

Jesus, For Who He Is (Part 1) – Is 42:1-9

Is 42:1-9; It's good to be back from Malaysia, and I'm thankful for your prayers – it was a good trip, and I can't wait to tell you about it next week in a Harvest Update
For now, suffice it to say that it was pretty cool to be a part of the launch of the newest church in our Fellowship – HBC-Kuala Lumpur; Gotta love the sound of that

I'm also thankful for Jeremy, our Campus Pastor, who preached here on our main campus last week; And Douglas Humphrey, our Director of Adult Ministries . . .
Who preached at the West Campus; Faithful men who rightly divide the word of truth

➤ That said, we have another amazing passage in front of us; And I want to spend the first half of the message telling you why; And there are 3 reasons for that:
1. I want you to see all this for yourself, so you don't think I'm just making this stuff up
2. I want you to feel the significance and experience the “wow” of this prophecy
3. I want you to be able to discern other passages just like it in the Old Testament
That's the first half of the message
And then in the second, we'll get to the actual truths it proclaims

So first of all, when it comes to telling you all about this passage, and why – it's important to understand that it's a Servant Song

Isaiah 42 is a Servant Song

In fact, it's the first of several “Servant Songs” in these chapters
Song, b/c it's poetic and metaphorical in nature, like much of Isaiah . . .
And Servant, b/c that's the word he uses – *Behold my servant* (1)
Hence, a Servant Song

And there are 4 of them – at least the ones referring to an *individual*
There's this one in chapter 42, another in chapter 49, a third in 50, and the most famous of all – found in Is 53
Where the one of whom it speaks is often referred to as the *suffering* servant

➤ The difficult part, is that they're set within a larger section, chapters 40-55, where God sometimes refers to an *individual* as his servant . . .
And sometimes his people *collectively* as his servant; Like we saw 2 weeks ago in 41:8
God says – *You, Israel, my servant*; Referring to his people collectively
And in 44:1 he says – *Now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!*
Again, clearly referring to his people as a whole

But other times, he seems to have an individual in mind; And the hard part is distinguishing which is which
Which songs or passages refer to an individual, who we now know is *Jesus*, and which ones refer to his people, including us at times
All of which is a big deal b/c we don't want to read Jesus back *into* the text, and make it say something it doesn't . . .
Nor miss him as the *fulfillment*, and all that it means for our lives

In fact, that's the very thing Jewish interpreters do; In an effort to deny Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, they miss the salvation he offers
Meanwhile, we tend to see Jesus on every page, when there's no textual warrant for it, or assume it has nothing to do with us at all

➤ So it's important to distinguish between the two types of songs – what I'll call a *Messianic* Servant Song, and a *Corporate* Servant Song
And you do that by paying attention to 5 indicators – the pronouns, scope, deeds, context, and fulfillment; And I'll go through them; But the bottom line is . . .

Don't miss the indicators!

For instance, God refers to his servant here as *him* and *he* – **Stand-alone Pronouns**
Look at v1 – *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. [2] He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; [3] a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. [4] He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.*

All singular pronouns, and there's no reference to corporate Israel
IOW he doesn't say – Behold, my servant *Israel* whom I uphold, *Jacob* whom I have chosen; Establishing his people *corporately* . . .
As the reference point for the following pronouns; He doesn't do that

Rather, he simply lets the pronouns stand alone
Indicating that he's probably talking about an individual; Or at least someone different than Israel as a whole

Second, is **Worldwide Scope**; Like in v1b where God says – *he will bring forth justice to the nations*; And in v4 . . .
He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth
And v6b – *I will give you* (still referring to his servant) *as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations*
All indicating that the scope of what's going on here, is beyond our reach

Third, is **Supernatural Deeds**; In this case, deeds that exceed our *ability* as God's people
Like in v3b – *he will faithfully bring forth justice*; As in *always*; And without fail
And v4 – *He will not grow faint or be discouraged*; Something too, that's beyond us
And how about v6-7 – *I will give you as a covenant for the people* [a means of sealing my promise God is saying], *a light for the nations* [a means of dispelling the darkness and giving hope], [7] *to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.*
Those are some pretty amazing deeds; Well beyond *our* ability

Fourth in helping us understand who God is talking *about* and *to*, is **Contextual Support**
And there are 3 sources – the immediate context, the larger context, and the biblical context

For instance, it says in v6b – *I will give you as a covenant for the people*; Indicating a difference between the people, the people of God, and his servant
So they can't be one and the same, and therefore this can't be a Corporate Servant Song
That's the immediate context

And then there's the larger context, where we find later on in chapter 53, that God's servant *redeems* his people; Again, distinguishing between . . .

His servant and his people, and pointing toward a Messianic Song

And then last on this one, is the biblical context; Where we find in passages like Lk 2:32, that Jesus, the Messiah, is referred to as *a light to the Gentiles*
Another way of saying nations; Just like v6 here in Isaiah
Once again supporting the conclusion that it's a Messianic Song
Don't miss the contextual support when interpreting prophecy

And then last, is **New Testament Fulfillment**; That's the last indicator
And it's critical to removing all doubt, that Is 42 refers to the Christ, the Messiah
And I want you to see it for yourself, by turning with me to Mt 12:15-23 (Is 42)

[15] *Jesus, aware of this* [aware that the Pharisees were out to get him b/c he healed a man on the Sabbath], *withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all* [16] *and ordered them not to make him known.* [17] *This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:*

[18] *“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles* [the nations]. [19] *He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets* [b/c he told them not to make him known]; [20] *a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory;* [21] *and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”*

[22] *Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”* [IOW can this be the Christ? The Messiah?]

➤ That's the New Testament Fulfillment; Where in one fell swoop Matthew confirms that the servant of whom Isaiah spoke, is Jesus; The Messiah; The Son of David
He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet

First, by bringing *justice* to bear – proclaiming that it was right to get *food* on the Sabbath, and do *good* on the Sabbath; Second, by flying under the radar; Or trying to
Not making a big deal of what he was doing, or drawing undue attention to himself by crying aloud in the streets, and telling those he healed not to say anything at all

And then 3rd, he was tender toward those in need – he didn't crush their spirit; Just like the prophecy said
A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; Until he does what is *right* for those in need

And as if *that* wasn't enough to confirm the fulfillment, he also opened the eyes of the blind, just like God said in Is 42:7
I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, [7] to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

He did it literally with the demon-oppressed man, and spiritually with hundreds more

No wonder they thought he was the Messiah; And they were right; B/c it fit
Everything he did fit the prophecy about God's servant in Isaiah (**Summary**)

So hands down, Is 42 is a Messianic Servant Song – a poetic prophecy about Jesus
Don't miss the indicators

➤ The question is, do you see him for who he is? B/c that's the purpose of all this
Having just laid down the gauntlet at the end of chapter 41 regarding the futility of *idols*, inanimate objects that supposedly served *them* . . .
God says in v1 – *Behold my servant; Whom I uphold; My chosen; In whom my soul delights*

IOW take a look at *my* guy; You've worshipped your useless idols long enough; And to no avail; The time has come to see *my* servant

And the contrast he paints couldn't be any clearer
The question is, do you *see* it? And do you see *him* – for who he is?

➤ Or have you created a god in your own image like so many in *Isaiah's* day?
Someone *missing* some of these characteristics
Someone *different* than the One who came, and died, and rose again

Or maybe your idol god has *some* of the characteristics of Jesus, but not all
Someone who's loving, but not just; Someone who's just, but not tender

Or maybe the god that you've inadvertently made in your own image, is weak; Like you
Oh you may not think of him that way, or admit it – but could it be that he's functionally powerless?
Shown by the depths of your doubt that he's capable or even cares?
Is that your god? Careful, careful

B/c we tend to emphasize the things we *like* about God, and the things like *us*, while minimizing the things we dislike, and are different
All of which yields an idol; An idol we *call* Jesus, but isn't really him
Which means it behooves us, either as a corrective or a preventative, to see him for who he is; And this passage goes a long way toward that

Starting with the fact that . . .

Jesus is the apple of God's eye (v1)

He is; We don't tend to think of him that way, but that's definitely the gist of v1
Behold [take a look at] *my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him*

If you uphold someone, if you support them; And *choose* them, marking them as special among all others; And *delight* in them from the depths of your heart . . .
And give them all you have, and all that you are, including the power and presence of your very Spirit – they're the apple of your eye

It's like a couple who adopts a single child
Choosing him above all others, upholding and supporting him in every way, delighting in him and all that he does . . .
And lavishing him with all that they have, and all that they are
He's the apple of their eye; And that's how God views Jesus; B/c he does the same

➤ Something he affirmed at his baptism

Mt 3:16-17 says – *When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

IOW this is the apple of my eye; I’ve chosen him, I’ve given him my Spirit, and I’m pleased with him*****

The result of which, is exaltation; God has highly exalted him (Ph 2)

How about you? Do you see him like that? And exalt him in *your* life b/c of it?

Or are you worshipping an idol? Make the correction

Second here . . .

Jesus makes wrongs, right (v1b,3b,4)

As in, he brings *justice* to bear; Something God reiterates 3 times in this passage

[1] He will bring forth justice to the nations.

[3] He will faithfully bring forth justice

[4] He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. They wait for his justice

If you’re going to see Jesus for who he is, you need to see him as God’s instrument of justice in this world

The one who corrects all that is wrong, and makes it right

Including the things in our *lives* that aren’t right – like our infirmities, and ill-health, and disabilities, and weaknesses

He may not do so *this* side of eternity, but do it he will; That’s part of justice

Like when he healed the man with a withered hand, earlier in Mt 12

And cleansed lepers from time to time; And restored paralytics; And raised people from the dead; He made things that were wrong, right; That’s justice

➤ As is forgiving us of our sin; Having paid the price, and heard our confession – the only thing left for him to do, is forgive

And forgive he does, b/c he promised, and he’s just (**1 Jn 1:9**)

If we confess our sins [the Bible says], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He’s faithful and just to make our wrongs, right*****

But it doesn’t stop there; He also rights the wrongs and oppression of others – *Vengeance*

is mine, I will repay, says the Lord (Rom 12:19); B/c he’s just

Sometimes righting wrongs on a *personal* scale, and sometimes a much wider one

Like when entire *nations* are brought to their knees

Or the entire *world* when Jesus returns (2 Thess 1:7-9)

Like Isaiah said back in **Is 10:17** – *The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day.*

➤ Is that how you see him? Do you see Jesus as the faithful instrument of God’s justice in this world? The one who makes all things right?

I hope so; B/c that’s what he does; And that’s what he’ll do (**Summary**)

Apple of God’s eye that he is, Jesus makes wrongs, right

Starting with the wrong of our heart, and ending with the wrong of our world

It’s one more reason to delight yourself in him

Prayer – Lord, I love your Word; I love how it fits together, I love how you speak to us through it, and love how it opens our eyes to who you are; Help us see it; Help us to see you; And receive our tithes now, as a joyful expression of our worship