

## 422 Behold My Servant

We are well aware that there is a war on, being fought on the battlefield of Pilate's throwaway question to Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18.38a). This is a fight ultimately between Almighty God, with His angels and Christ-redeemed children on the one hand, and the devil, with "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world" and his human agents on the other (Ephesians 6.12). In between stand "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision" (Joel 3.14), many not even aware of the decision they face - to accept God's gracious call in Christ, or not?

Satan's grip has been broken at Golgotha and his ultimate fate is assured but for now the conflict remains fierce (egs., Genesis 3.15 / Isaiah 53.5 / I John 3.8b / Revelation 20.2-3, 10 / I Corinthians 15.55-57). In response to this situation we know what is expected of us ... (egs., Matthew 4.10 / Romans 6.11-14 / Ephesians 5.11; 6.10-11 / James 4.7 / I Peter 5.8-9).

But this longstanding reluctance by the many to bow before Almighty God confirms our innate sinfulness (eg., Romans 3.23), because the showers of blessings He offers are so infinitely better than the pseudo, copycat "blessings" dangled by "the world, the flesh and the devil". The Key to these rich divine blessings lies in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, whom His Father describes as "My servant", in Isaiah 42.1 for example. In this special chapter, the first of the various "Servant Songs" found within the Book of Isaiah, we learn precious truths about "God the Lord" and His "servant" whom we are to "behold", of great relevance for us in the conflicts of today (Isaiah 42.5a & 1a, KJV).

This Servant, now clearly identifiable as Jesus Himself, is "elect", is upheld by, and is a source of delight for, His Father, and has the Father's Spirit "put upon Him" (from v.1; and egs., Matthew 3.16-17; 17.5 / 2 Peter 1.17). "God the Lord", our Creator and Life-Giver (v.5), has called His Servant in righteousness, will hold His hand and keep Him, and will give Him "for a covenant of the people ..." (v.6); those future tenses within the prophecy are now both fulfilled tenses and present tenses for today: the Servant remains the Key in God's plans for redemption and blessing.

Now a covenant is a solemn agreement between two parties, and in Isaiah 42.6b the Servant Himself is described as "a covenant for the people, for a light to the Gentiles ...". In other words, it is Jesus alone

who is the Bridge, the Mediator, the Debt-Payer, the Enmity-Remover, the Peace-Bringer, between Almighty God and sinful mankind (egs., Isaiah 53.6 / 2 Corinthians 5.21 / Titus 3.4-7): and Jesus the Covenant has achieved all this, in obedience to His Father's will, by the shedding of His own innocent blood.

We also learn of the Servant's demeanour and tasks. He will be quiet rather than brash, and understanding rather than brutal (Isaiah 42.2-3a). He shall faithfully and successfully "bring forth judgment" – to the Gentiles, and "unto truth" (vv.1b & 3b). He will be given "for a light to the Gentiles", opening blind eyes and bringing prisoners and those sitting in darkness "out of the prison house" (v.7; amply fulfilled later on, eg., John 8.32,36).

We must not miss the Jewish shock caused by God's promises, recorded here and elsewhere in the Old Testament, of His merciful intentions towards the Gentiles! But in response comes, "I [am] the Lord: that [is] my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (v.8); in other words, "I am the Lord, not you, and I will do as I choose", a useful lesson for us to keep in mind today.

Seven hundred years later old Zacharias the priest "got it", that God's grace extends beyond the Jews: the "dayspring from on high" was now come, to bring blessing to both Jew and Gentile alike (Luke 1.68-79). In our response to this unique God-sent Servant, let there be, as then, so too now, the singing of new songs unto the Lord and the giving of praises and glories to His Name (from Isaiah 42.10-12).

The choice of which side to support in the great battle between God's Truth and the devil's deceits is crystal clear. As His ambassadors we "hold forth" this Servant as the "word of life", Jesus being the complete, beautiful and simple answer to the question "What is truth?" (2 Corinthians 5.17-21 / Philippians 2.16a). In the light of Isaiah 42 and elsewhere in God's Word, part of our holding-forth can be to swing the question from "What is truth?" to the more specific "WHO is truth?", which puts the spotlight firmly on the Covenant Servant Himself (John 14.6).

Let those new songs break forth! – for, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" (Ephesians 1.3).

**2021 Faithful Sheep Ministries – [www.fsmins.org](http://www.fsmins.org)**

