

# A Just Servant

Isaiah 42:1-9

SS Lesson for 04/05/2020

**Devotional Scripture:** Ps 9:7-19

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Isaiah 42:1*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### JESUS BRINGS JUSTICE THROUGH FIRM GENTLENESS (ISA 42:1-4)

##### *Firm because God's Spirit is on Him (1)*

On Jesus providing wisdom, understanding, counsel and power (Isa 11:1-2)

On Jesus like a dove giving confirmation of Jesus as God's Son (Matt 3:16-17)

On Jesus because Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)

On Jesus because He speaks the words of God (John 3:34-35)

On Jesus because God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:37-38)

##### *Gentle because of His servant attitude (1)*

A servant attitude is one of gentleness and humility (Matt 11:29)

A servant attitude is one of service (Matt 20:28)

A servant attitude is one that God considers greatest (Luke 22:27)

A servant attitude is one that is willing to do even menial jobs (John 13:13-14)

A servant attitude is one of submission (Heb 5:7-8)

##### *Gentle because of His divine quietness (2)*

Quietness that comes from trusting God (1 Peter 2:23)

Quietness that allows for a non-response for some situations (Matt 27:14)

Quietness that comes from an understanding of the "big" picture (John 8:3-6)

##### *Firm because of His capacity to endure (3)*

Jesus endured humanity so that He could become a faithful high priest (Heb 2:17-18)

Jesus endured the cross to be the author and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:1-4)

Jesus endured being a servant because He was obedient (Phil 2:6-8)

Jesus endured all that happened to Him so that He could persevere (2 Thess 3:5)

##### *Firm because of His faithfulness (3)*

Jesus is faithful because He does all He says (1 Thess 5:23-24)

Jesus is faithful in His strengthening and protection (2 Thess 3:3)

Jesus cannot be anything but faithful, even if we are faithless (2 Tim 2:11-13)

Jesus is a faithful son over God's house (Heb 3:6)

Jesus is faithful to fulfill His promises (Heb 10:23)

Jesus is a faithful witness (Rev 1:5)

##### *Gentle because of His divine encouragement (4)*

Encouragement through prayer (Luke 22:31-32)

Encouragement through peace (John 14:27)

Encouragement through truth and commitment (Heb 6:17-18)

Encouragement through provisions (Jonah 4:5-6)

#### JESUS BRINGS JUSTICE THROUGH AUTHORITY AND REVELATION (ISA 42:5-9)

##### *Jesus has the authority because He was the creator (5)*

Creator of things both visible and invisible (Col 1:16)

Creator through being the Word (John 1:1-3)

Creator through whom all things exist (1 Cor 8:6)

Creator through whom all things were made (Heb 1:2)

Creator who built everything (Heb 3:3-4)

##### *Jesus has the authority because He gave life to man (5)*

Jesus provided life through breath (Acts 17:25)

Jesus provided life because in Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28)

Jesus is the only way to life (John 14:6)

Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35)

Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)

Life through Jesus' name (John 20:31)

God provided eternal life only through one man – Jesus (Rom 5:17)  
*Jesus has the authority because He has the ability to make us righteous (6)*  
Only through Jesus are the many made righteous (Rom 5:19)  
Righteousness comes through being born through Jesus (1 John 2:29)  
Jesus is our righteousness ( Cor 1:30)

*Jesus brings revelation through leadership (6)*

Leadership that leads to justification (Gal 3:24)  
Leadership that leads to the springs of living water (Rev 7:17)  
Leadership that leads to the way of God and truth (Matt 22:16)  
Leadership that leads to the right way (Mark 10:32)  
Leadership that leads to the Father God (John 14:6)  
Leadership that leads to a cleared way (1 Thess 3:11)  
Leadership that leads to the Most Holy Place (Heb 9:8)

*Jesus brings revelation through wisdom and understanding (7)*

Wisdom and understanding that makes the God's way known to us (Isa 42:16)  
Wisdom and understanding that opens our mind to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45)  
Wisdom and understanding that opens spiritually blind eyes (John 9:39)  
Wisdom and understanding that exposes Satan and leads to sanctification (Acts 26:18)  
Wisdom and understanding of the glory of God (2 Cor 4:6)  
Wisdom and understanding that allows us to know God better (Eph 1:17-18)

*Jesus brings revelation through deliverance (7)*

Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)  
Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)  
Deliverance from trials ( Peter 2:9)  
Deliverance from temptations ( Cor 10:13)  
Deliverance from evil attacks ( Tim 4:18)

*Jesus has the authority because He is the Lord (8)*

Jesus is our Lord because we have peace (Rom 5:1)  
Jesus is our Lord because we have eternal life (Rom 5:21)  
Jesus is our Lord because we believe in our heart that He has been raised from the dead (Rom 10:9)  
Jesus is our Lord because the Holy Spirit indwells us (1 Cor 12:3)  
Jesus is our Lord because He has all the glory, majesty, power and authority (Jude 25)

*Jesus brings revelation through renewal (9)*

Renewal into a new creation (Cor 5:17)  
Renewal into a spiritual covenant (Gal 6:15)  
Renewal inwardly daily (2 Cor 4:16)  
Renewal of the old self (Col 3:10)  
Renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A few years ago, the Consumer Attorneys of California created the “Champions of Justice Award” to honor extraordinary service among the association's members. Sandra Ribera Speed received the award in 2015. This honor was awarded to her in part for her involvement in a case involving a runaway delivery truck that crashed into a family vehicle. Sandra's law firm at the time wanted nothing to do with fighting this case against a powerful company and its army of attorneys. But Sandra believed the case had merit and refused to give up. She used all her savings and incurred credit card debt in order to work on the case by herself for six months. She was so well prepared that the seven lawyers from the prestigious firm representing the delivery company settled the case on the first day of trial. In addition to serving her clients well, Sandra's portion of the settlement allowed her to establish her own law firm. About 2,700 years ago, the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the ultimate champion of justice. He would fight for, defend, and serve not just one person but all those who would accept His help.

This lesson emphasizes God's promises of a just kingdom. The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah as the champion of justice. Such prophecies, of course, have direct bearing on Palm Sunday. The prophet Isaiah,

for his part, had a lengthy ministry, from about 740 to 680 BC. The book featuring his name as its title is comprised of two parts. Isaiah 1-39 has been described as the Book of Judgment; it focuses on the sins of the people of Judah. Isaiah 40-66, the Book of Comfort, looks forward about a century and a half to the time when Judah's exile in Babylon is about to end. We keep in mind that the exile did not even begin until 586 BC. The end of exile is foreseen in the chapter preceding our lesson text: God called a "righteous man" (Isaiah 41:2) to bring the captivity to its end. That man was Cyrus, the king of Persia who conquered Babylon in 539 BC (see 44:28 and 45:1, where he is designated "shepherd" and "anointed," respectively). He issued a decree permitting the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem beginning in 538 BC (Ezra 1:1-8). The word servant occurs more than three dozen times in the book of Isaiah. In chapter 41, the Lord applies it to Israel—"my servant" (Isaiah 41:8, 9). This servant was fearful. For that reason, God reassured the people of His love. They didn't need to fear; their exile in Babylon was not evidence that God had cast them away forever. He promised Israel that they were still His covenant people. The Lord encouraged His helpless servant Israel by stating that the people need not fear, because God would help them (41:10, 13, 14). The Lord then addressed, in a courtroom setting, the nations and their idols. He challenged the nations to provide evidence that idols had ever correctly predicted the future. After announcing judgment on the false gods, the Lord proclaimed that He had "raised up one from the north" (Isaiah 41:25)—surely once again alluding to Cyrus. Although the Persian emperor hailed "from the east" (41:2), he conquered several kingdoms north of Babylon before eventually attacking Babylon from that direction. Against this backdrop of a pagan king as an instrument of God to rescue an exiled people, Isaiah introduced the intriguing servant of the Lord. Isaiah 42:1-9 is the first of Isaiah's five "servant songs," in which the servant is identified with the Messiah to come (see 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-4). These messianic songs highlight what the servant is to accomplish on behalf of the world.

### Key Verse: Isaiah 42:1

*Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Verses 1-17 in this chapter are the first of Isaiah's "Servant Songs" referring to the Messiah. Israel is called the servant of the Lord (41:8; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20). And the Messiah, on whom God has placed His Spirit (42:1; cf. 11:2), is also called the Servant (cf. 49:3, 5-7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). Which servant Isaiah was referring to in each passage must be determined by the context and the characteristics assigned to the servant. Israel as God's servant was supposed to help bring the world to a knowledge of God, but she failed. So the Messiah, the Lord's Servant, who epitomizes the nation of Israel, will fulfill God's will.

**42:1-4.** Some Bible students say **My Servant** here refers to Israel, which is clearly the case in verse 19. True, Israel was upheld and **chosen** by the Lord, and was His **delight**. However, the statements in verses 1b-4 suggest that here the Servant is the Messiah. This **One** has the **Spirit** of God **on Him** (cf. 11:2), **and He will bring justice to the nations** (cf. 9:7; 11:3-4; 16:5). He will be gentle (42:2-3a)—most people would break a weak, useless **reed**, but **He will not** do so—and He will be faithful (v. 3b) and **not... discouraged** (v. 4). He gave the **Law** in which **the islands** (i.e., people in remote parts; cf. 41:1) **will... hope**. Matthew 12:18-21 quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 with some minor variations, relating it to Jesus and His ministry in Israel. As God's Servant, Jesus did what Israel could never do. He perfectly carried out the will of the Father so that people everywhere may believe in the Holy One of Israel.

**42:5-7. The LORD** promised to assist the Servant in His mission, which **God** can do because He is the Creator (cf. 40:12-14, 26). He **created the** immense **heavens** and **the earth** (cf. 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:13, 16) and life in it, including man, giving him **breath**. Speaking to His Servant (42:6-7) God assured Him that He had been **called** to perform the will of God. To be **called... in righteousness** (as Cyrus also would be, 41:2), meant to be responsible to do God's righteous will. Of course the Messiah, unlike Cyrus, lived a righteous life (for He is God). Because **the LORD** would **take hold of** the Servant's **hand** the Messiah would have the power to carry out God's will. Also the Servant was assured that He would **be a covenant for the people** (cf. 49:8). He would fulfill God's covenant promises to Israel, and would also be **a light** (cf. 42:16; Luke 1:79) **for the Gentiles** (cf. Isa. 49:6). Spiritually unredeemed Israel and the Gentiles are **blind**, and they are **captives... in darkness**. Though Cyrus would be the servant to release Jewish captives from exile, the Messiah gives spiritual **release** (cf. 61:1; John 8:32; Col. 1:13), sight (cf. John 9:39-41), and light (cf. John 8:12) to those who trust Him. (On **eyes** being opened; cf. Isa. 32:3; 35:5.) This spiritual salvation to both Jews and Gentiles will eventuate in the glorious messianic kingdom.

**42:8-9.** The LORD, Israel's covenant-keeping God, had given the prophecy recorded in verses 6-7 and He will not let idols take credit for it (cf. 41:21-24). In view of all that God had already done for Israel (the former things) these new things (cf. 48:6) of which He had been speaking would certainly happen. No other god can foretell such things. If, as some scholars argue, someone other than Isaiah wrote chapters 40-66 after the Jewish captives were released by Cyrus, then Isaiah's point in 42:9 and elsewhere is destroyed. Isaiah was affirming that God, unlike idols, can tell the future. And this divine ability adds to His glory (v. 8).

**42:10-17.** People everywhere (in the ends of earth; cf. 41:5 and see 5:26) should sing this song of praise to the LORD. These should include (a) people who make their living by sea commerce, (b) those who live in the islands (cf. 41:1, 5), and (c) those in the desert regions and towns. Kedar (cf. 21:16-17) is an area in Northern Arabia, and Sela was a city in Edom. People everywhere should sing and shout... to the LORD because of His victory over His enemies at the Messiah's second coming. God, seemingly silent for a long time, will act in judgment though, humanly speaking, it will be painful for Him (42:14). He will dry up the places where people do not revere Him (v. 15). But He will guide those who trust in Him, giving them light (cf. v. 7) and smoothing their paths (v. 16). However, pagans who trust in idols will be ashamed (v. 17; cf. 44:9, 11; 45:16).

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Jesus Brings Justice Through Firm Gentleness (Isa 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."

#### **Firm because God's Spirit is on Him (1)**

*On Jesus providing wisdom, understanding, counsel and power (Isa 11:1-2)*

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him--the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--

*On Jesus like a dove giving confirmation of Jesus as God's Son (Matt 3:16-17)*

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

*On Jesus because Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)*

I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

*On Jesus because He speaks the words of God (John 3:34-35)*

34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

*On Jesus because God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:37-38)*

37 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached- 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

## **Gentle because of His servant attitude (1)**

*A servant attitude is one of gentleness and humility (Matt 11:29)*

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

*A servant attitude is one of service (Matt 20:28)*

just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

*A servant attitude is one that God considers greatest (Luke 22:27)*

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

*A servant attitude is one that is willing to do even menial jobs (John 13:13-14)*

13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

*A servant attitude is one of submission (Heb 5:7-8)*

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

## **Gentle because of His divine quietness (2)**

*Quietness that comes from trusting God (1 Peter 2:23)*

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

*Quietness that allows for a non-response for some situations (Matt 27:14)*

But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

*Quietness that comes from an understanding of the "big" picture (John 8:3-6)*

3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

## **Firm because of His capacity to endure (3)**

*Jesus endured humanity so that He could become a faithful high priest (Heb 2:17-18)*

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

*Jesus endured the cross to be the author and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:1-4)*

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

*Jesus endured being a servant because He was obedient (Phil 2:6-8)*

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!

*Jesus endured all that happened to Him so that He could persevere (2 Thess 3:5)*

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

### **Firm because of His faithfulness (3)**

*Jesus is faithful because He does all He says (1 Thess 5:23-24)*

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

*Jesus is faithful in His strengthening and protection (2 Thess 3:3)*

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

*Jesus cannot be anything but faithful, even if we are faithless (2 Tim 2:11-13)*

11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

*Jesus is a faithful son over God's house (Heb 3:6)*

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

*Jesus is faithful to fulfill His promises (Heb 10:23)*

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

*Jesus is a faithful witness (Rev 1:5)*

5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

### **Gentle because of His divine encouragement (4)**

*Encouragement through prayer (Luke 22:31-32)*

31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

*Encouragement through peace (John 14:27)*

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

*Encouragement through truth and commitment (Heb 6:17-18)*

17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

*Encouragement through provisions (Jonah 4:5-6)*

5 Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.

## **Jesus Brings Justice Through Authority and Revelation (Isa 42:5-9)**

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.

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."

### **Jesus has the authority because He was the creator (5)**

*Creator of things both visible and invisible (Col 1:16)*

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

*Creator through being the Word (John 1:1-3)*

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

*Creator through whom all things exist (1 Cor 8:6)*

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

*Creator through whom all things were made (Heb 1:2)*

but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

*Creator who built everything (Heb 3:3-4)*

3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

### **Jesus has the authority because He gave life to man (5)**

*Jesus provided life through breath (Acts 17:25)*

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

*Jesus provided life because in Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28)*

'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

*Jesus is the only way to life (John 14:6)*

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

*Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35)*

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

*Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)*

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

*Life through Jesus' name (John 20:31)*

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

*God provided eternal life only through one man – Jesus (Rom 5:17)*

17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

### **Jesus has the authority because He has the ability to make us righteous (6)**

*Only through Jesus are the many made righteous (Rom 5:19)*

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

*Righteousness comes through being born through Jesus (1 John 2:29)*

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

*Jesus is our righteousness ( Cor 1:30)*

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

### **Jesus brings revelation through leadership (6)**

*Leadership that leads to justification (Gal 3:24)*

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

*Leadership that leads to the springs of living water (Rev 7:17)*

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

*Leadership that leads to the way of God and truth (Matt 22:16)*

They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are.

*Leadership that leads to the right way (Mark 10:32)*

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

*Leadership that leads to the Father God (John 14:6)*

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

*Leadership that leads to a cleared way (1 Thess 3:11)*

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.

*Leadership that leads to the Most Holy Place (Heb 9:8)*

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.

## **Jesus brings revelation through wisdom and understanding (7)**

*Wisdom and understanding that makes the God's way known to us (Isa 42:16)*

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

*Wisdom and understanding that opens our mind to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45)*

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

*Wisdom and understanding that opens spiritually blind eyes (John 9:39)*

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

*Wisdom and understanding that exposes Satan and leads to sanctification (Acts 26:18)*

to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

*Wisdom and understanding of the glory of God (2 Cor 4:6)*

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

*Wisdom and understanding that allows us to know God better (Eph 1:17-18)*

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints

## **Jesus brings revelation through deliverance (7)**

*Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)*

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

*Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)*

A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;

*Deliverance from trials ( Peter 2:9)*

if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the Day of Judgment, while continuing their punishment.

*Deliverance from temptations ( Cor 10:13)*

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

*Deliverance from evil attacks ( Tim 4:18)*

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Jesus has the authority because He is the Lord (8)**

*Jesus is our Lord because we have peace (Rom 5:1)*

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*Jesus is our Lord because we have eternal life (Rom 5:21)*

so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Jesus is our Lord because we believe in our heart that He has been raised from the dead (Rom 10:9)*

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*Jesus is our Lord because the Holy Spirit indwells us (1 Cor 12:3)*

Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

*Jesus is our Lord because He has all the glory, majesty, power and authority (Jude 25)*

to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

## **Jesus brings revelation through renewal (9)**

*Renewal into a new creation (Cor 5:17)*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

*Renewal into a spiritual covenant (Gal 6:15)*

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

*Renewal inwardly daily (2 Cor 4:16)*

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

*Renewal of the old self (Col 3:10)*

and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

*Renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)*

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable**

#### **Verse 1**

"The *hen* (behold) in ch. xli29 is now followed by a second *hen* [in Isaiah 42:1]. With the former, Jehovah pronounced sentence upon the idolaters and their idols; with the latter, He introduces His "servant." [Note: Delitzsch, 2:174.]

Yahweh called on the nations to see (give attention to) His Servant, in contrast to the idols (cf. Isaiah 41:29). The Old Testament used "servant" to describe the relation of God's people to Himself (cf. Psalm 19:11; Psalm 19:13). Individuals described themselves this way (e.g. Moses in Exodus 4:10; Joshua in Joshua 5:14; and David in 2 Samuel 7:19 and 1 Chronicles 17:17-19; 1 Chronicles 17:23-27), and others described them this way (e.g. Moses in Exodus 14:31; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Exodus 32:13; and David in 1 Kings 8:24). "Servant of the Lord" describes Moses 21 times and Joshua twice. The Lord referred to the following entities as "my servant": Israel (14 times, including seven times in Isaiah 40-55), Moses (six times), David (21 times), the prophets (nine times), Job (seven times), and Nebuchadnezzar (twice). Isaiah's explicit references to Cyrus call him Yahweh's "shepherd" (Isaiah 44:28) and His "anointed" (Isaiah 45:1). [Note: Motyer, p319, n1.]

Yahweh would uphold, or grip firmly, this Servant; He would sustain Him with deep affection. He would be one in whom the Lord delighted wholeheartedly, not just one He would use (cf. Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5).

The Lord would place His Spirit on this Servant, blessing Him with His presence and empowering Him for service (cf. Isaiah 11:2-4; Numbers 11:16-25; 1 Samuel 16:13; Psalm 33:6; Psalm 139:7; Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18-19; Luke 4:21). This Servant would bring forth justice to the nations of the world (cf. Isaiah 9:7; Isaiah 11:3-4; Isaiah 16:5). Justice (Heb. *mishpat*) connotes societal order as well as legal equity. The Gentiles would not find this justice on their own, but the Servant would bring it to them (cf. Isaiah 11:1-5; Isaiah 32:1). Jesus Christ will do this at His second coming. The Targum equated the Servant with Messiah. Modern Jews believe the Servant is Israel or the faithful within Israel. This was also the interpretation of Codex Vaticanus, but the following explanation of the Servant passages should rule out this view.

## **Verse 2**

He would not serve the Lord ostentatiously, nor would He advertise Himself. His ministry would be quiet, non-aggressive, and unthreatening. Obviously Cyrus was not this Servant.

"In Isaiah 42:1 we met the quintessential servant; here is quintessential service. It was forecast by Isaiah, exemplified perfectly in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is to be reproduced in all who would serve the Lord with true service." [Note: Ibid, p320.]

## **Verse 3**

The Lord's Servant would be gracious and patient. He would not discard what seemed to others useless, and He would not extinguish what seemed to others too spent. His calling was to save, not destroy. He would be faithful to His calling to bring forth justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1; cf. Isaiah 11:3-4).

## **Verse 4**

Not only would He not break or extinguish others, but the pressures and blows of others would not break or extinguish Him. This reflects the Spirit's empowerment in His life (cf. Isaiah 42:1). He would complete His mission of establishing justice on the earth. The furthest reaches of the earth will, therefore, anticipate the coming of His law, as Israel did at the base of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19; cf. Isaiah 2:3). They would do so eager for justice to come to the earth, not necessarily eagerly anticipating it to come through the Lord's Servant.

The Lord now turned from describing His Servant's task by speaking *about* Him to confirming His task by speaking *to* Him. This is a pattern in the Servant Songs: confirmation follows description (cf. Isaiah 49:7-13; Isaiah 50:10-11; Isaiah 54:1 to Isaiah 55:13). Two aspects of the Lord's glory that earlier exposed the plight of the Gentile world, namely, that the Gentiles do not know the only true God and that they worship idols, bracket this passage dealing with Gentile hope. [Note: Ibid, p321.] The task of the Servant, not His identity, continues to be the focus of attention. Each segment begins with a reaffirmation of the identity of the true God (Isaiah 42:5-6; Isaiah 42:8).

## **Verse 5**

The speaker identified Himself, for the benefit of the idol-worshipping nations (cf. Isaiah 40:1). He was the transcendent God who created all things (Heb. *ha"el*, cf. Isaiah 40:18), namely, Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of Israel. He described Himself further as He who established the earth and who alone cares for it and sustains its inhabitants. The Servant's ministry will fulfill the Creator's original intention for the earth.

## **Verse 6**

Yahweh not only called an invader in harmony with His righteous purposes for humankind (Isaiah 41:2), but He alone also called this Servant at the right time, in the right place, and for the right purpose.

"The righteousness of God is the stringency with which He Acts, in accordance with the will of His holiness." [Note: Delitzsch, 2:178.]

Cyrus would destroy, but Messiah would build. The Lord promised again to uphold His Servant (cf. Isaiah 42:1). The Servant would fulfill the covenant requirements and promises that God had given His people, becoming a covenant to them in that sense, and so bring them into intimate fellowship with Himself (cf. Isaiah 49:6-8). Thus this Servant cannot be all of Israel or even saved Israel or the prophets. Some commentators view this covenant as the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34), which Christ would ratify with His blood. [Note: See Ibid, 179-80; Grogan, p255; and Chisholm, Handbook on ..., p100-101.] Still others view it as the "covenant of grace" that Christ made available to people by dying on the Cross. [Note: See Young, 3:120-21.] The coming conqueror would drive the nations further into idolatry (Isaiah 41:5-7), but the Servant would lead them to God by serving as a light to the nations who sit in darkness (cf. Luke 2:32; John 14:6). The Lord Himself would do all this through His Servant (cf. Exodus 3:15; Exodus 6:3).

### **Verse 7**

As light, the Servant would heal disabilities (physical and spiritual), end restrictions that others imposed, and transform individual circumstances (cf. Luke 1:79; John 1:4; John 8:12; John 9:5; John 9:39-41; John 12:46; Acts 26:18). He would bring people out of bondage, including their bondage to sin (cf. Isaiah 61:1; John 8:32; Colossians 1:13).

### **Verse 8**

The Lord-Yahweh is His covenant name-is a distinct person with His own name (cf. Exodus 3:13-15). He would keep His covenant with Israel. He is not an idol that someone made and received the glory for making. The praise for His great acts belongs to Him, not to some image fashioned by one of His creatures (cf. Isaiah 41:21-29).

### **Verse 9**

"Behold" concludes this passage as it began it, forming an *inclusio* (cf. Isaiah 42:1). The former things that God had predicted through the prophets-that had come to pass already-provided assurance that the new things that Yahweh just revealed, about Cyrus and Messiah, would also happen. Another view is that the former things are the predictions concerning Cyrus, and the new things are the things having to do with the restoration of Israel. [Note: Delitzsch, 2:180.] Yahweh had revealed them before they happened, thus proving His uniqueness and superiority over the gods of the nations. This is the first of six times God claimed to predict the future in Isaiah (cf. Isaiah 44:7-8; Isaiah 45:1-4; Isaiah 45:21; Isaiah 46:10; Isaiah 48:3-6).

Thus ends Yahweh's disputation with the gods (Isaiah 41:1 to Isaiah 42:9). The appearance of Cyrus, more than 150 years after Isaiah's prophecies about him, would be a kind of sign that the prophecies about the Servant would also come to pass-in the more distant future.

### **Verse 10**

God had not forgotten, nor was He unable to deliver His people (cf. Exodus 3:7-9). Their redemption was certain.

"This vision of what God will accomplish through his Servant is so exciting that Isaiah breaks into the ecstatic hymn of praise (Isaiah 42:10-13), which then functions as a bridge from this section, Isaiah 41:1 to Isaiah 42:9, into the next, Isaiah 42:10 to Isaiah 44:22." [Note: Oswalt, The Book . . . 40-66, p109.]

### **Verses 10-12**

A new song arises in Scripture when someone has learned of something powerful and good that God has done or will do (cf. ch12; Psalm 33:3; Psalm 40:3; Psalm 96:1; Psalm 98:1; Psalm 144:9; Revelation 5:9; Revelation 14:3). Here it is salvation through the Servant that prompts this song of praise (cf. Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah called on everyone to praise the Lord because the Servant's ministry would benefit the whole earth. People living on the farthest seacoasts and in the desert lands should praise Him. Kedar, a son of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13), was also the name of a town in the Arabian Desert (cf. Isaiah 21:16-17; Isaiah 60:7). Sela was near modern Petra and was the mountain fortress city of Edom (cf. Isaiah 16:1). These people in various places represent diverse sources from which universal praise should come to the Lord.

### **Verses 10-22**

The section of Isaiah that I have titled "God's promises to His servants" (Isaiah 41:1 to Isaiah 42:9) sets the stage and introduces themes that Isaiah proceeded to develop in this section. Those themes are the certainty of redemption (Isaiah 42:10 to Isaiah 43:7), the witness to redemption (Isaiah 43:8 to Isaiah 44:20), and the memory of redemption (Isaiah 44:21-22).

### **Verse 13**

This verse gives the reason for the praise just called for. Isaiah gloried in the fact that Yahweh would one day arise as a mighty warrior to overcome His enemies. He did this when He moved Cyrus to allow the Israelites to return to their land. He did it more mightily when He sent Messiah to accomplish redemption. And He will do it most dramatically when Messiah comes back to the earth to defeat His enemies at Armageddon (Revelation 14:14-20; Revelation 19:17-19).

### **Verse 14**

God Himself explained that He had remained quiet a long time, but in the future He would cry out, as a pregnant woman does just before she gives birth. The cry (cf. Isaiah 42:13) signals a mighty act. God would bring forth a new thing.

#### **Verse 15**

Nothing in all creation would be able to resist and prevent the Lord from acting. His coming to judge sin and sinners would be as devastating to them as the searing east wind was to Palestinians.

#### **Verse 16**

However, He would lead His own people, those unable to find their way through the blinding storm of His judgment, to safety (cf. Revelation 12:14). The people of Israel were blind and could not bring the Gentiles into the light, but God would lead His blind servants (cf. Isaiah 42:7). He promised definitely to do this.

#### **Verse 17**

That deliverance would spell humiliation for idolaters because they, and others, would see the impotence of their gods compared to Yahweh. Return from the Exile provided a sign of what God would do for His people in the eschaton. Both acts of God seem to be in view here.

The rest of this chapter addresses Israel's present condition of blindness (cf. Romans 10). Yahweh now disputed with His people, not with pagan idolaters, as formerly. Motyer analyzed the structure of this part of Isaiah differently and saw a parallel between national redemption in Isaiah 42:18 to Isaiah 43:21 and spiritual redemption in Isaiah 43:22 to Isaiah 44:23. [Note: Motyer, p326.]

*(Adapted from URL: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/isaiah-42.html>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The biblical concept of judgment represents God's righteous world order. At His first coming, Jesus treated people more than justly; when Jesus walked the earth, He overcame enemies with gentleness and love. When He returns, He will judge the world based on how each person treated "the least of these" (Matthew 25:45). At His first coming, the Lord's servant inaugurated God's just and right order from a position of apparent weakness when compared to worldly strength; in so doing, He is an example for us so that we can "follow [in] his steps" (1 Peter 2:21-23). We have a part to play in the servant's task of bringing light to the nations and to our neighbors who live in darkness. The Holy Spirit, working through Scripture and circumstances, motivates Christ's followers to take His gospel to the ends of the earth. For more than 2,000 years, Christians have borne witness to Jesus through evangelism (see Matthew 28:18-20) and ministries of mercy: establishing hospitals and schools, caring for prisoners and the poor, and participating in countless other charities (25:34-40). Particularly challenging for most of us is following the manner and attitude of the servant's life and ministry. It's not easy to surrender the self-centeredness and assertiveness that has been with us since birth in the surrounding culture. But God's Word calls us to pattern our lives after His servant Jesus (Philippians 2:4-8). How will you follow the example of Jesus? How will you serve?

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

God's Servant - Isaiah described God's Servant and what the Servant would do. In doing so, Isaiah described Jesus and what He did. Filled with God's Spirit, Jesus quietly and humbly brought justice to the people.

The Reed and the Wick - To describe God's Servant, the prophet painted two pictures. One was of a reed—a fragile plant that usually grows in a swamp. It can be easily crushed or destroyed by an animal or an act of nature such as a fierce wind. The Savior gently handles this insignificant plant, keeping it from breaking apart. Isaiah also pictured a dimly burning wick for a lamp. The Messiah carefully trims the wick, drenches it with fresh oil, and blows His breath on it—making sure it does not go out. The Savior, unlike the reed or wick, is free from any evil or bad scars. Nothing dims His light. In God's perfection, He is God's blemish-free sacrifice to take away the sins of humanity. No nationality, country, class or religion is beyond His reach; each has the opportunity to embrace His truth. Regardless of their choice, it is still the Lord who provides every human being with their very breath.

The Light - Isaiah continued to speak of God's Servant, the Messiah, as the light to all nations. He is the absolute, final promise of God to both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus will bring any of His children out of being lost or in the dark. He illuminates their path, guiding them out of the captivity of sin and into His freedom.

God's Servant - the Messiah, Jesus Christ—is the light of the world. He came into the world to bring God's justice for all, Jews and Gentiles. On Palm Sunday they celebrated Him, but they were wanting political justice, not spiritual justice. How often today do we want the same thing?