

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 12 (March 15-21, 2015)

I hope you are enjoying these last few weeks from Isaiah as much as I am. We will continue to study from this wonderful book this week.

Sunday, March 15 (read Isaiah 42:1-4)

A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out. (Isaiah 42:3a)

Today's text features a prophecy regarding the arrival of Jesus Christ ("my servant") on earth. He is the second person of the Trinity and is upheld by the Father and energized by the Spirit as He accomplishes His task of bringing justice to the nations (v. 1). Since He speaks nothing but truth, He does not need to raise His voice to get attention (v. 2). He uses the weakest of the weak (bruised reed and smoldering wick) to accomplish His mission and to bring comfort and encouragement to them (v. 3-4). Matthew quotes this text to describe the time when Jesus quietly withdraws, instead of debating with the Pharisees who are seeking to kill Him (see Matthew 12:14-21). Can you trust Him to use you? Are you weak enough to surrender your all to Him?

Monday, March 16 (read Isaiah 42:5-7)

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. (Isaiah 42:6a)

God identifies Himself as the **Creator** and **Sustainer** of everything and everybody (v. 5). All that you need to know about creation is written in the first three chapters of Genesis. If you do not believe that God **spoke** the world into existence just as He says, how can you ever believe that He is able to save your soul when you cry out to Him? How can you trust the fact that He not only forgives your sins, but He also leads you by the hand "in the path of righteousness for His name's sake" (v. 6, see Psalm 23:3)? How can we witness to those who are lost if we do not even believe the creation story (v. 6b-7)? How can we know they **are** lost if we do not accept the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3? Can you see how important it is for you to believe that God is the Creator and Sustainer of everybody and everything?

Tuesday, March 17 (read Isaiah 42:8-9)

"I am the Lord; that is my Name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you." (Isaiah 42:8-9)

He is "the Lord; that is (His) name!" **The Lord** is the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8), so the "former things" are already fulfilled, and He announces the "new things" that will take place in the future (v. 9). When He says, "I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols," the obvious reference concerns the hand-crafted gods/idols that many people worshipped then and even now; however, it also references **our work** which must always be done for His glory. We need to arrive at the truth that every **good** thing we have accomplished has been done through His power so that we will not try to take the glory for ourselves. He is not about to allow anyone to make an idol out of his/her own good deeds. Since we know that His Word has already declared what will take place in the future as well as what took place in the past, let's simply trust the future into His hands.

Wednesday, March 18 (read Isaiah 42:10-13)

Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth (Isaiah 42:10a)

Now that we know Him as our Creator, Sustainer, Savior and Lord, shouldn't we "Sing to the Lord a **new song**?" You might be saying, "I don't like those new songs." That is not what He means! He wants you to sing the old songs with a new meaning—with the full realization of who He is and what He has done and is doing as well as what He is going to do in the future. When God gets all the praise and glory, we will see Him march before us in victory in every endeavor (v. 12-13). Finally, after 33 years of ministry, I am beginning to experience the joy and peace that comes through praising Him in all things (Phil. 4:4-7). I encourage you to seek Him and His righteousness and begin to praise Him for all that He does (Matthew 6:33).

Thursday, March 19 (read Isaiah 42:14-17)

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

Many people do not believe God will ever bring judgment for the out-of-control sins in our nation. Since He has remained silent for some time, they assume He will never speak up (v. 14). Could it be that what the politically correct crowd calls **man-made** global warming is nothing more than God's judgment on an ungrateful and unholy nation? While all this drought is taking place in many areas on our planet (v. 15), God is simultaneously opening the eyes of many who have previously been spiritually blind (v. 16). The weather related disasters of the past few years can be found in the list of things Jesus said would signal His return (see Matthew 24). Are you trusting in the Creator of the universe or in man-made idols (v. 17)? Eternity awaits your answer!

Friday, March 20 (read Isaiah 42:18-22)

Who is blind but my servant? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the Lord? (Isaiah 42:19)

In the early verses of this chapter, God prophesies about the coming of His **Servant**, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1-4). In today's text, He uses the word "**servant**" to describe His chosen nation, Israel. We who serve the Lord are supposed to be blind to the things of this world (v. 18-19), but not blind to God's commandments. Israel chooses to ignore God's Word and His law (v. 20-21). Therefore, the nation has been taken captive by the Babylonians who have seized them and all their possessions (v. 21-22). Who will rescue them from this life of poor choices? "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord" (see Romans 7:24-25). As I am writing this devotion, the United States is turning its back on Israel, but don't be afraid. Scripture says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). His Word proclaims everlasting protection for the nation of Israel (see Jeremiah 31:31-37). God said it! I believe it! That settles it for me! I pray that it settles it for you too!

Saturday, March 21 (read Isaiah 42:23-25)

Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come? (Isaiah 42:23)

The question in v. 23 printed above awaits an answer. Since God punished Israel for their sins, do you think He will ignore our gross sins, even the ones being made legal by the government and accepted by many churches of the United States? I can't help but wonder what our nation would be like if we followed the words of the Bible closely. God poured His wrath out on Israel, even though He loved them with all of His heart (v. 24-25). The good news for today is this: We are still living in the **Day of Grace**; therefore, we need to take God's Word seriously and repent of our sinful ways. Then God can bless our nation once again (see 2 Chronicles 7:14).