

## Isaiah 42:1-17 - The Solution

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I think that we tend to over promise and under deliver. Friends of mine's second son started school this year. He was a bit anxious about starting school so to reassure him it was going to be alright his parents told him he was going to school with his big brother. He did start school only to find out that he wasn't at school with his big brother. He went with him but wasn't at school with him. His parents had helpfully promised him something but it wasn't delivered.

We have seen so far in Isaiah that God makes promises and today we will see from Isaiah 42 that he delivers.

In Isaiah last week we saw what the problem was for Israel and the nations. The problem for them and for us is that our hearts are idol factories. We are constantly creating substitutes for God.

Why do we do that? The world is in chaos so they and we need something to make them feel secure. Something that will fix the problem.

This passage comprises the first of the four "Servant Songs" in Isaiah (see also Isaiah 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12). Each passage speaks of a Servant figure who is given a mission by the Lord. The great work of the Lord in behalf of Israel, and in behalf of the entire world, that is spoken of in Isaiah is accomplished through the work of this figure.

### 1. The Promised Servant of God

#### Read: v.1

Isaiah says:- Here is my servant. It is important to see Isaiah is making a contrast.

In Isaiah 41, the Lord called the Gentile nations for judgment. He called them to think about the idols they worship. He fired a series of questions at the nations about their idols that showed they are futile and so worthless to worship. He says:- Look at that idol, look at that idol, look at that idol. Every one of them is useless to give you security.

Then in Isaiah 42 he says:- Look at my servant!

The work of the Servant of the Lord will benefit the nations (verse 1). The last verse in Isaiah 41 begins with the word "behold," and the first verse in Isaiah 42 begins with it. The nations are to "behold" that their idols are worthless, but they are also to "behold" the Servant of the Lord who will bless them if they will let him.

Isaiah is contrasting servant with false deities then he is implying that his servant is also deity. If he is setting up this deity as their only hope against these false deities then he must by implication be deity.

He is your only hope. The only hope in a crumbling world.

#### God delights in him. v1

Notice what God says about him - My chosen one. God is ecstatic over this servant. God is wanting you to be caught up in his heart felt attitude. Isaiah wants to suck you into that same attitude. He wants you to say the same thing. He means all the world to me.

In verses 2-4 there are things said about the servant that highlight that he is not like other leaders. He is not going to take the world by physical force.

#### He is humble

Look at what he won't do. v.2

He is humble. He is not a showman. He is not a self promoter.

How will he bring about justice to the nations? He isn't going to smash like others conquerors. In contrast to Cyrus in Isaiah 41.

#### He is gentle. v.3

The Lord begins to explain the justice he has in mind in verse 3.

A "**bruised reed**" is symbolic of someone who has been weakened by exterior pressure and can't bear any more burdens. Some kings would break such bruised reeds, but not the Servant of the Lord.

A **smouldering burning** wick is symbolic of someone whose inner resources are at an end, who lacks the strength necessary to continue. Some kings would extinguish such dimly burning wicks, but not the Servant of the Lord. The justice that the Servant brings embraces bruised reeds and dimly burning wicks-the oppressed and the weak, the damaged and discarded.

### **He is faithful. .v3**

"He will not be falter or be discouraged" until he has established such justice. The word "discouraged" is the same word that is translated "smoldering," and the word "crushed" is the same one that is translated "bruised." People, like reeds and wicks, will become disheartened and crushed, but the Servant will not-at least not until he has established justice in the earth. He will suffer injustice in fulfilling his mission, but he will not cry out for his own justice; neither will he be discouraged in his mission or dissuaded from accomplishing it.

### **He brings justice.**

This dominates his purpose. 1,3,4

This is not an announcement of a sentence and then punishment. More a sense of righting the wrongs.

Barry Webb says:- *"The servant will undo all the horrendous and degrading effects that sin has had on the human race and restore to people their freedom and dignity as sons and daughters of God."*

When the Servant's mission is fulfilled, justice will not only have been brought forth, it will have been "established"-and it will be established over the entire earth.

I know I tend to make a name for myself. I am so quick to let out my successes. I only have think of what dominates my conversations. This is unlike the servant who does not a name for himself.

The justice the 'servant' will bring is to turn us from our foolish worship of idols. Turning us from the idols and so the effects of foolish worship.

Ray Ortlund says:- *"When we see slums and poverty and oppression and illiteracy and pollution and human misery in all its forms, do we have the eyes to see the meaning of it? These massive disorders prove that we are arranging human life according to idolatrous ideals."*

## **The Promised Servant of God**

### **2. The Delivered Servant of God**

In Jesus all these prophecies are fulfilled. Jesus is the servant God promised. When God promises he delivers.

Matthew quotes this passage in Matthew 12:15-21.

He shows that Jesus fulfils the promise of Isaiah 42.

Jesus went about healing people and he often asked those he healed to keep quiet about it.

What did that mean for Jesus?

It meant that he suffered injustice, but did not cry out for his own justice. He suffered silently and willingly. He concerned himself with bringing justice to the bruised reeds and dimly burning wicks. For him, justice did not mean breaking them or extinguishing them; it meant upholding them and re-igniting them. Despite tremendous anguish of soul, he did not back away from the task (Mark 14:32-42, Matthew 27:38-44, 1 Peter 2:22-23).

So, how precisely does he bring forth justice?

In the most astounding of ways! He does it by becoming a bruised reed and smoldering wick. He does not become disheartened or crushed. Not only does he become a bruised reed, he becomes a broken reed. Not only does he become a smoldering wick, he becomes an extinguished wick. That's how he brings forth justice to the nations-by allowing himself to be broken and extinguished by the sin of the world. The justice demanded for sin

is satisfied, and the justice demanded by God's compassion is extended. And now the nations-Gentiles all over the world know his saving work.

Are you a bruised reed, weakened by the pressures of life? Are you a smoldering wick, unable to respond to those pressures? Do you feel damaged or discarded?

If you do not feel this way now, you will one day. We are fragile creatures, all of us, far more vulnerable than we know. Many of us hide our bruises and manage to keep our flames burning for the public, but when we're alone we feel the pain and the flame burns dim. Our plight may be complicated by feelings that the bruises are self-inflicted and that we deserve to have our flames flicker. It may be true: Through our own sin, we may have brought on the bruises and dimmed the flame. But the Servant is not disheartened or crushed by whatever caused our condition; he just wants to help us in our condition.

What has caused your bruises, and what has caused your flame to flicker? The Servant of the Lord can help. In the greatest sense possible, he already has helped. He became a bruised reed that was broken for us. He became a smoldering wick that was extinguished for us. He did so in order that God's justice could be brought forth and established for us. As we see what the Servant has done for us in new and brighter ways, he upholds us broken reeds and re-ignites us smoldering wicks. And as we get a glimpse of what he has done for us, we can't help but wait expectantly for his instruction: We pour over his word and learn from him.

God delights in him

Look at Mark 1:11.

He wants to get you to say the same thing. He is all the world to me. Jesus is all the world to me

C.S Lewis:- "If we consider the promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."