

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE  
Isaiah 42

Intro: Here we have more comfort! Isaiah was commanded to comfort the people of God in chapter 40, verse 1, and to speak to their hearts, in verse 2. This is just what he did. He repeats certain truths of comfort, always bringing them to bear upon the hearts of his hearers, and readers.

He was speaking to a rebellious, sinful, idolatrous people. It would have been very understandable if he had just denounced them in the strongest possible way, but he was God's messenger, speaking to God's people, a people very dear to the Lord in spite of prolonged and severe disobedience. Here we see how God longs over His people, refusing to give them up, working in them until His purposes are finally accomplished.

How does He deal with His own? We have some very important answers here. (The message which we have here is not completed in this chapter, but we will see the remainder of it later.)

GOD DEALS WITH HIS PEOPLE:

I. THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Isa. 42:1-4).

How do we know that this refers to Christ? See Matt. 12:15-21.

The very language indicates that it could be no one else.

In 40:9 the Lord had said, "Behold your God!" Now He says, "Behold my servant . . ." What a mystery is here! What condescension--that the Son should become a Servant! No one can sufficiently describe the humiliation of Christ. We need to go over and over those verses which we have learned and said together for several weeks: Phil. 2:5-11, vv. 5-8 especially.

It is through this One that God always works.

Note what the Father did for Him. Note how the Father delighted in Him. Note the certainty of His work--and think of this with the background of the failure of Israel to be a proper witness to the world.

Vv. 2-4 speak of the character of His ministry, and of its ultimate success. Vv. 1b and 3b, 4 tell of His certain victory.

God has had many servants throughout the history of the world, but none like His own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Keep this in mind as we consider all that follows.

GOD DEALS WITH HIS PEOPLE:

II. IN FAITHFULNESS (Isa. 42:5-7)

We often hear it said that, if we do not do our job, the Lord will get someone else to do it. That is not true. We have too many illustrations to the contrary. Think of Abraham. Think of Jacob. Think of Moses. Think of Jonah. Think of Peter. Think of the sons of thunder, James and John.

Phil. 1:6 tells us what God does. He never gives up on those who are truly His own. Note how that is indicated here.

Third, GOD DEALS WITH HIS PEOPLE:

III. FOR HIS OWN GLORY (Isa. 42:8-12).

It is so easy for us to forget this. We begin to see a little blessing, and the first thing we seem to do is to want to share in the glory of it all.

The problem here was their idolatry. It seems inconceivable that the people of God would do such a thing, but their idolatry showed that they were giving the glory which belonged to God to graven images.

The "new things" mentioned in v. 9 evidently have to do with the work of the Lord among the Gentiles. "Kedar" is mentioned in v. 11--Kedar being the second son of Ishmael, and his name was carried by one of the greatest tribes of the Arabs.

All around the earth the name of the Lord will one day be glorified. The redeemed of all nations will sing to Him, and His praise will be declared "in the islands"--a term used of the Gentile nations.

What a day that will be!

But the people of God in every generation need to learn this lesson NOW! We dare not take glory to ourselves. We must not give glory to each other. We must not exalt God's instruments. He alone deserves the glory, and He deserves it continually. See also Isa. 48:11.

Cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23.

Note again in Isa. 42:8: "I am the Lord: that is my name." Does this impress us? It should! No one else bears that Name.

Finally, GOD DEALS WITH HIS PEOPLE:

## IV. WITH JEALOUSY (Isa. 42:13-25)

This section has two distinct parts:

- 1) Vv. 13-17.
- 2) Vv. 18-25).

The first has to do with the future; the second, with the present (at that time).

Note the statement in v. 13, ". . . he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war." God is not only jealous for the love of His people, but He is jealous for their blessing.

Cf. Ex. 34:14, "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

When the Law was given, in connection with the second commandment ("Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . .") [Ex. 20:4]), we read in Ex. 20:5,

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:  
for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God . . .

The Lord had been silent. He had held His peace. But now He would cry out like a woman in travail. He would work miracles to make things right for them. And He concluded by saying in v. 16b,

These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

All of this speaks of the ultimate outcome.

But what about things as they were then? Beginning with v. 18 the Lord appealed to His people.

In v. 18 He addressed Himself to the "deaf" and the "blind." Who were they?

V. 19 makes it clear that He was talking about another servant, Israel. They were the needy ones. They saw and they heard, but they did not really see nor hear!

V. 22 gives their present deplorable condition, but no one was saying, "Restore." V. 25 indicates the same thing.

Who did all of this? Their enemies? No! See v. 24. It was the Lord. Why? V. 24b, ". . . for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law."

What was the remedy? See v. 21. It is not their merit (for they had none), but God's righteousness, and the Lord "would magnify the law, and make it honourable," that is, powerful, noble, glorious (Wilson, p. 221).

All sin results from departing from the Word of God. The

remedy for our idolatry (covetousness) and other sins is to get back to the Word and to living in obedience to the Word.

Concl: What are the chief lessons for us?

— They are:

- 1) Our need for the Lord Jesus Christ as the people of God.
- 2) The grace and faithfulness of God.  
It does not encourage sin to tell the people of God that the Lord will not forsake us; it encourages holiness!
- 3) The imperative need for our witness.
- 4) The importance of daily obedience to the Word of God.