

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

THEME:

Jesus, the Servant of the Lord; polemic against idolatry; and Israel the servant of the Lord.

REMARKS:

It seems imperative to us that we discover and distinguish the two separate servants mentioned in this chapter. The nation Israel is called the servant of Jehovah. Delitzsch says, "Now the **'servant of the Lord'** is always Israel." The nation is definitely in view in verse 19.

The Messiah, Jesus, the personal representative of the nation Israel, is definitely in view in verses 1-7. In Matthew 12:17-21 there is an application of this prophecy to Jesus. The first three verses in this chapter are a fitting prophetic outline of the introduction to Mark's Gospel (Mark 1:1-13). In Mark we see, first of all, the beginning of the Gospel which goes back to Isaiah 40. Isaiah 40 introduces the forerunner who introduces the Messiah. In Mark, He is God's servant, he said:

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

We see God putting His Spirit upon Him in the baptism of Jesus.

Since Mark emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, it seems that the servant character of the Messiah is given to set forth Jesus, the man, he identified Himself with the nation Israel, that He might become the representative of that nation as the perfect servant. The nation was a blind servant. The two servants in this chapter are in contrast and are not identical.

It is said of Jesus that He ". . . **took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men**" (Philippians 2:7).

It is well to emphasize again that when Jesus became a man, He not only identified Himself with all humanity, but also specifically with the nation Israel, "**of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.**" As a Jew, He became the servant of the human race and "**became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**" It is well to note that, as the Servant of the Lord, He was obedient to the Father's will, he did not obey men, he was not their servant, he shined no one's shoes, and He did not become butler to Herod, he came to do the Father's will.

There is one further remark we need to make on this chapter which we have called to the reader's attention before—the central section of this chapter is a denunciation of graven images.

All through this section there is a continual repudiation of idolatry, the prevailing sin and seemingly incurable disease of the nation. God will not yield His place of supremacy to any form of idolatry. Anything to which a man gives his total life and longing becomes his idol.

This is the reason that covetousness is modern idolatry. It takes the place of God.

OUTLINE:

1. **The SERVANT of the Lord—JESUS.** Verses 1-7
2. **The SCOURGE (sacrilege) of Idolatry—Graven Images.** Verses 8-17
3. **The SERVANT of God—JACOB, the Nation Israel.** Verses 18-25

COMMENT:

Verse 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.**

“**Behold**”—is a bugle call to arrest our attention and fix our eyes upon Jesus. It reminds us of the injunction in Hebrews 3:1. “. . . **consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.**”

CONSIDER JESUS is the theme of this section.

It is “**looking unto Jesus**” that will keep us from all modern forms of idolatry. “**My servant**” is the descriptive title which gives the tone of this new section of Isaiah. In the first 34 chapters of Isaiah, the emphasis was upon the lofty plane of a sovereign upon a regal throne where He sat in majesty “**high and lifted up,**” ruling in absolute power and righteousness.

In this new section, He is a servant obedient even unto death, suffering for the sins of His subjects. The servant character becomes dominant and prominent in this last division. “**In whom my soul delighteth**”—“**. . . Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (Mark 1:11).

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

Dr. Ironside says that this verse delivered him from being a rude witness for Christ, he saw that our Lord was a “perfect gentleman,” and that He never forced His will or attention upon those who resisted it.

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

This verse is quoted in Matthew 12:20, he would not harm or crush a poor human being who had been bruised and beaten by life, however, if a man was ready to ignite because of deliberate and willful sinning, our Lord did not move to stop him. Truth is always the insignia of His judgment.

Verse 4—**He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.**

This verse is projected into the future and will be fulfilled in the kingdom.

Verse 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:**

God rests His authority and right of way on the fact that He is the Creator.

Verse 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;**

Jesus is a light of the world today, he will also be the light of the Gentiles in a coming day.

Verse 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.**

Christ performed these miracles, when He was here the first time, as credentials of the King.

Verse 8—**I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.**

Now begins God's polemic against idolatry. God never shares His essential glory with any of His creatures. There is a glory He communicates to His Church.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one (John 17:22).

God never permits any creature to take His place as God in the affections and devotions of His creatures.

Verse 9—**Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.**

Only God can predict the future accurately.

Verse 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.**

All creatures on this earth will sing praises unto God in the Kingdom.

Verse 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.**

All earthly creatures will worship God in that coming day.

Verse 12—**Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.**

“**Islands**”—this word occurs in verses 4 and 10 as well as here. It literally means the *sea-washed shores* and means the *continents* where the Gentiles dwell.

Verse 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.**

This Servant who is gentle and gracious will judge the people.

Verse 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.**

The patience of God will finally end, and the Servant will judge.

Verse 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.**

The physical earth will be affected.

Verse 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.**

This is the way He leads His own. They are blind to the future, he is not, so He will lead all who put their trust in Him.

Verse 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.**

The idolaters are warned.

Verse 18—**Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.**

Verse 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?**

He identifies the blind servant here as His own people Israel.

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me (Isaiah 43:10).

They are blind and deaf to God now, but their eyes will be opened some day, and they will turn to God. God will yet restore them to their land.

Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock (Jeremiah 31: 10).

Verse 20—**Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.**

Verse 21—**The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.**

This points to that future day.

Verse 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 people is Israel, the nation.

Verse 23—**Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?**

God calls upon those who think He has rejected Israel to listen to Him.

Verse 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 people and nation are identified as Israel. God scattered him and God will regather him.

Verse 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.**

The chastening of the Lord did not cause the nation to repent and return to God.

Did this thwart the purposes of God?

The answer, of course, is a loud negative—“NO.”

The next chapter (Isaiah 43) will give abundant evidence that our answer is the correct one.

~ end of chapter 42 ~

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