

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2021: *Isaiah: “Comfort My People”*
Lesson 9 “To Serve *and to Save*”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 41; Isaiah 42:1–7; Isaiah 44:26–45:6; Isaiah 49:1–12.

Memory Text

“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles’ ” (Isaiah 42:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Servant Nation (*Isaiah 41*)
- III. Unnamed Individual Servant (*Isaiah 42:1–7*)
- IV. Persian “Messiah” (*Isaiah 44:26–45:6*)
- V. Hope in Advance
- VI. A Feeling and Suffering Servant (*Isaiah 49:1–12*)
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Isaiah spoke of a servant of the Lord with a similar mission of mercy: ‘a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; . . . to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness’ (Isaiah 42:3, 7, NRSV). Let’s take a look at this Servant. Who is He, and what does He accomplish?” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In chapter 40, the people are told that the Babylonian exile is over and that Israel’s sin has been dealt with and a new era is beginning. They can and should all return home to Jerusalem. Through them God himself will bring his kingdom and all nations will see his glory. The prophet hopes that Israel will respond by becoming God’s servant and that they will now begin to share who God truly is with the nations.
3. In chapter 41, what is the significance of the ‘servant’? (Sunday’s lesson) Why are chapters 41 to 48 set up like a court trial scene?

4. By the end of the trial, we find that Israel is still as rebellious and hard-hearted as their ancestors, and will fail to fulfill their role as God's servant. In contrast, according to chapters 42 & 49, God is still going to fulfill his mission to bless the nations. Who is this servant and how is he different from the one in chapter 41? (Monday's and Thursday's lesson)
5. The first servant (Israel) proves to be blind, rebellious and fearful. Yet God uses him as his witness and promises to redeem him. The second servant (first introduced in chapter 42) is obedient, sensitive, suffers unjustly, yet God promises to uphold him and use him to bring Israel and the nations back to God.
6. What is the significance of the prediction of Cyrus as the Persian "Messiah" (44:23-46:13)? (Tuesday's lesson) Why does God use him when Cyrus does not even know him (45:4, 5)? Yet God calls him by his name (45:3, 4)! What is the lesson for us on how God works (even today)?
7. What is the significance of this in the context of chapters 41-48? What additional significance can be attached from another context? (See Wednesday's lesson).
8. The second servant reappears in chapter 49. How does this servant within the servant (Israel) function? How is he going to fulfill God's mission and do what Israel has failed to do? God gives this servant the title Israel, and sends him on a mission to restore the people of Israel back to their God, but also to become God's light to the nations.
9. What new element appears with the servant in chapter 49? See 49:4, 7 cf. the messianic king from chapters 9 & 11. (Thursday's lesson) If God uses him to bring deliverance, why does he need to endure frustration and unjust suffering? Could God not spare him of that experience?
10. What is the lesson for us and our mission in the current world? Are there ways we can reveal God's wisdom and leadership and share the knowledge of him? If God's purposes did not fail with the failure of Israel, what comfort can we find in these chapters to see what God is doing in our times? How can we be a blessing to a "bruised reed" and "dimly burning wick"?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Then what's our mission? Well, what was Israel's mission? What was Job's mission? My understanding is, we're not trying to prove that God can be trusted. We're supposed to spread the good word and spread the evidence. We're supposed to spread the record of God's demonstration of his trustworthiness. And that's to be found in scripture. And again, you see, it's not about us. In fact, we've often let him down, and we do not deserve his compliment, "You have said of me what is right," and yet God has been very gracious to all of us.

The fact that God would entrust us with this Good News, speaks very well of him. To think that he would let us pass on the Good News, is a very great honor, and even when we do a fumbling job, as Job felt he had, he said, "Oh God, I've spoken of things beyond my understanding." God says, "But you were surely on my side, and you have said of me what is right."

It's like Hezekiah. It all depends what we're talking about. Success is not to be measured in the things that Hezekiah introduced to his visitors. The greatest success a loyal member of God's family can achieve, is to speak well and truly of our gracious heavenly Father, and to hear his compliment, "You have said of me what is right."

I wish we were known for that. Do you suppose the day might come? That doesn't mean people will like our picture of God, but at least if they're going to reject us, they're going to reject the truth about God, which Satan did and one-third of the angels. They rejected the truth about God. Even God could not win one-third of the angels, and Jesus could not win Judas. There's no suggestion we'll win everyone. But if we go into a time of trouble and apparent defeat and opposition, let it be because we're speaking the truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – 1 & 2 Chronicles*, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/21MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/22MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But look how the New Testament confirms this as the Good News. Look over, for example, in Matthew 11:5. You remember the story behind verse 11? John the Baptist, who had faithfully announced the coming of the one that Isaiah pointed forward to, is now in prison. And he hears that Jesus is saying that real saints would visit the afflicted in prison. But he never came to see John. And John must have begun to wonder. And his own followers apparently began to wonder. So he sent emissaries to Christ, "Are you really the one or not?" And Jesus didn't say, "Yes, I am," because anybody could make a claim. He invited the emissaries to spend the day with him. And when they had listened to Jesus and watched him all day long, Jesus then said in verse 4, Matthew 11:

Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.

And they would recognize, John recognized, that this fit the description of the coming Messiah in the writings of Isaiah. Did you notice how often Jesus comments on the messages of Isaiah? And in his preaching he did exactly what Isaiah said needed to be done. {Graham Maxwell.

Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Isaiah, recorded January 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And do you remember when he fed the five thousand, or maybe more accurately the fifteen or twenty or twenty-five thousand. When he began to talk about his real mission, which was not going to be free food and free medicine, they left him. See, they welcomed that kind of thing, but not what he'd really come to reveal. Do you remember his triumphal entry? How thrilled they were. At last! Now! And then they abandoned him, within a few hours afterward. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Often your mind may be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think. You know that Jesus loves you. He understands your weakness. You may do His will by simply resting in His arms. {MH 251.3}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy, but to save. Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him. Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion were rejoicing in health and making trial of their new-found powers. Crowds were collecting around them to hear from their lips the works that the Lord had wrought. His voice was the first

sound that many had ever heard, His name the first word they had ever spoken, His face the first they had ever looked upon. Why should they not love Jesus and sound His praise? As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy. . . . {MH 19.4}

The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace. {MH 20.1}

All things proclaimed the urgent necessity on the earth of a Teacher sent from God—a Teacher in whom divinity and humanity would be united. It was essential that Christ should appear in human form, and stand at the head of the human race, to uplift fallen human beings. Thus only could God be revealed to the world. {RC 16.3}

Christ volunteered to lay aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and come to this earth to show to human beings what they may be in cooperation with God. He came to shine amidst the darkness, to dispel the darkness by the brightness of His presence. . . . {RC 16.4}

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together. {CT 465.2}

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." {MH 143.3}

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole. {MH 17.2}

In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of His divine relationship.—*Education*, p. 79. (1903) {Ev 55.3}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed. . . . He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden one with whom He daily came in contact. {WM 53.2}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with; but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His promises to pass. He will gather from the world a people who will serve Him in righteousness. {8T 254.1}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (ST March 25, 1897). {6BC 1082.3}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created, endowed with power to do the divine will. But the defection of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent, and yet it did not deter him from carrying out his eternal purpose; for the Lord would establish his throne in righteousness. God knows the end from the beginning; “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Therefore redemption was not an afterthought—a plan formulated after the fall of Adam—but an eternal purpose to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created. {ST, April 25, 1892 par. 1}

God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God’s plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil. {PP 78.3}

When Christ entered upon His campaign, Satan met Him and contested every inch of ground, exerting his utmost powers to conquer Him. Much was involved in this controversy. Intense interests were at stake. The questions to be answered were: “Is God’s law imperfect, in need of being amended or abrogated? or is it immutable? Is God’s government stable? or is it in need of changes?” Not only before those living in the city of God, but before the inhabitants of all the heavenly universe, were these questions to be answered. . . . {TDG 14.2}

Not merely in the minds of a few finite creatures in this world, but in the minds of all the inhabitants of the heavenly universe, has the immutability of God’s law been established. . . . With one voice they extolled God as righteous, merciful, self-denying, just.—Manuscript 1, Jan. 6, 1902, “God’s Justice.” {TDG 14.6}