come?"

This is a challenge to them to hear and understand why this happened to them.

It is as a loving parent saying, "Have you learned your lesson yet?"

God is saying, "Will you listen now?"

Isaiah 42:24 "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law."

“Did not the LORD ... ?”:

The nation went into Babylonian exile and worldwide dispersion as punishment by God for their rebellion against Him (30:15; 57:17; 65:2).

It was God who gave them over to their enemies to teach them a lesson.

It was their choice through their own free will to follow God, or not.

They chose to sin.

God allowed their enemies to take them to teach them how badly they needed Him.

Isaiah 42:25 "Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid [it] not to heart."

“The fury of his anger”:

The fall of Jerusalem to Babylon (in 586 B.C.), did not result from the strength of Babylon.

Rather, Israel had to taste the wrath of God because they paid no attention to the Lord.

“Set him on fire”:

Nebuchadnezzar, who was the king of Babylon, burned Jerusalem when he conquered the city (See 2 Kings 25:8-9).

The sadness of this verse is that they did not realize why this happened to them.

Because they chose false gods and they chose to be unfaithful to God, He poured out His fury on them.

He wanted them to repent, but they did not.

Isaiah Chapter 42 Questions

1. Who is verse 1 prophesying about?
2. What is the word "behold" saying?
3. How could the Son of God be thought of as a servant?
4. What does "Emmanuel" mean?
5. Where do all the followers of Jesus carry the laws of God?
6. How did Jesus minister?
7. Did He seek people out to minister to?
8. What does the name "Jesus" mean?
9. What about Jesus' ministry did most of His followers not understand?
10. What will Jesus be called when He comes to reign on the earth?
11. What does the author believe "the smoking flax" to represent?
12. Describe the judgment of Jesus in one word.
13. What does the tenderness and kindness show us about Jesus?
14. Jesus will separate the world into what 2 classes?
15. Who created all things?
16. Who are filled with the Spirit of God?
17. What is the "covenant" spoken of in verse 6?
18. Who is the Light?
19. What does verse 7 say, He will do?
20. Where do we find the Scripture in the New Testament where Jesus taught from Isaiah?

21. Name some of the things these Scriptures said He would do?
22. What is the new thing God is proclaiming?
23. Who is to sing the new song?
24. What is singing a type of?
25. Who does the glory go to?
26. Who wins the battle?
27. When did Jesus defeat death?
28. What does the "crying like a travailing woman" show?
29. Who controls all the elements on the earth?
30. Open my eyes Lord, I want to see _____.
31. Jesus came not to do away with the law, but to _____ it.
32. Who gave Jacob for a spoil?
33. Why did God pour out His fury on them?