

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

August 1, 2010

“The Perfect Servant”

Focal Passage: Isaiah 42:1-13

Cross References: Isaiah 41, Matthew 3:17, Matthew 12:15-27,

Historical Context: We emerge in [40:1](#) in a different world from Hezekiah's, immersed in the situation foretold in [39:5-8](#), which he was so thankful to escape. Nothing is said of the intervening century and a half; we wake, so to speak, on the far side of the disaster, impatient for the end of captivity. In chs. [40-48](#) liberation is in the air; there is the persistent promise of a new exodus, with God at its head; there is the approach of a conqueror, eventually disclosed as Cyrus, to break Babylon open; there is also a new theme unfolding, to reveal the glory of the call to be a servant and a light to the nations. All this is expressed with a soaring, exultant eloquence, in a style heard only fitfully hitherto (cf., e.g., [35:1-10](#); [37:26f.](#)), but now sustained so as to give its distinctive tone to the remaining chapters of the book.

Grogan, Geoffrey W. “VII. The Sole Sovereignty and Sure Promises of the Lord (40:1-48:22)” In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Volume 6. 240. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1986.

Central Idea: Isaiah 42 begins a section termed the “servant songs.” It is not clear that these chapters were every actually sung. So the name is actually describing the nature of these chapters. They are collections of God’s sayings about His people Israel with their inconsistency and the unblemished perfect servant who will come to fulfill the covenant and make a relationship between God and fallen humanity possible.

Lesson Idea: It is fascinating to read of Christ and His mission many years before He even came to earth. As he fulfilled His calling to serve we as His ransomed children must display the same humility and obedience.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

July 26th Aug. 1st, 2010

July 26th Isaiah 41-43

July 27th Isaiah 44-46

July 28th Isaiah 47-49

July 29th Isaiah 50 - 52

July 30th Isaiah 53- 56

July 31st Isaiah 57-59

Aug. 1st Isaiah 60-63

Highlights of the Week

Isaiah 43: The Redeemer of God’s People

Isaiah 44: Prophecy regarding people’s return to Jerusalem

Isaiah 46:9-10: No other God. God will see His plan through.

Isaiah 47: The Fall of Babylon

Isaiah 52:7 The Good News

Isaiah 52:13- 53:13: The suffering servant. Christ’s suffering prophesied.

Isaiah 55: Let the Thirsty Come.

Isaiah 56: Hope for the gentiles.

Isaiah 58: True fasting

Isaiah 41 compared to Isaiah 42

The NIV obscures the fact that both v.1 and 41:29 commence with the word *hen* ("behold"). Through the prophetic word the reader's eye is directed away from the pagan gods with their images to God's servant. After reading the previous chapter, the reader is inclined to see an immediate link with the description of Israel in 41:8-10, especially as that passage also follows a condemnation of idolatry. It may not be possible completely to identify the servant here with the nation (cf. v.6), but we can certainly say that in him the servant mission of Israel finds perfect expression. As so often in this book, a theme is introduced at a comparatively modest level and rises to an expression truly sublime (see [comments](#) at 4:2). There can be little doubt that we are intended to make the identification with Israel to begin with, that we might be gently led to him who is the incarnation of God's mind for Israel (cf. [Matt 12:15-21](#)).

Grogan, Geoffrey W. "D. The Lord's Servant—the Perfect and the Defective (42:1-25)" In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Volume 6. 254. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1986.

Isaiah 42:1-4

¹ "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."

DISCUSSION:

- What is the justice that God's servant will bring to the nations?
- From what you know about Jesus. How does He fit this description?
- Compare Isaiah 41:8-10 with 42:1-4. How are the descriptions alike and how are they different?

Isaiah 42:5-7

⁵ This is what God the LORD says— he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ⁶ "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

DISCUSSION:

- Isaiah 42:5 describes who God is. How does this give God power to call His servant?
- What are ways that we ignore the God given breath and life we have?
- Isaiah 42:6 can be read as the God-given mission of Jesus Christ. How is Christ a covenant between God and humanity?
- Gentiles were outsiders, foreigners to the Jewish people. God's servant was a light to them. How is our service in Christ a light to those who are not Christians?

Isaiah 42:8-9

⁸ *"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*

⁹ *See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."*

DISCUSSION:

- In verse 8, God establishes His supremacy. Look at Ch. 41, how was Israel giving God's glory to others?
- How do we give the glory and praise intended for God to other things in our lives?
- We must realize that God won't allow this to continue.
- In what ways have you experienced God displaying His sole supremacy?
- Verse 9 speaks of the prophecy of the fulfillment to come in Christ.
- How has God declared His gospel?

Isaiah 42: 10-13

¹⁰ *Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them.*

¹¹ *Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops.*

¹² *Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands.*

¹³ *The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.*

DISCUSSION:

- Vv. 10-13 are a response to the Lord's foretelling of His great servant. The people of Israel had long spoke of the great Exodus and based their faith and understanding of God on that experience. The deliverance that this servant brings is even greater than the Exodus and should broaden and strengthen their (and ours) understanding of God.
- In what ways do we grow complacent in our praises to God?
- This new song will be sung by everyone, because it affects everyone. Is there any context in which you are hesitant or fearful to share the truth of God's promise in Christ?
- According to Verse 13, who will have ultimate victory?
- How should this shape our obedience in telling what God has done?

APPLICATION

God came to and revealed himself to His people the Israelites. He made a covenant with Abraham that He would be their and they would be His people. They were to obey Him completely and serve Him fully. God knows men's hearts and He knew that Israel would disobey and break the covenant, even as He was constantly faithful. In His perfect plan He sent the perfect servant to establish His everlasting covenant with all people, Jew and Gentile. Christ, God in the flesh, brings release to the captive and sight to the blind. Our salvation is only possible in Christ, the one in whom the Lord delights. Philippians 2 calls followers of Christ to serve as He did by the power of the Holy Spirit. To serve God as Christ served God we must be surrendered completely to Him and to Him alone. We must recognize that just like Israel we have made idols in our lives that keep us from being accurate representatives of God's glory. God will not allow us to continue to give Him less than all of ourselves. God is asking for your complete surrender to Him and for you to put all of your trust in Him.

What/who are you really worshipping, giving yourself to?

Serving God means letting
everything in your life come under His direction.