

A Trek Through Isaiah 34 - 41:21 - 42:17

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Context

The Great Solution (40:1 - 42:17)	
Consolation for Yahweh's people 40:1 - 41:20	The plight of the Gentiles 41:21-29
The Servant 42:1-17	

In the book of the Servant (38 - 55): How will God's people be redeemed from captivity?

For this week:

- The Plight of the Gentiles 41:21-29
- The Servant 42:1-17

The Plight of the Gentiles 41:21-29

- Isaiah has been focusing on Israel. Now he turns to the Gentiles and how they are in a difficult situation.

Gentile gods summoned 41:21

Isaiah 41:21 (LSB)

21 "Bring near your case," Yahweh says. "Bring forward your mighty arguments," The King of Jacob says.

- Gentile gods summoned
- the King of Jacob
 - The ruler of Jacob, as the false gods were considered rulers of their nations. Which one is sovereign?

The challenge. 41:22-23

Isaiah 41:22–23 (LSB)

22 Let them bring it forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, That we may establish our heart on them and know their outcome. Or cause us to hear of what is coming;

23 Declare the things that are to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together.

- V22-23a Three tests
 - Tell the past
 - V22 As for the former events, declare what they were.
 - V22 That we may establish our heart on them and know their outcome (meaning)
 - Tell the future
 - V22 declare to us what is going to take place
 - Do something to show that you exist
 - V23 Indeed do good or evil. Encompasses all activity.
- V23b Response to true deity
 - that we may anxiously look about us and fear together.
 - True deity will inspire fear.
- Yahweh had done this
 - He told the meaning of what had occurred
 - He told what was to come
 - Accurately. Not like pagan oracles which were ambiguous.
 - He brought His word to pass.
 - As Jer 1:12I am watching over my word to perform it.”

The false gods exposed 41:24

Isaiah 41:24 (LSB)

24Behold, you are nothing, And your work is non-existent; He who chooses you is an abomination.

- Behold
 - Pause between v23 & 24. Waiting for something to happen.
- You are nothing
 - Nothing happens. The false gods are exposed
- He who chooses you is an abomination.
 - Chooses
 - All men worship something. They must choose between false gods and the true God.
 - Josh 24:15 "If it is evil in your sight to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh."
 - Ro 1:23 ...they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the likeness of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
 - Abomination.
 - For not giving to the Creator the honor due Him.
 - Yahweh is jealous. Is 42:8, 48:11 I will not give My glory to another
 - He will bring false gods and their worshippers to destruction. Dt 7:26 And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.

The true God in action and prediction 41:25-27

Isaiah 41:25–27 (LSB)

25 “I have awakened one from the north, and he has come; From the rising of the sun he will call on My name; And he will come upon officials as upon mortar, Even as the potter treads clay.”

26 Who has declared this from the beginning, that we might know? Or from former times, that we may say, “He is right!”? Surely there was no one who declared; Surely there was no one who caused those words to be heard; Surely there was no one who heard your words.

27 “Formerly I said to Zion, ‘Behold, here they are.’ And to Jerusalem, ‘I will give a messenger of good news.’

- Contrast the true God revealed in words and deeds
- V25 Yahweh acting
 - I have awakened one from the north
 - Cyrus
 - Yahweh is the initiator of history.
 - And he will come upon officials as upon mortar, Even as the potter treads clay.
 - Picture of mixing mortar or a potter treading on clay.
 - The conqueror tramples his helpless enemies under his feet.
- V26 Failure of the false gods
 - Who has declared this from the beginning, that we might know?
 - The test of a true God.
 - that we may say, “He is right!”?
 - Used in a law court to indicate the one justified.
 - Surely there was no one who declared
 - Answer: none of the false gods. They are nothing.
- V27 Vindication of the true God
 - Formerly I said to Zion, ‘Behold, here they are.’
 - Telling what was to come before it came to pass
 - And to Jerusalem, ‘I will give a messenger of good news.’
 - Telling the meaning: the coming conqueror is good.
 - Cyrus will tell the Jews that they can return to Jerusalem.

The plight of the Gentiles: their gods are nothing. 41:28-29

Isaiah 41:28–29 (LSB)

28“But I look, and there is no one, And there is no counselor among them Who, if I ask, can respond with a word.

29“Behold, all of them are false; Their works are non-existent; Their molten images are wind and utter formlessness.

- I look among them
 - Among the false gods.
- No counselor
 - None provide guidance.
 - Contrast Is 9:6 Wonderful Counselor
- False
 - A deception
- Works are non-existent
 - Nothing
- their metal images are wind and utter formlessness
 - Appear substantial.
 - No real substance.
- Here is the plight of the Gentiles. Eph 2:12 ...having no hope and without God in the world.

The Servant 42:1-9

- Here the Servant is introduced and commissioned.
- First of the four Servant songs of Isaiah (42:1-9, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13 - 53:12)

The Servant presented 42:1-4

Isaiah 42:1-4 (LSB)

1“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul is well-pleased. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

2“He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.

3“A crushed reed He will not break And a faintly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will bring forth justice in truth.

4“He will not be faint or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

- V1a Introduction of the Servant
 - Behold My Servant
 - Here Isaiah is introducing the Servant (second picture of the messiah)
 - “Servant” previously used of the nation Israel (41:8). But that servant was blind and deaf (42:19) and needed to be redeemed. This is the Redeemer.
- V1b Three characteristics of the Servant
 - Whom I uphold, My chosen one
 - Selected for the work of Yahweh
 - Established by Him
 - in whom my soul is well-pleased;
 - God is delighted in Him with His entire being.
 - As Mt 3:17 a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”
 - I have put My Spirit upon Him
 - Yahweh’s personal presence equipping the Servant for His work
 - How John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Messiah (Jn 1:32-34) And John bore witness saying, “I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He abided on Him...And I myself have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”
- V1c The mission of the Servant
 - He will bring forth justice to the nations
 - justice.
 - The salvation of God in the broadest sense: individual + corporate
 - The world seeks justice through its own gods (41:6-7); the result is abomination (41:24)
 - True justice comes only through the Messiah
 - to the nations. Not just to Israel.

- V2-3 The methods of the Servant
 - He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.
 - Quiet, not loud or self-promoting.
 - Not like an earthly conqueror
 - Not like a prophet who uses frenzied behavior and ecstasy
 - A crushed reed He will not break And a faintly burning wick He will not extinguish
 - Gentle
 - Crushed reed. Damaged. Unable to stand.
 - faintly burning wick. Lacking oil. Lost hope.
 - He will faithfully bring forth justice
 - Faithfully. Fulfilling God's plan to save the world
 - Contrast with an earthly conqueror who exalts himself and rules by force
- V4 The perseverance of the Servant
 - He will not be faint or crushed until He has established justice in the earth
 - Includes(1) difficulty (2) perseverance to victory
 - Heb 4:15 ...One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.
 - Jn 19:30 It is finished
 - the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.
 - Coastlands. All nations
 - For His law. Saying that the Servant is God.
 - Is 2:3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, To the house of the God of Jacob, That He may instruct us from His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion the law will go forth And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
 - Wait expectantly. Depend on the Servant. Refuse to act on their own.

The Servant commissioned 42:5-9

Isaiah 42:5–9 (LSB)

5 Thus says the God, Yahweh, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,

6 "I am Yahweh, I have called You in righteousness; I will also take hold of You by the hand and guard You, And I will give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,

7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who inhabit darkness from the prison.

8 "I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.

9 "Behold, the former things have come to pass; Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I cause you to hear them."

- V5 The One with authority
 - Heb El. The supreme God.
 - The Creator: the One with authority to commission

- V6-7 The Servant called
 - I have called You in righteousness
 - Speaking to the Servant
 - Called. Chosen, designated, prepared.
 - in righteousness;
 - In accord with God's righteous character
 - For God's righteous purpose
 - Re Ro 3:21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart...
 - I will also take hold of You by the hand and guard You,
 - The Servant is not left alone. God is with Him..
 - Luther: God would hold the Servant by the hand "namely, for this reason, that Satan and the world with all their might and wisdom will resist Thy work."
 - And I will give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations
 - The Servant Himself is the covenant and the light.
 - The relationship is mediated through Him
 - 1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
 - To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who inhabit darkness from the prison.
 - The work of the Servant
 - To restore sight to those blinded by sin
 - To free those in bondage to sin

- V8 Yahweh the only One
 - God is exclusive: (1) There is none like Him (2) He will not deny Himself
 - God is jealous: He will not allow the praise that is rightfully His to go to another.

- V9 New things replacing the old
 - the former things have come to pass
 - Previous prophecies.
 - Now I declare new things
 - The person and work of the Servant (42:1-7)
 - before they spring forth, I cause you to hear them..
 - What the false gods could not do.
 - Yahweh, being God, knows future events and reveals them.
 - The prophet speaks of events before they are visible in history.

Response to Yahweh's solution 42:10-17

The world sings 42:10-13

Isaiah 42:10–13 (LSB)

10Sing to Yahweh a new song, Sing His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, as well as its fullness. You coastlands, and those who inhabit them.

11Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, The villages where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud, Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.

12Let them give glory to Yahweh And declare His praise in the coastlands.

13Yahweh will go forth like a warrior; He will awaken His zeal like a man of war. He will make a loud shout, indeed, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies.

- V10-11 Call to sing
 - Sing to Yahweh a new song. About the new things.
 - from the end of the earth...Kedar...Sela
 - Kedar. In the northern Arabian desert.
 - Sela. Capital of Edom.
 - From the farthest reaches to the interior of the wilderness
 - From the tops of the mountains. So that all may hear.
- V12 Content of the song
 - give glory to Yahweh...declare His praise
 - As the Seraphim in Is 6:3 The whole earth is full of His glory.
- V13 Cause of celebration
 - Picture of warfare.
 - Yahweh wakens His zeal by thinking of the wrongs done to Him
 - He attacks with a loud shout
 - He gains the victory
 - Here is the seed of the woman come to bruise the head of the serpent.

A new birth 42:14-17

Isaiah 42:14–17 (LSB)

14“I have kept silent for a long time; I have kept still and restrained Myself. Now like a woman in labor I will groan; I will both gasp and pant.

15“I will lay waste the mountains and hills And dry up all their vegetation; I will make the rivers into coastlands And dry up the pools of waters.

16“I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them And rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, And I will not forsake them.”

17They will be turned back and be utterly put to shame, Who trust in graven images, Who say to molten images, “You are our gods.”

- Abrupt change from war theme
- V14 A new thing
 - I have kept silent for a long time
 - From Gen 3 to the present.
 - Awaiting the proper time As Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...
 - Now like a woman in labor I will groan; I will both gasp and pant
 - As a pregnant woman. Time to give birth.
- V15 The old will pass away
 - I will lay waste the mountains and hills...
 - The old order completely transformed.
- V16 The new will come
 - I will lead the blind by a way that they do not know...
 - Spiritually blind
 - New ways. Darkness into light.
 - These are the things I will do.
 - Done by God not by man.
 - I will not forsake them
 - He is faithful
- Here Yahweh is undertaking the task previously given to the Servant: to bring the Gentile world from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.
- V17 Defeated foes
 - They...Who trust in graven images...
 - Foes of v13.
 - Will be turned back. Total destruction.
 - Be utterly put to shame. As they realize the folly of their sin.

Application: Our hope is in a Person

Is 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul is well-pleased. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

- Problem: Israel needs comfort and transformation. The Gentiles are without hope.
- Solution: My Servant.
- He will bring forth justice: individual and corporate wellness.

Our hope is in a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read Ps 23:1-4.

Picture of a shepherd and His sheep. How do we follow our Shepherd?

- He is our Shepherd. We are His sheep.
- I shall not want. We trust in Him to provide.
- He makes me lie down. We obey Him
- He leads me. He leads, we follow
 - Jn 10:3-4 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.
 - He leads us to green pastures and still waters.
- He restores my soul. We listen to Him when panicking rather than running off
- He guides me in the paths of righteousness...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death... He leads us in right paths. May be through the valley of the shadow of death.
- I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
 - We don't give in to fear.

Read Ro 10:3

- Righteousness of God. Jesus' righteousness given to us through faith

What were the Jews doing to obtain righteousness?

- Earn it by works (keeping the law)

How is what we are to do different from what they did?

- We trust that we are justified through our faith in Christ.
- The Bible illuminated by the HS tells us what our Lord wants.
- We obey out of love for Him.

Look at Col 1:10.

- Let us walk worthy of Him. What does He think about what we are thinking, saying, doing?
- Let us seek to fully please Him. What does He want us to think, say, do?

References

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