

The Song of the Elect Servant

Isaiah's Servant Songs

Isaiah 42:1-20

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Isaiah's Servant Songs

42:1-13 *The Elect Servant*

49:1-13 *The Faithful Servant*

50:4-11 *The Learned Servant*

52:13-53:12 *The Suffering Servant*

61:1-11 *The Joyful Servant*

I. Shaping My Ministry

II. God's Challenge to the Idols (Is 41:21-24 cf. 1 Kgs 18:20ff)

Disgusted by the influence that dead and lifeless idols have had over Israel and all nations, in Isaiah 40-66, God challenges them to a contest. He speaks through Isaiah (41:21-24):

²¹"Present your case," says the LORD. "Bring forth your strong reasons," says the King of Jacob. ²²"Let [these idols] bring forth and show us what will happen; Let them show the former things, what they were, That we may consider them, And know the latter end of them; Or declare to us things to come. ²³Show the things that are to come hereafter, That we may know that you are gods; Yes, do good or do evil, That we may be dismayed and see it together. ²⁴Indeed you are nothing, And your work is nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.

While the idols remain silent, God demonstrates that He is the Living God by revealing two events hundreds of years before they occur: the coming of Cyrus, King of Persia (c. 538 BC) to conquer Babylon and the coming of His Servant, Jesus, to conquer sin and idolatry.

III. The Elect Servant

Isaiah 42:1-9

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. 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; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

⁵Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: ⁶"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep 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.

⁸I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. ⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

A. His Threefold Identity (1 cf. Num 12:7; Dt 18:15ff; Mt 3:17)

B. His Threefold Character (2-4)

1. Humble (2 cf. Mt 4:6; Mk 1:44; 5:43; 7:33)

2. Gracious (3 cf. Mk 1:31, 41; 2:5; 5:34, 36; 7:30; 14:6)

3. Patient (4 cf. Mk 4:1-34)

In this verse, we find the seeds of Jesus' view of God's _____. Remember that God's Kingdom is simply God's _____ manifest in human history. In Jesus' day, most Jews believed and taught that God's Kingdom would come like an overwhelming flood. But that doesn't fit Isaiah's prophecy. So Jesus taught that the kingdom is like a farmer's crop, a mustard seed, and leaven. It works gradually.

C. His Threefold Calling (5-9)

1. Establish Justice (1-4)

He will establish justice in the earth by spreading God's law through all the earth.

2. Enlighten the Blind & Free the Prisoners (5-7)

He will rescue the nations from their sinful blindness and their enslavement to idols.

3. Magnify God's Glory (8-9)

And He will do both these things because God is jealous of His _____ and intends to restore true worship in all the earth, among all nations.

IV. We Become Like What We Worship (Ps 115; Is 42:17-20; 2 Cor 3:17)

In biblical theology, we become like what we _____. Hence, when we worship idols, we become increasingly like them. Psalm 115 declares:

⁴*Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.* ⁵*They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;* ⁶*They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell;* ⁷*They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat.* ⁸*Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.*

When we worship idols, we become like them. This was true in Isaiah's day. God was repulsed by the Israelites' character, a character that reflected their rampant idolatry (Is 42:17-20):

¹⁷*They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed, Who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, 'You are our gods.'* ¹⁸*"Hear, you deaf; And look, you blind, that you may see.* ¹⁹*Who is blind but My servant [Israel], Or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the LORD's servant?* ²⁰*Seeing many things, but you do not observe; Opening the ears, but he does not hear."*

Hence, if we want to *establish justice in America* and to see God's *law* exalted in our nation (cf. Mt 28:18-20), then we must pray that our people repent of their _____ and worship the Living God. This is the only pathway to righteousness. Idols cannot convey life; Jesus can. So Jesus declared to the Samaritan woman, "*God is seeking worshipers to worship Him in Spirit and Truth*" (cf. Jn 4:23). This is what God is about. It is why He sent His Son, and it is why He has commissioned us to go in the world: that those who are giving *glory to idols* and becoming increasingly *shameful* like those idols may start giving *glory to God* and becoming increasingly *glorious*.

Worship is the key to sanctification and transformation. When we worship the Living God, we become increasingly like Him, we begin to reflect His character in our character. Paul declares, "*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord*" (2 Cor 3:18). The more we worship *the glorious God*, the more *glorious* we become.

V. Conclusion