

“Choice Servanthood”

Isaiah 42:1-25

Context: Isaiah revisits the Servant of the Lord ‘thread’ as part of his prophecy about the end of the captivity in Babylon and the Remnant’s return to the Promised Land. Earlier, the Persian King Cyrus was used as a ‘type’ of redeemer of Israel. In this passage, the Servant of the Lord God is presented as the fulfillment of all the previous types of redeemer. His redemption transcends the physical Babylonian captivity of Israel and extends to the spiritual captivity of the Remnant in the fallen world system described as Babylon in the Book of Revelation. **Life Principle:** Biblical servanthood is choosing to obey the Lord in the service for which has laid hold of you, not selecting the service you prefer (cp. Is. 42:1-9; Phil. 2:5-8; 3:12-13; Jn. 13:3-17).

1. Serving the Lord – Isaiah 42:1-9

The Lord’s Servant who delivers the Remnant from subjugation is proclaimed. He comes with the divine anointing of the Holy Spirit. This anointing is evinced by God’s pleasure in His sinless state, His gentle healing work with the weak, His humility, His imputation of righteousness through suffering, and His sending of the Holy Spirit to anoint the spiritually blind that they may see. Jesus Christ applies these verses to Himself revealing that He fulfills the prophecy as God’s redeeming Servant.

2. Singing of His way – Isaiah 42:10-17

Isaiah gives an ecstatic call to sing words of a new song for the light and hope of the Remnant’s promised new and blessed existence. The new words come from a new supernatural journey that the redeemed have never experienced, a journey led by God Himself.

3. Heeding His call – Isaiah 41:18-25

The flow of the Servant’s song concludes with a description of chastisement to the disobedient, faithless faith community, Israel. They were called to serve but refused, even under God’s discipline such as that experienced in the Babylonian captivity. This is a warning applicable today to those churches symbolized by Laodicea in Revelation 3:14.

Study questions:

- Matthew 12:18-21 is cited as a fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1-4. In what sense does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah? How does the citation in Matthew differ from that of Isaiah? Why the difference? What did His healing symbolize? How does Jesus exemplify the way that future sons and servants of God are to be empowered by the Holy Spirit as they participate in the proclamation of the kingdom?
- Doctrine is based upon spiritual life. Isaiah 42:1 reveals that Jesus exemplifies the perfect Servant of the Lord God. Look up the meaning of servant in *TWOT* (#1553f) and also as it is applied to Jesus in *TDNT* (v.2, p 277). How do these descriptions concur with our description of Jesus’ work as servant (see footnotes 11-14 ‘**On Jesus Christ**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org)? How is the servanthood of Jesus supposed to affect our lives (cf. Philippians 2:3-8; John 13:15)? What does that look like according to Isaiah 42:2-3?
- Certain terms carry profound theological content. In Isaiah 42:6, the Servant of God is given as a “covenant” to the people. As a **Bible study method**, look up the term “covenant” in the *TWOT* (#282a). Who are the people of the covenant in this passage? Using the basic notion of covenant, describe the sense in which Jesus Christ is a covenant to the people. As part of the people, how is Jesus a covenant to you personally?

Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Isaiah 42:2-3. How do you treat those who are weaker than you? Ask the Lord to illuminate your mind with the Spirit so that this week you may bring His way of service to the “broken, ratted on, sat on, and spat upon.”