

SESSION 1

THE GREATEST NAME

Leader pages on pp. 102-105

THE POINT:
THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD
AND ONLY HIS NAME
DESERVES GLORY.

ISAIAH 42:1-12

¹ "This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations.

² He will not cry out or shout or make his voice heard in the streets.

³ He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick; he will faithfully bring justice.

⁴ He will not grow weak or be discouraged until he has established justice on earth. The coasts and islands will wait for his instruction."

.....
⁵ This is what God, the LORD, says—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 on it—

⁶ "I am the LORD. I have called you for a righteous purpose, and I will hold you by your hand. I will watch over you, and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people and a light to the nations,

⁷ in order to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those sitting in darkness from the prison house.

⁸ I am the LORD. That is my name, and I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

.....
⁹ The past events have indeed happened. Now I declare new events; I announce them to you before they occur."

¹⁰ Sing a new song to the LORD; sing his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea with all that fills it, you coasts and islands with your inhabitants.

¹¹ Let the desert and its cities shout, the settlements where Kedar dwells cry aloud. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy; let them cry out from the mountaintops.

¹² **Let them give glory to the LORD and declare his praise in the coasts and islands.**

MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

Justice . . . nations (v. 1)—The Servant's mission involved bringing justice not only to Israel but also to the nations. The Hebrew word translated nations can also be rendered "Gentiles."

I am the LORD (v. 8)—The designation is derived from the Hebrew verb "to be" and denotes God as the

self-existent, covenant God who acts independently of outside influences.

Glory (v. 8,12)—from a Hebrew verb meaning "to be heavy." It designates the weighty importance and the shining majesty that accompany the Lord's presence.

WHY SHOULD WE BRING GLORY TO THE NAME OF GOD?

Names are important. It's rare you see boys named Judas or hear Jezebel tossed around for possible girl names. Instead, names are chosen to inspire. Some of us inherit surnames attached to great legacies. My grandfather and father brought respect and honor to my last name through the lives they lived. More than a few times I was referred to as so and so's grandson or son. Just before leaving college, my dad told me to never forget who I was and whose name I carry.

Sometimes we don't find much attachment to our given name and are most comfortable with a nickname. Whether provided by family or friends, a good nickname is often associated with an intimately shared experience. This is what happens to the Messiah within Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a coming "Servant." We now know that Servant by the name of Jesus. His mission was to represent God and His name accurately by bringing God honor and glory. Let's discover how Isaiah said Jesus would do this.

He Delights in Us // Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah 42 contains the first of four "Servant Songs" describing the coming Messiah. These songs have sometimes drawn undeserved challenges to Isaiah's authorship. Some contend Isaiah couldn't have written the book by himself. Most who hold this belief don't embrace the divine nature of prophecy. Their worldview doesn't provide space for divine foretelling. Of course, we hold the view that one man, the prophet himself wrote the entire book of Isaiah.

Isaiah is often called the prince of prophets. His tenure as prophet spanned four kings and almost sixty years dating from 740–680 BC. Because Isaiah so clearly foretells Jesus's birth, life, suffering and victory, many refer to it as the "fifth Gospel, emphasizing its deep connection to Christ's story.

"The Bible reveals two portraits of the coming Messiah: **Messiah, Son of David:** The Lion of

Judah. He would be the victorious King who conquers the enemy and rescues His people.

Messiah, Son of Man: The sacrificial Lamb of God. He would be the Suffering Servant who takes the penalty for His people.

Jewish tradition taught that one man could not fulfill both roles. Biblical history informs us otherwise. Jesus is both the Lion and the Lamb. In His first advent, He was the Lamb; in His second, He will be the Lion.

Isaiah opened this first servant song with the



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words “This is” (v. 1). The KJV uses “Behold.” It means to fix your gaze, marvel, wonder, study, notice, and consider. Think of a bride at her wedding. All eyes and attention should be upon her as she marches down the aisle.

The remainder of verse 1 reveals some characteristics of this coming Messiah:

- “Servant”: One who acts on behalf of another.
- “I strengthen him”: God will protect, direct, and supply His Servant with all He needs.
- “Chosen”: Selected since the foundation of the world.
- “I delight in him”: The Father delights in the Son before He has done anything related to the mission.
- “I have put my Spirit on him”: The Servant is personally anointed by the Lord.

Two main themes fill the rest of these verses: justice and humility. Justice is mentioned three times. The Servant will:

Bring justice to the nations (v. 1). The nations included the Gentiles as well.

Faithfully bring justice (v. 3). He will be true to the Father’s purpose for Him.

Established justice in the earth (v. 4). He will not be disheartened.

The word for justice, *mishpawt*, means “a fair judgment” or “to set things right.” The Servant is to set things right between God and all His rebellious children.

The second theme, humility, is how He will deliver this divine justice. The Servant will not cry out or shout His message in the streets for the masses. With gentleness and humility, He will carry it to those who are broken and bruised. Bruised reeds and smoldering wicks were thrown out as useless, even though they could be repaired. This justice will bring life and hope to those who have little left.

Jesus, the Servant, was to be the sacrificial lamb who bore the sins of the world. This justice will reach the coastland and the islands, or in other words, to the uttermost parts of the world. In John 17, facing His final days, Jesus expressed His sole desire was to glorify His Father. He did this perfectly and the coasts and the islands still hear of His justice.

WHAT HOPE DO THESE VERSES GIVE YOU ABOUT THE MISSION OF CHRIST?



DIGGING DEEPER A CASE FOR SITUATIONAL JUSTICE

A 2024 study argues that 74% of Black Americans feel that the justice system was designed to hold them back.² This might make it difficult for some to take God’s claim of extending biblical justice (*mishpawt*) to the ends of the earth seriously. Keep in mind the strategy laid out in Isaiah 42. The Servant has God’s Spirit even though he does not cry out (42:1–2). This situation is comparable with Moses’s encounter with Pharaoh in Exodus 5. No matter what Moses would have said, Pharaoh was not going to provide a just ruling. Pharaoh was an unjust ruler who wanted power over justice. Justice systems are only as just as those who run them. During His time on earth, Jesus didn’t lead a governmental revolution but His actions redefined justice. He challenged corrupt leaders, uplifted the poor, and fulfilled Isaiah 42 by restoring justice one life at a time.

How might you be led by the Spirit to bring about biblical justice in your sphere of influence today?



He Calls Us // Isaiah 42:5-8

Promises were made of the Servant whom Isaiah's audience was to behold. He would bring justice to the nations. Verses 5-8 are the verification, or credit check, of the promise maker.

The word Lord is the name we use in English for Yahweh, the personal name God gave His people. The structure of the Lord's announcement is:

- The Lord's credentials are revealed.
- The Lord's promises are proclaimed.
- The Lord's name is glorified.

Isaiah established the Lord's credentials as the one "who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it" (v. 5). Isaiah used the phrase "stretched them out," a repeat of 40:22. That was counterintuitive, at the time the universe was believed to be static. It wasn't until the early 1920s, thanks to scientists named Einstein, Hubble, and Friedmann, that we confirmed Isaiah was right all along. The universe is expanding, or being "stretched out."

He is the One "who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk on it" (v. 5). Those words recall the creation account of Genesis 1-2, where the Lord breathed life and therefore His Spirit into the ones He molded out of the dust. These credentials verify the Promise Maker is also the Promise Keeper.

After His credentials were verified, the Lord Himself spoke to His Servant. He made specific

promises concerning the righteous purpose for which He's been called. It was a call to transform the rebellious into the righteous. Everything about the mission was "right." The right person – right time – right place – right purpose.

In verse 6, the Lord took over and spoke directly to us, promising things on which the Servant could count. With His own hand, God would hold and protect Him. The same hands that stretched out the galaxies, dug the oceans, and raised the mountains would lead Him and watch over Him.

The Lord declared that He will not share His glory or His name with anyone or anything. He alone is the One who can accomplish what He has promised: justice and salvation. Therefore, only the name Yahweh deserves glory and praise.

Jesus, the Servant, some 700 years later fulfilled these words. He opened the eyes of the blind and set the prisoner spiritually free. Because of what Jesus did, He became the covenant that reconciled God and man. This makes Peter's statement even more clear: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Only Jesus was qualified, only Jesus could do it, and only His name is worthy of praise.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GREAT WORK IN OUR WORLD AND IN OUR LIVES?

He Is Praiseworthy // Isaiah 42:9-12

The Lord, still speaking in verse 9, once again reminded His people why they can trust His promises. "Before they occur" (v. 9) can be translated "before they spring up," which carries the idea of a plant or grass blade breaking through the surface and suddenly appearing out of the ground. It's the result of hidden work below the surface.

No matter what the past or future events are, the truth is that what God says comes to pass. The reason they happen is because God, the Lord, is creating and shaping the future with His hands!

Isaiah closed out this section of the Servant song in a similar way to his other Servant songs—a hymn

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of praise. The purpose is to raise the audience's eyes from their current difficult circumstances and be inspired by what the Lord will do in the future.

Why a new song? For there to be a new song, there had to be an old song. Just as His people sang His praises for the things that have already taken place, there will be new songs of praise lifted for the new things that are about to spring up. Once the Lord brings justice to the nations through the Servant, there will be yet another new reason to sing praise songs to the one and only true God.

The new song is itself a foreshadowing of the day when all people from every tribe behold the Lord as the one true God. Paul wrote, "For this reason, God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

This new song is a reminder that the first time the Servant came as Messiah, son of Joseph, the Lamb to reconcile, but the second time He will come as Messiah, son of David, the Lion of Judah to conquer. And He will take those of us who have trusted in Him to heaven.

HOW HAS GOD'S FAITHFULNESS PROMPTED A NEW SONG IN YOUR HEART?

DID YOU KNOW?

Sometimes nonbelievers might view God as a conceited being because He created mankind to worship Him exclusively. Verses like Isaiah 42:8 make it clear that God will not allow anyone or anything else to receive the glory that is due to Him alone. But how can a Christian affirm this while also acknowledging that being conceited is wrong and sinful? Instead, of arguing that God created mankind to worship Him exclusively, it might be better to state that God created mankind to worship "goodness." From here, one can share that Scripture clearly teaches all "goodness" comes from God alone (Psa. 16:2; Jas. 1:17-18). Thus, for mankind to worship "goodness," mankind must worship God. This is why God can boldly declare that He alone is worthy of all worship. He is the only One who can follow through on the promise of providing mankind with goodness.

Biblical Truth: "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18).

What or who claims to provide people with something "good" but fails to follow through on the promise?

LIVE IT

How can you explain to someone how God's glory is connected to your life?

Listening to someone else's description of your life might be particularly discouraging or affirming. Reflecting on God's glory should be a natural part of the Christian life, but it might take time for us to develop habits that make people see this as a genuine part of who we are. This should not be something that we force. Instead, we should constantly seek ways to conform our actions so that they fall more in line with the actions of Christ. Here are three simple activities that can help you do this:

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- **Memorize.** Commit Philippians 2:9-11 to memory. Reflect on those words and ask God to show you how to live under His lordship each day.
- **Write.** Write a hymn, poem, or spoken word thanking the Lord for His faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future. Use what you've written in your personal worship for God's glory.
- **Encourage.** There are many bruised people in our communities. Someone you know is going through a tough time. Send this person a note of encouragement with a promise from God.

DAILY READINGS

1. WHO'S YOUR SAVIOR // ACTS 4:12

As we go through our lives, we find proxies that provide us temporary comfort, solace, and safety. We view these things as our saviors that can release us from the pressure, heartache, and harm of everyday life. As believers, we must put our hope in the salvation given to us through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 states, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved." As people of God, once we acknowledge that we'll find lasting comfort, solace, and safety. So, as you go through this week, reflect on what you've allowed to be a savior in place of the One true Savior.

Invite God to be your Savior in the areas of your life that you've allowed proxies to take hold.

2. HE IS! // ISAIAH 42:8

God's magnificent name of Yahweh has many meanings, one being "He That Is." Often, when offering gratitude to God, we immediately think about God as He relates to us. We honor God for blessing us with families and jobs and, of course, for gifting us with salvation. How often, though, do we acknowledge God for being who He is? This includes His traits, patterns, and behaviors. What do God's actions reveal about His character? To answer these questions, we must look to God's sovereignty, holiness, patience, and love toward us. Furthermore, you'll begin to see Him beyond what is given to you. This mindset births praise of God and a heart of gratitude as you begin to see His hand over your entire life.

Lord, help me to see who You are and praise your attributes.

3. TAKE A KNEE // PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11

During Medieval times, knights would pledge their unending service by kneeling before them, placing their hands between their lord's hands, promising to lay their lives for their lord and the honor of their name. Like these medieval knights, when we confess Jesus as our savior, we "take a knee" by

forfeiting our sinful nature to honor the name of God. We submit to God. When we "take a knee," we proclaim to the world that Jesus is our Lord and has authority over everything we have and every place we inhabit. In what ways will you "take a knee"?

Submitting to God proclaims Jesus's authority in our lives.

4. HAND IN HAND // ISAIAH 42:6

In the late 90s, the gospel group Trin-i-Tee 5:7 covered a classic song called "Put Your Hand in the Hand." The song challenges the listener to put their complete faith in God, and the verses emphasize just how dependable God is. After stating Jesus's purpose, Isaiah 42:6 states, "I will hold you by your hand. I will keep you." This Scripture shows God's loving character and that believers can find security in Him. John 10:28 states that followers of Christ are in God's hands, and no one will "snatch them out." Believing this in our hearts, we can put our complete trust in God, knowing that he is faithful to keep His promises. As the song says, "Put your hand in the hand of the man that stilled the water."³

We can securely put out complete faith in God, knowing that we are in His hand

5. GIVE GOD GLORY // ISAIAH 42:12

Recently, I attended a church service in my hometown. The pastor took some time during the service to honor a mother of the church, it was her 81st birthday. The pastor handed her the microphone, she said excitedly, "The Lord has been good to me every single day, and I give Him all the glory." As believers, we should strive to give God glory in everything we do. We can do this by witnessing to others about Jesus, or in other ways, like turning the other cheek when in an argument. When we give God glory through representing Him well is, by extension, testifying His character.

God help me to represent You well so that You can get the glory from my life.

Week 1 – God’s Word: One Big Story

Scripture Readings: 2 Timothy 3:16–17; Genesis 1:1; Revelation 22:20–21; Luke 24:27

The Bible is not a random collection of writings—it is one unfolding story of God’s plan for the world. Written over 1,500 years by different authors in different contexts, it carries one heartbeat: God’s love and His plan of redemption. Jesus Himself showed that all the Scriptures—from Moses to the Prophets—pointed to Him (Luke 24:27). The Bible begins with God’s creation and ends with new creation. Between those bookends is humanity’s fall, God’s covenant love, Christ’s redemption, and the ultimate hope of restoration.