

**Is. 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.**

At first read, you might think that Cyrus is still the servant being referenced. Verse 27 of the last chapter makes reference to “one that bringeth good tidings” to Jerusalem. This is a different servant. The first three verses of this chapter are used in Matthew (12:17-21) in reference to Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Reminder—God is the One speaking through Isaiah. Jesus is described in this verse as God’s servant. As I looked at the Hebrew, I noticed that the root word for *servant* comes from a word that means “to work.” Jesus declared several times in the gospels that He had come to do the work of His Father.

*John 4:34* Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish **his work**.

*John 9:4* I must **work the works** of him that sent me...

*John 17:4* I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished **the work** which thou gavest me to do.

“whom I uphold” – The Hebrew for *uphold* declares “to sustain, (up-)hold (up), stay (up).” Webster adds “to hold up, to lift on high, to elevate.” When I think of the three persons of the Trinity, that makes sense to me. They are so completely One that Each *upholds* the other. Not only that—God is saying that He is the One that will uphold His servant, His Son, His *elect* (from root meaning choose, select, appoint, excellent, require). The obedience of the Son will result in His being exalted/lifted up in Glory by the Father. I thought the Hebrew for the word *elect* was also revealing. Jesus was *selected/chosen/appointed* as the *excellent, required* sacrifice needed to accomplish redemption for man.

“delighteth” – “to be pleased with; specifically, to satisfy a debt”

Jesus is also the Son in whom God’s soul delights. Jesus is God in flesh. In the form of man God was pleased to satisfy the sin debt of man.

“I have put my spirit upon him” – Again, that is a natural part of Three yet One. Jesus, God in flesh, the man, possessed the Spirit of God as one who had never lost fellowship with the Father. He had no sin nature. I personally believe that man was created in fellowship with the Father and in possession of that same Spirit which we now have to wait until the new birth to possess. Adam chose to rebel against God and forfeited his spiritual sustenance; he died spiritually. Although Jesus possessed the Spirit from birth, I believe this phrase in verse 1 is a reference to the time when He was empowered by the Spirit in all His fulness at His baptism.

“he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” – I thought Matthew 12:21 needed to be connected to this phrase since Matthew was quoting from this part of Isaiah through the inspiration of the Spirit.

*Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*

These statements appear to be saying totally different things; but I know that since the Spirit connected the two scriptures, they go hand in hand. The root word for *judgment* states “to vindicate or punish” as part of its meaning. *Trust* references “expectation, hope and confidence.” While Jesus was ministering on earth, He taught about the need for repentance and living to please God. Although He ministered primarily to the Jews, His message was also meant for all people. The Jews to whom Isaiah ministered were rebellious and sinful and facing coming judgment. In contrast, the Gentiles, when given the opportunity, would begin to embrace the teachings of the Savior and respond with the love and obedience God expected from His chosen people of Israel. I guess I am trying to say that as the *church* began to grow, the Gentiles recognized that their sin required judgment and began turning in faith to Jesus for their salvation. This was after His death, burial and resurrection, so they were placing their faith in the name (representing the person) of Jesus, the Son of God, whom they had never seen.

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

Again, through the inspiration of the Spirit, Matthew quotes it a bit differently.

*Matthew 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*

This seems to be saying that Jesus was a teacher with a gentle spirit; He would not qualify as a “hellfire and brimstone” preacher. He did, however, exhibit great passion when He overthrew the moneychangers in the Temple and when He rebuked the Pharisees as hypocrites. His ministry demonstrated a confident, quiet, consistent focus on teaching the scripture, living as an example according to His teaching, and declaring His identity through His miracles.

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

**Is. 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.**

*Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

Verse 3 is describing God’s servant, Jesus, as gentle and compassionate. Isaiah is picturing people who are discouraged, oppressed and struggling (all from the Hebrew for *bruised*) to a broken reed. “Smoking flax” is reference to the wick of a candle that is very dim and about to burn out; this paints a picture to me of a

person who is feeling hopeless and ready to give up. These are the people to whom Jesus is able to minister—people who recognize that they are needy. The next statement is one of encouragement, comfort and motivation. God is on the throne, and He will be victorious over the forces of sin. This Servant will never fail and will never be discouraged; He knows the end from the beginning. The whole earth will one day experience His righteous judgment when He assumes the throne of David. Victory is sure for the faithful, the righteous in God through the Son.

**Is. 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:**

At this point (again using poetic repetition), Isaiah reminds us Who is speaking—God the LORD (the covenant-keeping God of Israel). The very same God that created the heavens and earth and everything associated with them, the very same God that gives the breath of life to man.

**Is. 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;**

**Is. 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.**

It would seem that at this point God is directing His message to His Servant, Jesus. This would be supported by the following scripture in Luke.

*Luke 2:25-32 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon... And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ...and when the parents brought in the child Jesus...Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said...A **light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.***

The Hebrew root for the word *righteousness* states “to make right,” which describes exactly the purpose for Jesus coming to earth as a man. He came “to make right” the relationship of man to His Creator.

“hold thine hand” – God is the strength (from the Hebrew for *hold*) that sustained His Servant Jesus, just as He sustains the believer today who will yield himself in submission to Him.

“will keep thee” – *Keep* = guard, protect, preserve  
Again, this is a description of God’s protection and preservation of His Son particularly, as well as all of His children of faith.

“give thee for a covenant” – I liked the wording of the NLT for this verse, “given you to my people as the personal confirmation of my covenant with them.” The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant.

*Heb. 8:6-10 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises...Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

“a light” – A light reveals, and Jesus came to reveal the truth of God. I believe the main truth of verse 7 is a reference to spiritual enlightenment. Those who are blind are in the dark; those who are in prison are described as being in darkness. Prisoners are also held captive by someone or something; they are not free. The scripture tells us that the truth sets us free.

*John 8:31-36 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

These verses in John make clear that man is the prisoner / servant of sin until he turns to Jesus in faith and obedience.

God is always very clear in His distinction of the people of Israel and the rest of the world, the Gentiles. This verse in Isaiah is just another affirmation of the fact that God has always intended for all of mankind to experience fellowship with Him. I think the Lord was making a special point to those to whom Isaiah was prophesying that His truth would be made known to the world with or without their cooperation. I think that is an important truth for all of us. God doesn't need us to cooperate with Him to accomplish His will. His purposes will be accomplished with or without our cooperation. When we as His children are rebellious and disobedient, we are the ones that suffer.

**Is. 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.**

I love this verse. YHWH is now addressing His people. It is another unequivocal statement of God as God—the One and Only. There is no other being that is His equal. This is not wrongful pride; it is just a statement of fact. It's a statement that should strengthen our faith. Only YHWH is deserving of glory and praise.

**Is. 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.**

This is a statement that supports the truth of the previous verse. Only God has the ability to predict the future. Every prophecy from the mouth of God comes

to pass just as He has foretold. As He continues to foretell in the future (through the later prophets and in New Testament times), they too will come to pass according to His word. The scripture is full of proofs of this declaration. History and science are full of proofs of this statement—from the declaration that the earth is round to the prophecies concerning the world empires in Daniel, to the coming of the Messiah, etc.

**Is. 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.*

**Is. 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.*

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

“new song” – The Psalmist used this phrase several times, and the singing of a new song is mentioned twice in Revelation. Both the Hebrew and Greek for *new* reference “freshness.” That seems to emphasize an attitude of the heart. It’s not a song being sung as a ritual without emotion. It is a song full of love, praise and adoration.

Isaiah’s message is now addressing all the peoples on earth—from lands across the sea, to the islands, to the wilderness, to the mountaintops. All the people of earth are encouraged to celebrate their God and declare His praise.

**Is. 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.

My mind immediately goes to the verses in Revelation 19 that describe Jesus coming in glory as a mighty warrior.

*Rev. 19:11-21* And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he

*deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

**Is. 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.

**Is. 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.

At this point the Lord compares His actions to that of a pregnant woman in the throes of birth pains. I can't help but make reference to the Olivet Discourse (see Topical Study). This has to be a reference to the tribulation period. The 6<sup>th</sup> seal judgment and the 7<sup>th</sup> vial/bowl judgment affect the mountains. The 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet judgment and the 3<sup>rd</sup> vial/bowl judgment affect the rivers.

**Is. 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 believe this is talking about spiritual healing. This message is directed to the people of Israel. The tribulation in fact is the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel (see journal on Daniel 9), one of the purposes of which is to bring the people of Israel back into fellowship with their God. They are now spiritually blind. God is going to work in such a miraculous way on their behalf that they will be brought from darkness into light. The Hebrew for *crooked* includes "distorted" and for *straight* includes "to make right." In other words, their spiritual understanding has been distorted and is going to be cleared up. This healing will take place because of God's actions on their behalf. God will not forsake His people.

**Is. 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.*

This is a prophecy that the people of Israel will repent and turn back to their God in faith. Once they have clear spiritual understanding, they will be greatly ashamed at their past rejection of God's love and provision for them through the Messiah. They will be greatly ashamed that they ever placed their faith in worthless, manmade idols.

**Is. 42:18** Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

**Is. 42:19** 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?

**Is. 42:20** Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

Again, the prophet is referencing God's people as spiritually deaf and blind. Israel was chosen as God's special servant and messenger to the nations of the

world. They were supposed to be an example before the nations of the power of God and the blessings associated with submission to God. They were supposed to proclaim God's truth to the nations. The people of Israel failed. They were shown many evidences of God's power, righteousness and mercy; yet they didn't seem to understand. God was faithful to send His servants, the prophets, to share His truth, His heart, His desires, His promises, His warnings—but the people responded like they were deaf.

**Is. 42:21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable.**

The Hebrew for the word *law* stated “especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch.” In spite of the rebellious response of His people, God delights in His law. The *law* was given for the benefit of the people and revealed God's standards for living. These standards are rooted in His righteousness.

**Is. 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.**

This is a sad statement on the current state of affairs of the Jewish people. Instead of the place of blessing that God intended for them, they are experiencing judgment. Still, they refuse to seek God's forgiveness.

Again, that reminds me of the attitude of men as they respond to God's wrath being poured out upon them during the tribulation. Instead of repentance, they will choose to continue in their sin. Instead of turning to Almighty God in faith, they will hang on to faith in their worthless idols and the Antichrist.

*Revelation 9:20-21* And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

**Is. 42:23 Who among you will give ear to this? *who* will hearken and hear for the time to come?**

It's like the prophet is perplexed and pleading. Isn't there anyone paying attention? Do you not understand the purpose of God's judgment? Are you going to continue on the path of closing your ears and eyes to God as He seeks to draw you back to Him in repentance?

**Is. 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.**

The prophet continues to confront the people. Don't you understand Who is responsible for placing you in subjection to your enemies? Don't you

understand that it is YHWH, the One against whom “we” have sinned? Isaiah identified with his people in their sin. He did not, however, identify with them in refusing to walk in obedience and submission to God. “For **they** would not walk...neither were **they** obedient...” Isaiah was striving to be obedient and submissive to God. Isaiah had failures just like the rest of us, but his desire was to obey and be submissive to God; and his life reflected just that.

**Is. 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.

“Therefore” = Because of their rebellion and disobedience

The scripture tells us in many places that God is slow to anger.

*Nehemiah 9:17* And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

*Psalm 103:8* The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

*Psalm 145:8* The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

*Joel 2:13* And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

*Jonah 4:2* And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

*Nah. 1:3* The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

The fact that Israel caused Him to respond to them in anger is pretty telling of their stubbornness and hardheartedness. The prophet compares their judgment at the hand of God as a fire that surrounds His people and even burns them. Still the people did not seem to understand. They were so caught up in their sins that they didn't even understand that their sin was the reason for their judgment.

It seems that the Israelites were just as prone to think from a human perspective as we are today. We think everything has its origin outside of God's plans and purposes because a loving God would never allow such things to happen to good/innocent people. They just thought they were the victims of a stronger nation. It was beyond their thought processes to think that God would use an

evil nation to bring judgment upon His own people. The prophet Habakkuk expressed that very thought when God told him that He was going to chastise His people by allowing the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to conquer them.

*Habakkuk 1:12-13 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*

The more we study God's Word and make it a part of our being, the more likely we will begin to see through God's eyes when we look at events/circumstances in our world and begin to understand His purposes in allowing or bringing about such events/circumstances. (See Topical Study—"Why Does God Allow.")