

Session 14 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 41-42

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Isaiah spoke this to the people of Judah sometime before the Assyrians invaded the land in 701 BC.
- B. Outline for Isaiah 41-42
 - 41:1-7 The Lord controls human history
 - 41:8-16 The Lord will help Israel
 - 41:17-20 The Lord will supernaturally help Israel return to the land
 - 41:21-29 The powerlessness of false gods

 - 42:1-4 God's Servant will establish justice in the nations
 - 42:5-9 God's Servant will give light to the nations
 - 42:10-17 The end-time prayer movement and Jesus' second coming
 - 42:18-25 God's discipline of Israel

II. THE LORD CONTROLS HUMAN HISTORY (ISA. 41:1-7)

- A. God called the nations to determine who was in control of history and who had strength (41:1-4). The Lord summons the nations to an open discussion so that He can lay out the evidence before all. Isaiah had just declared that the nations had no strength compared to the Lord (40:12-31).
¹"Keep silence before Me, O coastlands, and let the people [the nations] renew their strength! Let them come near...let us come near together for judgment [a formal decision]. ²Who raised up one from the east?...Who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Who gave them as the dust to his sword...? ⁴Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I am He.'" (Isa. 41:1-4)
- B. **Keep silence:** The Lord called the nations to listen carefully to Him before they spoke arrogantly making claims about their strength (41:1). The call for "silence" alerts them to listen carefully.
- C. **Renew their strength:** The Lord offered to give strength to the nations. This blessing had just been offered to Israel (40:31). All are invited to "renew their strength" by embracing His leadership and looking to Him. The nations cannot renew their strength by their gods or by a military build-up.
- D. **Who raised up one from the east:** The Lord was asking, in essence, who was responsible to raise up the "military super powers" of any given generation (41:2-4). He asked them who raised up a military conqueror from the east who could easily defeat many nations. The emphasis here is on the Lord who was the power behind this leader from the east. Suggestions for who this unnamed man from the east include: Cyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, or Sennacherib.
- E. God's presentation of His sovereignty here was to help Judah not to fear (41:10), but look to Him. The message here is that Israel in right relationship with God has a glorious future full of promise.
- F. The nations rejected God's offer, seeking to gain strength from each other and their gods (41:5-7).

III. THE LORD WILL HELP ISRAEL (ISA. 41:8-16)

- A. The Lord spoke of promises to Israel that He would ultimately fulfill in the end times in context to Jesus' return (41:8-16). It seemed to some of them that God had rejected Israel. Judah need not fear because God will strengthen them to prevail over those who war against them.

⁸“But you, Israel, are My servant...the descendants of Abraham My friend. ⁹You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions...¹⁰Fear not, for I am with you...I will strengthen you...¹²Those who war against you shall be as nothing...¹⁴Fear not, you worm Jacob... ¹⁵Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth; you shall thresh the mountains...¹⁶You shall rejoice in the LORD, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.”
(Isa. 41:8-16)

- B. ***I have taken from the ends of the earth*** (41:9): God called them from its “farthest regions.” God promised to regather Israel from the nations in the end times (Isa. 11:11-16; Zech. 10:8-12; 8:7-8).
- C. ***Fear not*** (41:10, 13, 14): When people are fearful, they are vulnerable to making wrong choices. Some in Israel fainting for fear will be deceived into embracing the Antichrist as their messiah.

²⁶...men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming... (Lk. 21:26)

- D. ***Those who war against you shall be as nothing***: The Lord will totally destroy all the armies that war against Israel, including the mighty armies of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4).
- E. ***I will help you*** (41:10, 13, 14): Isaiah promised His help three times in this passages for emphasis.
- F. ***You worm, Jacob***: This is a picture of one who is weak, vulnerable, and easily crushed.
- G. ***I will make you into a new threshing sledge*** (41:15): The Lord will make Israel into a mighty threshing sledge that will thresh and winnow mountains or mighty nations. A threshing sledge with sharp metal attachments was pulled over various crops to crush and get them ready to be winnowed.
- H. ***You shall rejoice in the Lord*** (41:16): Israel will be the first nation in which every one of its citizens will be born again and walking in righteousness (Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:26).

²⁶And so all Israel will be saved...“The Deliverer...will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”
(Rom. 11:26)

IV. GOD WILL SUPERNATURALLY HELP ISRAEL RETURN TO THE LAND (ISA. 41:17-20)

- A. The Lord will supernaturally help the people of Israel return to the land in the end times (41:17-20).

¹⁷“The poor and needy seek water, but there is none...¹⁸I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water...¹⁹I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the

cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, ²⁰that they may see and...understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.” (Isa. 41:17-20)

- B. **The poor and needy (41:17):** These Jewish refugees will seek for water as they journey through the desert on their way to Israel after Jesus returns and destroys the Antichrist.
- C. **I will open rivers in desolate heights (41:18):** The Lord will supernaturally cause water to flow on the mountain tops, fountains to break forth in valleys, and pools of water and springs in the desert.
- D. **I will plant trees in the wilderness (41:19):** Isaiah mentioned seven types of trees that provide shade. This will aid refugees walking through the desert.

V. THE POWERLESSNESS OF FALSE GODS (ISA. 41:21-29)

- A. The Lord challenged the nations to prove that their gods had wisdom and power (41:21-24). He called the nations to give examples of times where their gods prophesied important international events in history (former things) or of important international things in the future (things to come).

²¹*“Present your case,” says the LORD. “Bring forth your strong reasons,” says the King of Jacob.*
²²*“Let them...show the former things...and...declare to us things to come.” (Isa. 41:21-22)*

- B. The Lord raised up one from the north (41:25-29). The Lord predicted a significant international event in contrast to the idols’ inability to do so. The Lord would raise up a mighty military leader from the north. Isaiah identified him later as Cyrus, king of Persia (44:28; 45:1; Ezra 1:2-4).

²⁵*“I have raised up one from the north...and he shall come against princes as though mortar...”*
²⁶*Who has declared from the beginning...that we may say, ‘He is righteous’?... (Isa. 41:25-29)*

VI. GOD’S SERVANT WILL ESTABLISH JUSTICE IN THE NATIONS (ISA. 42:1-4)

- A. Isaiah starts by describing Jesus’ ministry at His first coming and then described the fullness at the His ministry in context to His second coming (42:1-4). In the end times, the subject of justice is a primary focus in both God’s and Satan’s kingdoms.

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 [all the nations]. ²He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth...” (Isa. 42:1-4)*

- B. **Justice:** Justice is making wrong things right. The Hebrew word for justice, *mishpat*, speaks of social order as well as legal equity. Isaiah prophesied about justice more than any other in Scripture (Isa. 1:17, 27; 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 16:5; 28:6; 28:17; 30:18; 32:1, 16; 33:5; 42:1, 3, 4; 51:4; 56:1; 61:8).

- C. **He will not cry out:** Isaiah described Jesus' approach to justice at His first coming (42:2-4). He did not lift His voice in the street in a political or military uprising (40:2). He caused justice to prevail while offering tender mercy to all who seek Him (42:3)—a bruised reed He will not break. Jesus endured more resistance than most, yet was steadfast in humility and trust in God (42:4).
- D. **Litmus test:** Isaiah 42 provides the clearest biblical model for partnering with Jesus' mandate to establish justice in the nations. The kingdom approach to justice must be in deep **allegiance** to Jesus (42:8), released by **intercessory worship** (42:10-12), and operating in the Spirit's **power** (42:1, 7), resulting in **evangelism** (42:17) and support for the **remnant of Israel** (42:7, 22), from lives of **righteousness** energized by **intimacy** with God (42:1, 6).
- E. **Justice in the earth:** The context for Jesus' parable on intercession is injustice in the end times (Lk. 17:22-18:8). Jesus referred to a time when justice would be released in all the earth (Isa. 42:4). The context of the Luke 18 prayer on prayer is the end-time global oppression of the Antichrist.
4He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth... (Isa. 42:4)
7Now will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night...8He will bring about justice for them quickly. (Lk. 18:7-8; NAS)
- F. It is essential to prioritize justice and approach it in the way in which the Scripture teaches us. One of the most important moments in IHOPKC's history was on September 19, 2009, when we committed by the grace of God to **combine 24/7 prayers for justice with 24/7 works of justice**.
- G. Every sphere of society in every nation will be filled with justice by the end of the Millennium. Some are confused by the amount of justice to expect in the nations in this age. It is substantial, but not total. In the parables of the kingdom (Mt. 13), Jesus taught that the nature of the kingdom in this age was to start as a seed that grows in context to increasing darkness with mixed responses.
- H. There is significant continuity of our labors now with what Jesus will do in the millennial kingdom.

VII. GOD'S SERVANT WILL GIVE LIGHT TO THE NATIONS (ISA. 42:5-9)

- A. The Father spoke directly to Jesus, assuring Him of intimate partnership unto victory (42:6-8). In this conversation within the Trinity, the Father committed to "hold and sustain Jesus." Intimacy with the Father was essential to Jesus and to those who partner with Him in resisting injustice.
6"I, the LORD, have called You [Jesus]...and will hold Your hand; I will keep [sustain] You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, 7to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house...9Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Isa. 42:6-9)
- B. **I will give You as a covenant:** Jesus is the means of the covenant that we have with God. He embodies and enables all that pertains to the new covenant.
- C. **As a light to Gentiles:** The Father said it was too small a thing to send Jesus only for Israel (49:6).

⁶Indeed He says, “It is too small a thing that You [Jesus] should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6)

- D. ***To bring out prisoners from the prison:*** Jesus’ ministry includes liberating physical and spiritual prisoners. Those who sit in darkness in a prison house describes physical prisoners.

VIII. THE END-TIME PRAYER MOVEMENT AND JESUS’ SECOND COMING (42:10-17)

- A. Isaiah prophesied about a global intercessory worship movement (42:10-13) that will be dynamically connected to Jesus’ return (42:13) and the end-time judgments (42:14-15). Jesus is not coming in a vacuum, but in answer to a global worship movement.

¹⁰Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands...¹¹Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing...from the top of the mountains ...¹³The LORD shall go forth [Jesus’ return] like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies...” (Isa. 42:10-13)

1. ***New song:*** The prophetic “new song” in Scripture is released by the Spirit at very important times when God determines to make a dramatic shift in salvation history.
 2. ***From the ends of the earth:*** Isaiah highlights five of the most challenging regions of the world that will join in the end-time worship and prayer movement.
 3. ***Go down to the sea:*** includes the nearly 12,000 inhabited islands of the earth
 4. ***Coastlands:*** includes the major population centers on the coastlands of the earth
 5. ***Wilderness:*** includes the small cities in the wilderness and desert regions of the earth
 6. ***Villages of Kedar and Sela:*** Islamic villages in Jordan (Sela) and Saudi Arabia (Kedar); Kedar is a collective name for Arab tribes (Isa. 21:16; 60:7; Jer. 2:10; 49:28; Ezek. 27:21).
 7. ***Mountain tops:*** a difficult place to assemble people for worship and prayer
- B. Jesus will prevail against His enemies by releasing His judgments against the Antichrist’s empire (42:13-15).
- ¹³The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies. ¹⁴“I have held My peace a long time; I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once. ¹⁵I will lay waste the mountains and hills [earthquakes], and dry up all their vegetation [drought]; I will make the rivers coastlands [earthquakes]...” (Isa. 42:13-15)***
- C. ***Prevail against His enemies:*** Jesus will stop oppressors (42:14). We do see the need for a judge until oppressors rise up. The Antichrist’s empire will be far more powerful than Hitler’s Nazism.

- D. **Held My peace:** Jesus has held His peace or been “silent” in His global judgments throughout history. He has restrained Himself according to the perfect wisdom of Father’s timetable.
- E. **I will lay waste mountains:** Isaiah highlighted earthquakes and drought (42:15). Isaiah highlighted the earthquakes described in the prophets and in the book of Revelation that will destroy the Antichrist’s resources and infrastructures (Isa. 2:10, 19, 21; 13:13; 29:6; Ezek. 38:19; Hag. 2:6, 21; Zech. 14:4-5; Heb. 12:26-27; Rev. 6:14; 8:5; 11:13; 16:18-20).
¹⁸There was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth... (Rev. 16:18)
- F. **I will dry up the pools:** The two witnesses will release a drought for 3½ years or the same length of time as the drought related to Elijah’s prophesying (Rev. 11:3-6).
⁶These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy. (Rev. 11:6)

IX. GOD’S DISCIPLINE OF ISRAEL (42:18-25)

- A. The Lord described many of His people as being spiritually blind and deaf messengers (42:19-20). They are ignorant of what the Scripture says about what He is doing in the earth.
¹⁸“Hear, you deaf; and look, you blind, that you may see. ¹⁹Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I send?...²⁰Seeing many things, but you do not observe...” ²¹The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will exalt the law [Word] and make it honorable. (Isa. 42:18-20)
- B. **He will exalt the law:** In the end times the Lord will exalt or magnifying the Word of God when billions of people will be in need of understanding the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 24:14).
¹...Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified... (2 Thes. 3:1)
¹⁰...so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord...¹¹God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul...²⁰So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10-11, 20)
- C. The Lord allows Jewish people to be put into prison in the end time (42:22-23). Here, Isaiah describes one of the most offensive aspects of God’s end-time plan to bring salvation to Israel.
²²But this is a people robbed and plundered; all of them are snared in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses; they are for prey, and no one delivers...! ²³Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come? ²⁴Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the LORD, He against whom we have sinned?...²⁵He has poured on him the fury of His anger...yet he did not know; and it burned him, yet he did not take it to heart. (Isa. 42:22-25)
- D. The New Testament describes Christians suffering persecution and even being taken captive (Rev. 13:7, 10; cf. Mt. 10:21-22, 28; 24:9; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4; 2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4).

- E. The Old Testament focuses on Jewish people being scattered, persecuted, and/or taken captive (Ps. 102:20; Isa. 11:11-14, 16; 14:1-3; 19:23; 27:12-13; 40:11; 42:7, 16, 22; 45:14; 49:9-12, 21, 24-26; 60:10, 12, 14; 61:1, 5; Jer. 30:3, 8, 10, 17; 31:16, 23; Ezek. 39:23-29; Hos. 11:11; Joel 3:1-2, 8; Amos 9:14; Mic. 2:12-13; 4:6-7; 5:6; 7:12; Zeph. 3:19-20; Zech. 9:11-12; 10:10-11; 13:8; 14:2).