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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Isaiah 42.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Isaiah 42.

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### Topics.

- I have put my Spirit upon my servant; he will establish justice in the earth.
- I have called you in righteousness; for the people, a light for the nations.
- Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare.
- The LORD will cry out like a woman in labour and lay waste mountains.
- Who is, blind as the servant of the LORD or deaf as his messenger.
- Who gave Jacob and Israel up to the looter? Was it not the LORD?
- The history of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.

4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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Following is a brief outline of the history and context of Isaiah's previous chapters, having some knowledge of these helps understand the focus of this chapter and where it fits within the history of Israel.

**Earlier chapters of Isaiah:** speak of Assyria conquering many nations including the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and almost all of the fortified cities of the two tribes of Judah.

**In Isaiah chapter 37:** speak of Sennacherib king of Assyria armies surrounding Jerusalem and the angel of the LORD utterly destroying the Assyrian might and power by striking down 185,000 of Sennacherib soldiers which resulted in the king and those who survived returning to their own land in Nineveh. (The story is also found in 2 Kings 19:32-37).

**Isaiah chapter 38:** speaks about the LORD adding fifteen years to Hezekiah's life, and delivering Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and his mighty armies.

**Isaiah chapter 39:** speaks of Hezekiah showing all his gold and silver; the treasures of his kingdom; his storehouses of food and his entire armoury to an envoy of ambassadors sent to him by Merodach-baladan the king of Babylon and Isaiah telling him that in future time to come all the riches and treasures and even his own new born sons will be carried to Babylon. (Isaiah 39:2-7) This was a prophetic prediction of the seventy year captivity of the Jews in Babylon which commenced about one hundred and twenty years after this prediction.

**Isaiah chapter 40:** speaks of the restoration of the kingdom and the return of the people from the Babylonian captivity. But this amazing prophecy is not confined to the restoration of the royal family and of the tribe of Judah only, but reaches forward to the whole Gospel age from the coming of John the Baptist to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah chapter 41:** speaks about Cyrus the king of Media Persia conquering nations and setting Israel free from their seventy years Babylonian captivity.

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The LORD'S chosen Servant.

**I have put My Spirit upon My Servant; He will Establish Justice in the Earth.**

Isaiah 42:1-4 ----- <sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; <sup>3</sup>a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. <sup>4</sup>He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

Some say that the verses of this chapter are referring to Israel as God's chosen servant, there are valid reasons for drawing this conclusion, since there are many verses throughout the Bible that call Israel God's chosen servant, but there are also many other verses that call the Lord Jesus Christ God's chosen Servant. It is the context of the verses that show who the LORD has in focus when He or a prophet is using the title "the LORD'S chosen Servant."

In this chapter Isaiah refers to both Israel and Christ as the "the LORD'S chosen Servant." The context makes it very clear who the LORD has in focus when the prophet is referring to His Servant. Many of verses fit like a glove on the Lord Jesus Christ that would certainly not apply to Israel, while others apply perfectly to Israel, but would in no way fit the Lord Jesus Christ the ultimate and perfect Servant of God. We know these verses are speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ first appearing and his return in glory because Matthew in the New Testament cites these verses.

- This (Jesus withdrawing from the synagogues) was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: <sup>18</sup>"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. <sup>19</sup>He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; <sup>20a</sup>a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory. (Matt. 12:15-20).

Isaiah prophesied the LORD would put His Spirit in His chosen servant and he will help the poor and needy and not give up until he establishes justice in the earth. The LORD did put His Spirit in Christ when he was here on earth.

- 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. (Matt. 3:16).
- When he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. (Mark 1:10).
- The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22).
- John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. (John 1:32).

And Jesus certainly helped the poor and needy.

- Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. (Luke 7:22).

Obviously Jesus has not achieved justice in the earth as yet so we know Isaiah's prophecy not only embraces the first appearing of Christ, but also embraces the following future age when Jesus returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone

will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**I have called you in Righteousness; for the People, a Light for the Nations.**

Isaiah 42:5-8 ----- <sup>5</sup>Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it. <sup>6</sup>"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, <sup>7</sup>to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. <sup>8</sup>I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

To grab the attention of the reader and magnify the importance of what the LORD is about to say He begins by proclaiming that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth and gives life to mankind. Every man and woman that is standing on planet earth and still breathing should be thanking the LORD. It is God who is gives the air they breathe and the spirit of life that is keeping their heart pumping and their blood flowing through their veins. Should He choose to do so He could vaporize the very air we breathe.

**The LORD'S chosen servant:** there is only one person the LORD says He will give His glory to and that person is His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, no human has ever been able to do the miracles Jesus did. Many today claim to have miraculously healed others, but no human has ever had power over the sea or the weather or been able to create multitudes of fish from nothing. Unlike Jesus who simply walked through the secular crowds in the business of everyday life and healed whoever he touched regardless of their faith or what they believed, many

ministers today require mood altering music to be continuously playing before they are able to perform their miracles. This shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that Jesus is the only man who ever walked upon our planet that God poured His Spirit upon without measure (meaning without limitations).

- He whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. (John 3:34).

This means that God had such trust in His Most beloved Son that He was able to give him the full measure of His power over all creation and all life. Jesus had the full power of God to do with as he willed. With one word he could have completely destroyed the Roman Empire and those who plotted his murder, but instead chose rather to save sinners rather than his own life and to follow God's will and not his own.

- Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done. (Luke 22:42)

Jesus could have refused to go to the bloodstained cross of Calvary, but because of his love for you and I and all others he chose the way that would open the door for all to be united to God and saved to eternal life by faith and grace.

**I will take you by the hand and keep you:** (v6) here the LORD is pictured as holding the hand of His Servant the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a tender picture of a caring Father guiding His Son, but this relationship is not limited to our heavenly Father and His Son only, it is the same relationship the faithful in the global family of Christ have with their Saviour and perfect big brother the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not like the shepherds spoken of in the following verses: -

- He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. (John 10:12-13).

Unlike these uncaring shepherds Jesus is: -

- The good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15).
- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30).

**Ponder for a moment:** Jesus died for us while we were sinners so how much more will he do to save those who are devoted to him by faith and love. He does this by clothing us in his righteousness and daily covering us with his grace.

**I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations:** (v6) some think that the Christian faith is relatively new compared to some of the more ancient religions, but the following words of the LORD: -

- I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, <sup>7</sup>to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that the Christian faith existed in the eternal mind of God before time began. Jesus himself cites these prophetic words: -

- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives (prisoners) and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. (Luke 4:18).

This is a beautiful picture; God says He will give His Servant a covenant for the people this of course refers to the New Testament covenant of grace which is a light to all nations (Jews and Gentiles).

When the Bible uses the term all nations in this context it means Jews and the Gentiles (the Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or a Jew). The following shows the absolute splendour of Bible prophecy, when Jesus was eight days old he was brought to Jerusalem and Simeon full of the Holy Spirit thanked the LORD and then quoted the following verses: -

- Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup>that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." (Gentiles and Jews embracing all nations alike). (Luke 2:29-32).

**I am the LORD; I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols:** (v8) in Isaiah chapter forty it is written: -

- To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? <sup>19</sup>An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. <sup>20</sup>He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. (Isaiah 40:18-20).

When speaking of idols the Living Bible says, "O foolish man you chop down a tree and use some of the wood to build your homes, some to cook your food, some to warm your hands and some you carve into an idol and bow down before it to worship it, can't you see it's just a block of wood (Isaiah 44:19). The service of idols is so absurd and illogical that it is enormously difficult for a person with a sane mind to understand how anyone in their right mind chooses the service of idols before the service of God.

It is common for cultic religions to be heavily laden with ritualism. This is because a heavy focus and adherence to outward ritual and ceremony gives the worshipper a sense of reverence and a close connection and adoration to their god. These rituals may involve candles, occultist symbols, mystical rites, drinking the blood of bull, chicken-beheading, prayers, songs and such like things, but the most seductive is sexual ritual that involves all sorts of sexual immorality since this type of ritual appeals to the lowest level of the flesh (i.e., the lower nature of mankind).

One of the reasons people do choose a false faith is because idols and false gods do not put demands upon their outward lifestyle, as long as the believer adheres to their ceremonial rituals and outward religious practises they are accepted by their god and free to live as they please.

There are other god's besides the LORD God of all creation; however all other gods are created by the imagination in the mind by a strong belief in them. This is because the human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore automatically responds to whatever is pictured on the imagination of the mind whether it is real or false.

The stronger the belief the greater effect the mental image on the imagination of the mind will have on the human nervous system. This is why deception is so deceptive. It matters not if the god an individual believes in is real or not the nervous system responds accordingly. If the god an individual believes in is a wrathful, vengeful and judgmental god they will feel emotions of guilt and fear in contrast to this if the god an individual believes in is a god of love and compassion they will feel emotions of love and comfort.

The imaginary, but real images of the mind creates a real entity that affects the emotions and feelings through the human nervous system. These feelings convince those that believe in idols that there are evil gods and spirits, but in reality they do not actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind, but to the individual believing in idols and false gods they are very real entities.

This is why faith should be based upon the Scriptures of the Bible and never upon on emotions. This does not mean emotions should be denied, God gave them to us to enjoy (especially in worship and praise) it just means that they should not be the foundation of our faith and what we believe.

It is through reading the Bible that we learn who the one and only immortal, invisible, eternal God is and His eternal will, plans and purposes for the world, the earth and for eternity.

Clearly no god of the imagination has any power to create the earth, the mountains and the seas, there is only one God who has such awesome power and He is the immortal invisible, Holy Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life the great I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the heavenly Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. To understand how idols and false gods gain controlling power over the minds of individuals and nations see the title: -

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU)

**Behold, the Former things have come to Pass, and New things I Now Declare.**

Isaiah 42:9-12 ----- <sup>9</sup>Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." <sup>10</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. <sup>11</sup>Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. <sup>12</sup>Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the coastlands.

**Kedar:** was one of the twelve sons of Ishmael, son of Abram by Hagar the twelve sons were called princes because they helped originate the Arab people. Their territory was in the northern part of the Arabian Desert.

**Sela:** was a place in Edom taken by King Ahaziah.

**Former things are come to pass:** (v9) the LORD calls upon the people to believe that what He had predicted in regard to future things would come to pass based upon the fact that many previous predictions that His prophets had foretold had now been fulfilled, and this reality should lead them to set their confidence in Him alone as the one and only true God.

Now the LORD makes new promises, which are guaranteed to be fulfilled as the old ones were. This new prediction promises the following two things: -

1. The deliverance of Israel from their seventy year captivity.
2. The Messiah, who is to bring all nations to the worship of the one true God and the deliverance of the Gentiles from sin, the condemnation of the law and death.
  - 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. (Isaiah 42:1).
  - He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. (Isaiah 42:4).
  - I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, (Isaiah 42:6).

All things that the LORD had previously foretold and promised have come to pass in their proper seasons exactly as it was said they would, not one of them failed, as was noted by Joshua.

- Now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14).

The promises made to Abraham concerning the settling of Israel in the land of Canaan and to Moses concerning Israel's deliverance out of Egypt and the predictions spoken by Isaiah and the many other prophets all came to pass. Now because of these great promises being fulfilled Israel has every reason to believe

the new and excellent things pertaining to future events that are yet still to come to pass, specifically their restoration by Cyrus and more fully the to the universal Gospel message going out to all nations and the coming of the Messiah to rule the world will also come to pass.

**I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them:** (v9) here is a beautiful image that is taken from plants and flowers sending out shoots, buds and flowers. It literally means, "before they begin to germinate," meaning before there are any outward indications of life in the seed its growth has begun. The idea is that God predicts future events before there was anything by which it might be supposed that such events would take place.

These predictions did not arise up from human knowledge and wisdom as human men may sometimes predict future events with great probability by observing certain political indications and current world events. God gave these predictions when there were no such signs and when such predictions could only be done by the inspiration of God.

It is in this respect that the predictions of God's prophets differ from mankind's wisdom and knowledge, understanding and intelligence, speculations and assumptions.

While the seeds of future events were as it were under ground and unseen God inspired His prophets to predict them when there was no visible appearance of such events. Before there is the slightest observable indication to enable a wise, intelligent and knowledgeable observer to predict a future event God foretells it through His prophets and often hundreds of years before the event. Jesus when talking to his disciples about who would betray him said: -

- I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. (John 13:19).

Prior to Jesus being crucified he told his disciples: -

- The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31).
- The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise. (Mark 9:31).
- They will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise. (Mark 10:34).

These verses shine a brilliant light upon a truth that is often overlooked; that truth is this: during Jesus three years ministry on earth serving, healing and ministering God's love and grace to others he was fully aware of the brutal cruel and suffering death he was to suffer on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

### **The LORD will cry out Like a Woman in Labour and Lay Waste Mountains.**

Isaiah 42:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>The LORD goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal (stir up jealousy in KJV); he cries out, he shouts aloud, (he will roar in KJV) he shows himself mighty against his foes. <sup>14</sup>For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. <sup>15</sup>I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. <sup>16</sup>And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.

**The LORD goes out like a mighty man:** (v13) the LORD here is pictured as a mighty warrior that goes out with a war-cry in zeal and fierce indignation against the idols and to battle against the enemies of his people. The LORD in the Scriptures is often represented as a man of war: -

- The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. (Exodus 15:3).

- Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! (Psalm 24:8).
- Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendour and majesty! (Psalm 45:3).
- The LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones. (Isaiah 30:30).

Habakkuk pictures the LORD as a warrior riding in a chariot of salvation.

- Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? (Habakkuk 3:8)

The LORD will prevail conquer and subdue Israel's enemies and when the Lord Jesus Christ returns he will prevail conquer and subdue by his Spirit, his love and his grace, and make them his willing people in the day of his power; and those who rebel against his reign over them he will rule with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

**NOTICE:** the rivers, mountains and seas signify nations, cities and lands.

**He shall roar:** (13) here the LORD is pictured as a lion the king of beasts facing his enemies with a fierce roaring to instil fear and terror over his attackers or as a roar of victory over his prey.

**Like a man of war He stirs up His zeal:** (13) (stir up jealousy in KJV) the word zeal/jealousy comes from the Hebrew word (*qin'ah*) it embraces jealousy, envy and zeal, it carries the idea of being jealous, zealous or envious or provoking another too jealously. Here it carries the idea of the LORD rising up with zeal to protect His good name and His people. In the same way a husband would rise up in fury if he saw another man abusing his wife, likewise the LORD will stir Himself up against the merciless, ruthless, cruel and hard-hearted enemies of his Son and of the Gospel and of those who mock, persecute and scorn those who belong to His Kingdom.

**The LORD will no longer hold His peace:** (v14) or restrain His wrath, but instead will go forth as a mighty warrior to destroy His and His people's enemies and to deliver and save them. It could be said today that we live in the long day of grace and the long day of death until the Lord returns in glory with judgment.

**I will cry like a travailing woman:** (14) in the same way that a woman in labour cannot withhold her cries or stop her child being born a day will come when the LORD will no longer be able to suffer the wickedness and injustice on earth, but will instead like the woman in labour give vent to His wrath and bring punishment upon His enemies. The expression, "I will cry like a travailing woman," carries the idea that the LORD will suddenly and utterly destroy the irredeemable enemies of His word and His people. When men's wickedness reaches a great height, God patience is represented in Scripture as if it had come to an end and He could no longer withhold punishing the guilty.

- You have rejected me, declares the LORD; you keep going backward, so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you—I am weary of relenting.
- The LORD could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day. (Jer. 44:22)

**I will make waste mountains and hills:** (15) signifies God destroying powerful kings and mighty nations, cities and lands that are against Him and against His word and His people.

**I will dry up the pools:** (15) Often in Scripture God's mercy, blessing and joy is represented by pouring water upon the dry ground.

- The lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. (Isaiah 35:6).
- I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. (Isaiah 44:3).

Therefore drying up pools carries the idea of the LORD removing all sources of prosperity and comfort from the wicked and from His enemies while His wrath is described as a consuming fire, parching everything and reducing it to barrenness. These verses can refer to the following three periods of time: -

1. The LORD has for a long time (i.e., seventy years) been patient and held His peace against the Babylonians who have oppressed and held His people in captivity for almost seventy years. But like a woman in labour who can no longer withhold her child from its birth the LORD can no longer withhold His wrath and will instead with zeal for His people rise up like a man of war against their oppressors. He will lay waste mountains and hills referring to the Empire of Babylon and all its allied nations, and turn the rivers into islands and dry up the pools referring all nations that have acted as enemies against Israel.

The LORD used Cyrus king of Media Persia to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. The following verses of the prophet Isaiah show that God not only called Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and called him by name, but also show that God said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. They picture God holding Cyrus by the right hand and opening all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdues all nations.

- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped*, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, *who call you (Cyrus) by your name.* <sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, *I call you by your name, I name you*, though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me*, <sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).
- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: '*Surely God is in you*, and there is no other, no god besides him.' (Isaiah 45:14).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. Cyrus after conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. In this context the blind would refer to the people of Israel who were spiritually blind and the LORD'S promise that He would lead the people in a way that they do not know and will guide them would refer to Cyrus a secular king setting them free, since never before has a secular king given the entire nation of Israel permission to return to their own land and city and rebuild their temple and establish their faith. In this way the LORD turned Israel darkness (the seventy year captivity) into light and did not forsake His people.

2. Isaiah's prophetic message also transcends the era of Cyrus and echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this scenario the LORD has for a long time been patient and held His peace against the hypocritical prideful legalistic religious leaders of Israel (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) who have oppressed His people for many years. But like a woman in labour who can no longer withhold her child from its birth the LORD can no longer withhold His wrath and will instead with zeal for His people rise up like a man of war against their oppressors and legalistic teachers. He did this through the Lord Jesus Christ: -

- Making a whip of cords, Jesus drove them (the money-changers) all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." (John 2:17)

He will lay waste mountains and hills in this context would refer to the (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes), and turn the rivers into islands and dry up the pools would refer to stripping the religious leaders of all their power over the people which Christ did by his death and resurrection and the introduction of the Gospel of grace and in this way the LORD did not forsake His people.

3. The LORD has for a long time been patient with the world and held His peace against the wicked and those who persecute, mock and scorn His people. But like a woman in labour who can no longer withhold her child from its birth the LORD can no longer withhold His wrath toward the enemies of His people and will instead with zeal for His people rise up like a man of war against their oppressors, the wicked and the enemies of God.

This of course will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty and strike down the nations, and rule them with a rod of iron. (Rev. 19:11-16). In this scenario laying waste the mountains and hills would refer to all the nations that oppose Christ and his people while leading the blind in a way they have not known would refer to all those who were spiritually blind, but have now had their eyes opened to the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Who is, Blind as the Servant of the LORD or Deaf as His Messenger.**

Isaiah 42:17-20 ----- <sup>17</sup>They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, "You are our gods." <sup>18</sup>Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! <sup>19</sup>Who is blind but my servant or deaf as my messenger whom I send Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the LORD <sup>20</sup>He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear.

Verse twenty-four says, "Who gave up Jacob to the looter, and Israel to the plunderers? (v24) showing that the people in focus here who have turned to idols are God's own people Israel. The LORD had told Israel to hear what the prophets are saying and turn from their wicked ways, but they have set their hearts diamond hard against the LORD'S prophets and are therefore spiritually blind and deaf to God's word. Equally as bad as this they had set up idols and pagan altars in their land and the city of Jerusalem.

**They are utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols:** (v17) this refers to the people of Israel, they are put to shame, because they trusted in their idols and now their beloved city Jerusalem is in ruin, the Temple of God has been pillaged of all its gold and silver and its sacred items and the people are in captivity to Babylon.

#### **NOTE.**

Keep in mind that this is a prophecy of future events yet to come. Isaiah by the inspiration of God is seeing in his mind the vision and proclaiming it to the people so that when these things come to pass, they will look back to these prophecies and see that what Isaiah proclaimed was the word of God. One of the reasons for this was so that with this realisation that their LORD was speaking to them and

they rejected Him they would be convicted of their sin and repent of their wickedness and forsake their idols and return to the LORD their God, which is exactly what they did at the end of their seventy years in captivity.

**Who say to metal images, “You are our gods,”** (v17) the metal images would refer to all the idols Israel had made and set up in their cities, but primarily to the two golden calves Jeroboam set up when the United Kingdom of Israel split. At this time Rehoboam remained King of the land of Judah and of Jerusalem (the two tribes) while Jeroboam became the king over Israel (the ten tribes) in the land of Samaria.

Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David, if this people of the ten tribes go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then their heart will turn again to their LORD, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to him.”

So Jeroboam made two calves of gold and said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt,” and he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. This became a sin, for the people of Israel (1 Kings 12:26-29). The following verses show that these two golden calves became an ongoing sin for the ten tribes of Israel: -

- The LORD will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin." (1 Kings 14:16).
- Jehu king of Israel did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan. (2 Kings 10:29).
- Now you (Jeroboam and all Israel) think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods. (2 Chron. 13:8).

Remember to keep in mind that this is a vision that Isaiah is having of future events that have not yet come to pass, but are certain to do so at the appointed time in the future. Often a prophecy is spoken in the present tense as though the event has already happened when in actual reality the fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment and speaks it as he sees it in present time. The people the prophet is speaking to know when the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is written in.

When a prophet speaks he is often speaking as the voice of God, therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass. This is another reason the prophet can speak the words of God in the present moment because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future.

Another reason many future prophecies are spoken in the present tense, is because the prophet is speaking the words of God or the vision as they come to him in his time. The prophet himself may not always be aware of the echoes contained in his prophecy or that the words he is speaking, actually have contained within them the ability to transcend time and travel thousands of years through history to a future age or a future person.

The following verses are a good example of this principal:-

- For a nation (Babylon) has come up against my land (Judah), powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. <sup>7</sup>It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white. (Joel 1:6-7)

This event has not taken place, yet Joel speaks it in the past tense as though it has already happened. This is simply because Joel is speaking what he is seeing happening in his vision. God is giving Joel a complete picture in his mind of what is about to take place.

Joel in a sense is watching a movie being played out in his mind and is simply speaking it out as the events take place, thus the reason Joel speaks in the past tense, in his mind the events have already taken place, but in real life they are still to be played out in the future

### **Who gave Jacob and Israel up to the Looter? Was it not the LORD?**

Isaiah 42:21-25 ----- <sup>21</sup>The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious. <sup>22</sup>But this is a people plundered and looted; they are all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons; they have become plunder with none to rescue, spoil with none to say, "Restore!" <sup>23</sup>Who among you will give ear to this, will attend and listen for the time to come? <sup>24</sup>Who gave up Jacob to the looter, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey? <sup>25</sup>So he poured on him the heat of his anger and the might of battle; it set him on fire all around, but he did not understand; it burned him up, but he did not take it to heart.

**This is a people plundered and looted:** (v22) refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**All of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons:** (v22) refers to God's people being held in captivity to Babylon for seventy years.

**They have become plunder with none to rescue:** (v22) also refers to God's people being held in captivity to Babylon with no one to come to their rescue.

**Who gave up Jacob to the looter and Israel to the plunderers?** (v24) refers to God using Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as His servant to bring His judgment upon the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Jer. 25:9).

It was the LORD'S desire to magnify His law and make it glorious amongst His people (v21), but they rebelled against Him and turned to worship idols and seek their counsel. This is why they as a nation are referred to as the LORD'S blind and deaf servant that cannot see or hear. Because they would not walk in His ways the LORD has given them up to their enemies.

The looter and plunder applies to Babylon who destroyed Jerusalem and plundered the cities riches and not only took the gold and silver of the temple and all the sacred vessels back to the city of Babylon, but also lead the inhabitants of Jerusalem in chains out of the city and into Babylon where they became captives for the next seventy years.

**Conclusion:** Isaiah finishes this chapter asking the people of Israel when the appointed time for the looter and plunder comes will any of them consider this prophecy and acknowledge that they had sinned against the LORD and not obeyed Him or walked in His law and realise this is why the LORD has poured on them the heat of his anger and set the battle of their enemies all around against them.

Israel did not heed these words nor did they perceive that all the trouble that came upon them was because the LORD their God had turned against them, because they had turned against Him. However at the end of the seventy years they did forsake their idols and returned to the LORD their God united as one nation with one faith. (Though the primary enemy in focus is Babylon the principal taught here can also be applied to the many Assyrian invasions against Israel).

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### **The History of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon.**

God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them.

But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14).

The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again)

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed.

Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

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End.