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## ISAIAH 42:1-9

### (THE SERVANT OF THE LORD)

#### INTRODUCTION

This morning we begin a consideration and study of a new chapter in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 42. As we do so let us remember the GENERAL STRUCTURE of the book of Isaiah. You will recall there are TWO MAJOR SECTIONS, chapters 1-39, and chapters 40-66. Chapters 1-39 occur within the lifetime of the prophet and are sometimes referred to as the ASSYRIAN CHRONICLES. Chapters 40-66 record events that are after the lifetime of Isaiah and are often referred to as the BABYLONIAN CHRONICLES. This SECOND SECTION of Isaiah, wherein our text lies this morning, begins historically toward the end of what is known as the 70-YEAR BABYONIAN CAPTIVITY (608-538 B.C.) and extends to the time of Christ and beyond.

You will also recall from our studies that this SECOND MAJOR SECTION of Isaiah has THREE PRINCIPAL SUBSECTIONS, chapters 40-48, 49-57, and 58-66. These three subsections and the THEMES OR EMPHASIS of them are suggested to us in Isaiah 40:2. There the prophet wrote,

**“SPEAK YE COMFORTABLY TO JERUSALEM, AND CRY UNTO HER, THAT HER WARFARE IS ACCOMPLISHED,** (CHAPTERS 40-48; -THE SALVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE PEOPLE OF THE GOD)  
**THAT HER INQUITY IS PARDONED:** (CHAPTERS 49-57; - THE ATONEMENT OF THE LORD, THE EXPIATION OF THE PEOPLE’S GUILT); **FOR SHE HATH RECEIVED OF THE LORD’S HAND DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS.** (CHAPTERS 58-66; - THE FUTURE BLESSING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD)

You will also recall from our previous studies that this threefold division of Isaiah 40-66 is a literary structure that Isaiah himself gives us. The final verses of all three sections, 48:22; 57:21; and 66:24, have identical language and themes. The point being this is not an arbitrary division but one that the prophet himself clearly gives us.

The reason I remind us of this structuring is because Isaiah 42:1-43:13, the passage we are beginning our study of this morning, is itself a further subsection in the literary structure of Isaiah. Isaiah chapters 40-48 may be divided into THREE PRINCIPAL PARTS, 40:1-43:13; 43:14-45:25; 46:1-48:22. And then, and for our purposes this morning, Isaiah chapters 40:1-43:13, also has three subsections, chapters 40, 41, and 42:1-43:13. I don’t want to bore you or bog you down with all this structuring, but there is a point to it. In chapter 40 in verse 9 the prophet calls the people of God to, **“BEHOLD YOUR GOD”**. In chapter 41 in verse 29 the heathen nations along with the people of God are called to **“BEHOLD”** the VANITY, the NOTHINGNESS, of the false gods, the idols, and that in contrast to the WORDS AND WORKS of God of which Isaiah had spoken in chapter 41. Chapter 42 begins with yet another **“BEHOLD.”** This **“BEHOLD”** concerns the one God speaks of in chapter 42 as **“MY SERVANT.”** From the use of the term **“BEHOLD,”** and the THREE DIFFERENT SUBJECTS of it in chapters 40, 41, and 42:1-43:13 we are enabled to recognize the three different parts of chapters 40:1-43:13, and we are greatly helped in understanding the subject, emphasis, and message of each part.

As we come to chapter 42 this morning and our consideration of the SERVANT OF THE LORD, the ONE we are now called to behold, may we also remember that the ONE GREAT THEME of chapters 40-66 is the SALVATION OF THE LORD, THE SALVATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. HISTORICALLY this is of the people of God out of Babylon. ESCHATOLOGICALLY this is the salvation of the people of God out of sin. In chapter 41 we saw the HISTORICAL SALVATION of the people of God out of Babylon was accomplished by God's HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SERVANT CYRUS. And as we shall see in chapter 42 God's ESCHATOLOGICAL SALVATION of His people out of sin is accomplished by His TRUE AND ULTIMATE SERVANT, THE SECOND MEMBER OF THE TRINITY, GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, and that in His HUMAN NATURE.

And in chapter 42 it is this GREATER SALVATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD OUT OF SIN, and that by God's ULTIMATE SERVANT, HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that I want us to consider this morning. We begin our consideration of this with verses 1-9 of Isaiah 42 and the THREE MATTERS it sets before us concerning this servant who is to come, and who we know to be Christ. The great Reformed minister Eric Alexander identified these three matters as, 1) WHO IS THIS FIGURE, 2) WHAT IS HE LIKE, and 3) WHAT HAS HE COME TO DO.

Let's begin with the reading of our text.

#### TEXT

**"BEHOLD MY SERVANT, WHOM I UPHOLD; MINE ELECT, *IN WHOM* MY SOUL DELIGHTETH; I HAVE PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM: HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGEMENT TO THE GENTILES.**

**HE SHALL NOT CRY, NOR LIFT UP, NOR CAUSE HIS VOICE TO BE HEARD IN THE STREET.**

**A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK, AND THE SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH: HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGEMENT UNTO TRUTH.**

**HE SHALL NOT FAIL NOR BE DISCOURAGED, TILL HE HAVE SET JUDGEMENT IN THE EARTH: AND THE ISLES SHALL WAIT FOR HIS LAW.**

**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.**

**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;**

**TO OPEN THE BLIND EYES, TO BRING OUT THE PRISONERS FROM THE PRISON, *AND* THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS OUT OF THE PRISON HOUSE.**

***I AM* THE LORD: THAT *IS* MY NAME: AND MY GLORY WILL I NOT GIVE TO ANOTHER, NEITHER MY PRAISE TO GRAVEN IMAGES.**

**BEHOLD, THE FORMER THINGS ARE COME TO PASS, AND NEW THINGS DO I DECLARE: BEFORE THEY SPRING FORTH I TELL YOU OF THEM."**

You should immediately recognize from the text that this is one of the passages from which Jesus quotes in Luke 4:18 at the beginning of His ministry. Having read our text let us now begin our consideration it's MESSAGE.

### MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

As we noted earlier the prophet in chapter 42 now calls the people of God to **"BEHOLD"** the ONE who is spoken of here as THE SERVANT OF THE LORD. And God through Isaiah tells us FIRST, WHO HE IS. This is the message of verse one and this is what we will consider this morning.

#### I. THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, WHO HE IS.

In verse one Isaiah identifies FIVE THINGS which tell us WHO the SERVANT OF THE LORD is.

- A. FIRST, He is referred to as **"MY SERVANT."** The FIGURE who is being spoken of in verse one is the SERVANT OF THE LORD, **"MY SERVANT."** And this is the KEY ELEMENT of this figure. In being spoken of as **"MY SERVANT"** He is being identified as God's TRUE and ULTIMATE SERVANT, the one who is WHOLLY DEDICATED and DEVOTED to the WILL of God. Indeed, it is His DEVOTION and DEDICATION to the WILL OF GOD which makes Him THE SERVANT OF THE LORD. In a sense God has been waiting for ONE who would be wholly DEDICATED and DEVOTED to His will. This is who Adam was to have been in the Garden. And this is what Israel as a nation was called to. But it is only God's only begotten Son, Christ, who is the TRUE AND ULTIMATE SERVANT OF THE LORD. It is Christ alone who is FULLY DEDICATED AND DEVOTED to God's will. In John 4:34 we read concerning our Lord, **"JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, MY MEAT IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME, AND TO FINISH HIS WORK."** The writer of Hebrews in chapter 10:5-7 quotes Psalm 40:6-8 concerning Christ, **"WHEREFORE WHEN HE COMETH INTO THE WORLD, HE SAITH, SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU WOULDST NOT, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME: IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAST HAD NO PLEASURE. THEN SAID I, LO, I COME (IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME,) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD."** Christ is the TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD AND WHAT MAKES HIM SO IS THAT HE IS WHOLLY DEDICATED AND DEVOTED TO THE WILL OF GOD. This is the great message of the familiar passage, Philippians 2:5-9, concerning Christ. There in verses 7-8 we read, **"BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN: AND BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLING HIMSELF, AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."** HE TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT AND BECAME OBEDIENT, OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS. This is why Christ came into the world, to be the SERVANT OF GOD THE FATHER IN HIS HUMANITY, AND IN HIS HUMANITY TO BE WHOLLY DEDICATED AND DEVOTED TO THE FATHER'S WILL. And as we read these words concerning Christ may we recognize if we are to be God's servants we to, like Christ, must TRULY BE DEVOTED AND DEDICATED TO THE WILL OF GOD. And this is what Paul calls us to in Philippians 2:5, **"LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS."** Our Lord's entire life was dedicated and devoted to the doing of

God's will. This was first and all-encompassing for Him and so it is to be with us. Not just a part of our life but the POINT OF OUR LIFE.

- B. SECONDLY, God through His prophet says of His SERVANT, **"BEHOLD MY SERVANT, WHOM I UPHOLD."** These words give us insight into the future SUFFERING of the SERVANT OF THE LORD. There will be such an assault not just upon His body, but as well His soul, that He will in His suffering have the need to be upheld. And there are TWO OCCASIONS we see in Scripture in which heaven sent help to UPHOLD Christ. The first is recorded in Matthew 4:1-11 where at the end of His temptations in the wilderness angels came and ministered unto Him. And the second is recorded in Luke 22:43 when He was on the Mount of Olives praying just before His betrayal and an angel was sent to strengthen Him. In His humanity our Lord as the TRUE SERVANT OF GOD, DEDICATED and DEVOTED to God's will, had a need to be upheld. And consider, if this was true of the Son of God in the days of His humanity upon the earth as the SERVANT OF THE LORD, how much more is this true of us as the servants of the Lord. If Christ had need of the help of heaven in His obedience to the will of God how much more do we have need of the help of heaven for our obedience. We are not sufficient within ourselves. We must not be surprised when we like Paul in II Corinthians 1 find ourselves **"PRESSED OUT OF MEASURE, ABOVE STRENGTH."** There will be those times when the assault upon our body, and even more upon our soul, will be like that of Paul's, and like that of our Lord, and we will have need of the help that can only come from our God in heaven.,
- C. THIRDLY, God through His prophet speaks of His servant as, **"MINE ELECT."** In these words, Isaiah speaks of Christ as God's CHOSEN ONE. This is the meaning of **"MINE ELECT."** And this is exactly Peter's description of Christ in I Peter 2:4 where he writes, **"TO WHOM COMING, AS UNTO A LIVING STONE, DISALLOWED INDEED OF MEN, BUT CHOSEN OF GOD, AND PRECIOUS."** CHRIST IS THE CHOSEN OF GOD. Generally, this is a term that is applied to the people of God. John 15:16, Matthew 24:24, and I Peter 1:2 are examples of this. And it is true the SAINTS are CHOSEN OF GOD. And we understand what it means to be chosen or elect in LIGHT OF THE ELECTION OF CHRIST. In the sense He was CHOSEN OF GOD, we to are CHOSEN OF GOD. And as we understand He was CHOSEN in the sense of BEING ORDAINED, APPOINTED OF GOD, we like Him are CHOSEN in the sense of being APPOINTED or ORDAINED by God. And thus, we read in Acts 13:48, **"AND WHEN THE GENTILES HEARD THIS, THEY WERE GLAD, AND GLORIFIED THE WORD OF THE LORD: AND AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED."** But there is also a difference. Ultimately, it is Christ who is THE CHOSEN OF GOD, and we, as Paul declares in Ephesians 1:4, are CHOSEN IN HIM. Israel in the past as a nation, and we in the church in the present, are a people God has ORDAINED, APPOINTED, CHOSEN, to be UNITED to Him, TO BE IN HIM. God has indeed CHOSEN US AS HIM, WE ARE ELECT AS HE IS ELECT. BUT HE IS THE CHOSEN OF GOD, and we are CHOSEN IN HIM. OH, THE BLESSEDNESS of BOTH HIS ELECTION AND OURS. MAY WE ALWAYS REJOICE IN, GIVE THANKS FOR, AND SERVE IN THE REALITY OF BOTH THE ELECTION OF CHRIST, AND OUR ELECTION IN HIM.
- D. FOURTHLY, God through the prophet speaks of His servant as being the one, **"IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH."** Again, this is a description of Christ that we find in the New Testament. This is the meaning in Matthew 3:16, at the baptism of Christ, and in Matthew 17:5, on the Mount of Transfiguration, of the words, **"...THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED."** When God the Father says this is my Son in whom I am well pleased He is saying this is my Son in whom my soul delights. This is the language of love. Christ is the BELOVED OF GOD. Christ is THE

ONE IN WHOM THE FATHER DELIGHTS. And WE, in Christ, are the BELOVED OF GOD. Paul writing to the church at Rome in Romans 1:7 addresses them with these words, **"TO ALL THAT BE IN ROME, BELOVED OF GOD, CALLED TO BE SAINTS."** Christ, and the church in Christ, are the BELOVED SERVANTS OF GOD. May we NEVER FORGET WHO WE ARE TO GOD IN CHRIST. MAY WE ALWAYS LIVE IN THE REALITY OF BEING THE BELOVED OF GOD. MAY THIS ALWAYS COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE US. IT IS NEVER OTHERWISE WITH US. AND ALL GOD'S DEALINGS WITH US ARE AS HIS BELOVED. THIS DOES NOT MEAN HE WILL NEVER DISCIPLINE US BUT IT DOES MEAN HE IS ALWAYS, AND IN ALL THINGS LOVING US AND DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR US.

- E. FIFTHLY, God through the prophet Isaiah speaks of Christ in the words, **"I HAVE PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM."** And this too is a description of Christ that we have in the New Testament. This is seen in Matthew 3:16 where the Holy Spirit like a dove descends upon Him. And this is seen in John 3:34 where Christ is spoken of as having the Spirit without measure. And this language is the language of empowerment for ministry. The filling of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit is for the purpose of service. This is exactly what we see in our text. Following these words concerning the putting of the Spirit upon Him we read, **"HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGEMENT TO THE GENTILES."** This is the purpose of the putting of the Spirit upon Him. It is in order that that He might bring JUDGEMENT, by which is meant SALVATION, to the Gentiles, to the world. And this is exactly what Christ said to His disciples concerning their ministry. In Luke 24:48-49 we read, **"AND YE ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS. AND, BEHOLD, I SEND THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER UPON YOU: BUT TARRY YE IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, UNTIL YE BE ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH."** And then concerning this same matter we read in Acts 1:8, **"BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER, AFTER THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU: AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDAEA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH."** And when these words were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost it was not just the 12 but the whole 120 who were in the upper room who were filled with the Spirit. And Peter in Acts 2:38-39 declared, **"THEN PETER SAID UNTO THEM, REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. FOR THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL."** Here Peter declares that this promise of the filling and empowering of the Holy Spirit is for all. And it is not the Holy Spirit in regeneration of which he is speaking but a filling of the Spirit which is after that. The disciples, as we read in John 20:22, already possessed the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this is the implication of our Lord concerning every genuine believer in John 3:1-8. What took place on the Day of Pentecost was something more than this, something after this. Indeed, so common was this in the early church that Paul in Acts 19:2 ask the disciples he found in Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed. And Paul in writing to the church at Ephesus was speaking of this in Ephesians 1:13 where he wrote, **"...IN WHOM ALSO AFTER THAT YE BELIEVED, YE WERE SEALED WITH THAT HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE."** The Holy Spirit of Promise refers to Jesus promise of the filling of the Holy Spirit in Luke 24 and Acts 1 and to which we have just referred. But as well this is what John the Baptist was speaking of and promised in Matthew 3:11. And this is the promise of Ezekiel 47 and Joel 2:28-32. And I believe this is what is woefully missing in the ministers and the ministry of the church today, this experience and reality of what our Lord and Paul, and the prophets were speaking. It is that unction, that anointing, that is present and undeniable in the

ministers in whom it is found. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his lectures on Preaching and Preachers in 1969 at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia told the story of an older minister who upon observing the speaking of a younger minister commented that he had yet to experience his baptism of fire. He was speaking of this anointing, this unction that comes from a filling of the Holy Spirit for ministry. Such language as this is not understood by most today and especially in the Reformed arm of the Church. There is a GENUINE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER SALVATION. THIS IS WHAT CHRIST AND PAUL WERE SPEAKING OF. THIS IS WHAT LLOYD-JONES WAS SPEAKING OF. THIS IS WHAT THE GREATEST OF THE PURITANS WROTE CONCERNING. AND THE GENUINE REALITY OF THIS, NOT THE MAN-MADE MANUFACTURED VERSION OF IT, IS WHAT IS MOST GREATLY MISSING IN THE CHURCH TODAY. OH, THAT WE THE CHOSEN OF GOD IN CHRIST, THE SERVANTS OF GOD IN CHRIST, MIGHT LIKE CHRIST BE GENUINELY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND EMPOWERED FOR MINISTRY AS WAS THE EARLY CHURCH.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, in our text, God through His prophet Isaiah looks forward to the time of the coming of the TRUE AND ULTIMATE SERVANT OF GOD-CHRIST. AND IN VERSE ONE GOD THROUGH THE PROPHET TELLS US WHO HE IS. HE IS THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE SERVANT OF GOD, THE ONE WHO GOD SPECIALLY UPHOLDS, THE ELECT/CHOSEN OF GOD, THE ONE IN WHOM GOD TRULY DELIGHTS-THE BELOVED OF GOD, HE IS THE ONE UPON WHOM GOD AS NO OTHER PUT HIS SPIRIT FOR THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY, OF BRINGING JUDGEMENT, SALVATION TO THE NATIONS.

AND SAINTS, WHO ARE WE THIS MORNING? WE, IN HIM, ARE ALSO THE SERVANTS OF GOD, THOSE WHOM GOD SPECIALLY UPHOLDS, THE ELECT, THE CHOSEN OF GOD, THOSE IN WHOM GOD DELIGHTS, THE BELOVED OF THE LORD, AND THOSE TO WHOM GOD PROMISES TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT UPON FOR THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY.

AND I ASK YOU THIS MORNING WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY KNOW OF THESE THINGS? WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THEM? THERE ARE NO GREATER, HIGHER OR MORE GLORIOUS REALITIES THAN THESE OF WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN, AND WHICH ARE OURS IN CHRIST. AND I CALL YOU TO THESE TODAY. I CALL SOME WHO ARE PRESENT TO THE SALVATION OF GOD IN CHRIST. I CALL OTHERS TO A FULLER REALITY OF THE BLESSEDNESS THAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST. AND I CALL YET OTHERS TO A FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS AVAILABLE IN AND FROM CHRIST. I CALL ALL TO THE REALITY, AND THE REALITIES OF SALVATION IN CHRIST THIS MORNING.

LET US PRAY.