

Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isaiah 40-55)
(#6) The First Servant Song (Isa. 40:12) (cont.)

Outline of Isaiah 40-66
SECTION THREE: ORACLES OF REDEMPTION AND CONSUMMATION

- I. The Book of the Consolation of Israel (Chs. 40-55)
 - A. 40:1-11 The Prophet is to Announce God's Coming
 - B. 40:12-31 The Creator of the Universe
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Last Lord's Day we began to consider the First Servant Song of Isaiah, which is Isaiah 42:1-9. We were able to work our way through many verses, but not all of them. We will continue today where we left off, complete our consideration of the First Servant Song (42:1-9) and then we will proceed into the next section of the book of prophecy. But first let us summarize what we have already considered.

In this Servant Song, we have the prophecy of our Lord Jesus as the One whom God purposed to send to deliver His people from the bondage--the helpless and hopeless condition--into which their sin had brought them. The immediate context of prophet's words, penned in the 8th c. B.C., was the remnant of Jews who were in captivity in Babylon during the 6th c. B.C. But this Servant Song looks beyond the temporal deliverance of His people to the time when His Servant would deliver all of His people, being comprised of a remnant of Jewish people and Gentiles from all over the world. God had chosen His Servant to accomplish for His people that which they could not do for themselves. God would call, equip, strengthen, and assist His Servant in accomplishing salvation for all of His people.

Let us again read this passage, the first 9 verses of Isaiah 42.

“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.
²He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
³A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
⁴He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”
⁵Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
⁶“I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,

And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,
⁷To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.
⁸I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

We have already considered “**The person of the Servant**” (42:1), in which included information regarding the Servant’s calling, His equipping, and the nature of His mission. It is through this power of the Holy Spirit given to Him by His Father that He is able to accomplish His mission. He will not only save the remnant of Jews that God had reserved for Himself, but “He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles”; in other words, He rules over the Gentiles as a righteous Judge. God has raised up this Deliverer to redeem His people from their slavery, setting them free from their oppressors, whereby He enables them to live before God in liberty. And so here prophetically Jesus Christ is shown to be equipped with the Spirit whereby He might bring a well-regulated government to His people.

In **verses 2 through 4** we read of **the work of the Servant**. What is set forth here is the manner in which He will bring forth justice. He does so first by His **character**:

*“He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.”* (v.2)

We then read of His **concern** in **verse 3**:

*“A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.”*

We see that Christ aids and supports the weak and feeble. And so, the Servant of God does not crush and destroy the needy; He assists them. Rather, He would crush all those who would crush them.

We read of the Servant’s **commitment** in verse 4.

*“He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”*

Here again we see that Christ was sent not only to be the Redeemer of Jews but He was to be so of the Gentiles also. Here we see Gentiles, who live in the “coastlands” about the Mediterranean Sea, longing for the salvation that He, the Servant of God, would bring. They need Him to rule over them. And the law by which He will govern them will give them a peaceful and secure existence.

After the announcement and description of His Servant, God was about to speak directly to His Servant, which is contained in 42:6-9. But first God describes Himself in verse 5, then He would address His Servant. We read in **verse 5**:

⁵*“Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,*

And spirit to those who walk on it:

Two qualities of God are described which are set forth in 4 clauses in parallel with one another. First, God is the Creator of all that is; He is the One Who spread out the earth distributing its inhabitants. And second, God is the Lifegiver to all human beings, having given them a spirit so as to enable them to live before Him.

But then God addressed His servant directly and commissions Him with His task. We read in **verse 6**:

***“I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,***

God declared to His Servant, ***“I will give you as a covenant for the people.”*** This is where we left off last week.

This matter calls for our close attention. ***He, the Servant, is Himself set forth as the covenant of the people.*** First, we must understand the nature of a covenant as set forth in Holy Scripture. There are several meanings to this term depending on the context in which the word is found. In many contexts it should be understood like ***a legal contract or agreement upon which two parties base a relationship with one another.*** It may be a contract between two ***equal*** parties who are entering a formal relationship, like a business agreement or contract. Or it may be the terms between two parties of ***unequal*** stature, like a ***treaty*** that an ancient conquering king established with a people that he has subjugated to himself. When the treaty was signed, the conqueror had laid out the stipulations by which his relationship with the conquered would be conducted. The king promised to provide security for them. They, in turn, promised allegiance and loyalty to him. They agreed to send him tribute that which was fitting with his name, his power, and the benefits that he brought his people. This latter type of covenant treaty was known as a ***suzerain treaty***. A covenant between God and His people is much like the ancient suzerain treaty.

A covenant was also often established between two individuals, frequently made before a witness, perhaps solemnized in a ceremony that may involve the offering of a sacrifice and a meal. The ratification of the covenant in this sense would be seen to be done in the presence of God with Whom the meal is shared. An example of this form of covenant was made between Jacob and his father-in-law as recorded in Genesis 31:43-55.

⁴³And Laban answered and said to Jacob, “These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? ⁴⁴Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.”

⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶Then Jacob said to his brethren, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. ⁴⁷Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore its name was called Galeed, ⁴⁹also Mizpah, because he said, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. ⁵⁰If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me!”

⁵¹Then Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. ⁵²This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. ⁵³The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. ⁵⁵And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

When a covenant of this type was made between two individuals, a sacrifice was commonly offered to God and sometimes this sacrifice was understood to be a meal preparation for the participants (and perhaps priests) who would dine together along with God, who was their witness to the covenant. From then on, the

covenant would be appealed to as binding on the two parties, God having witnessed the agreement, Who, it would be assumed, would see to it either party would be punished, if they failed to live according to its prescriptions.¹

The covenant would be based upon whatever the two parties established between them. Again, when the covenant was established by one “greater” being “offered”, or perhaps dictated to the lesser, the greater would declare the ground of their covenant. Often a “sign” of the covenant would be declared at the onset of the covenant relationship as a perpetual witness, reminder, of the covenant relationship established. In Jacob and Laban’s case the sign of the covenant between them was a heap of stones. When God established a covenant with the human race represented by **Noah** after the flood, the covenant was based on God’s *promise*. The sign of the covenant was the rainbow.

⁸Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: ⁹“And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. ¹¹Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹²And God said: “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: ¹³I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. ¹⁴It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; ¹⁵and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.” (Gen. 9:8-17)

God set His bow in the heaven, as a warrior would, say, hand his archery bow above his fireplace showing that the war was no longer, but a state of peace now existed. So God sets His battle bow in the clouds, indicating His warfare was now over against the inhabitants of the earth through His judgment of the flood.

When God made His covenant with Abraham, it, too, was based on God’s promise.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. ²And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” ³Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ⁴“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

⁹And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. ¹³He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your

¹ There are a number of major covenants mentioned in the OT. There is a covenant between God and Noah. The sign of the covenant being the bow in the clouds. There is a covenant between God and Abraham (Genesis 15), the sign being physical circumcision. God promised Abraham that He would be his God and a God to his descendants. And then there is the covenant between God and Israel (Mosaic covenant) (Deut. 6:17, 18). This covenant was based upon the 10 commandments. These two tablets of stone were the basis on which God would relate to the nation when they were in the land. The sign of the covenant was the Sabbath observance (Ex. 31:16-18).

flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.” (Gen. 17:1-14)

The covenant was circumcision. The promise of the covenant was God enabling Abraham to be a father of a great people, comprised of many nations. Not only was the covenant physical circumcision of the male child, but circumcision was also the “sign” of the covenant.

When God made His covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, the covenant was made with the physical descendants of Abraham. The promise of the covenant was that God would bless the political nation of Israel, comprised of Jewish people (as well as to Jewish proselytes). This blessing promised Israel’s privilege of having a relationship with God, God’s favor of the nation over all of the Gentile nations, as well as God’s blessing upon their physical life. The basis of the Mosaic covenant itself was the Ten Commandments. We read in Deuteronomy

⁷“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? ⁸And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? ⁹Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’

¹¹“Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. ¹²And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. ¹⁴And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.

The sign of the Mosaic covenant was the manner in which Israel was to observe Saturday as the Sabbath Day. In Exodus 31 we read of the sign of the Mosaic covenant.

¹²And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. ¹⁴You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷***It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever***; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”

¹⁸And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Now here in **Isaiah 42:6**, God said that He would appoint the Servant (Christ) Himself as “a covenant of the people.” The Lord Jesus Himself is the covenant--the basis of the relationship between God and His people. In Him are the terms of the covenant. He is the sacrifice. Here God promised that He would have a relationship with His people based on the person of this Servant. When our Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper, He declared, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11:25). Our covenant relationship with God is not based on the Ten Commandments, as was the nation of Israel, which they could not and would not keep. Rather, our eternal covenant relationship with God is grounded and founded on Jesus Christ, the Servant of God, who was able to do for us before God that which we could not do. It was His work, His sacrifice, His authority, by which God has established with us an eternal relationship with Himself. Our responsibility is to see the truth of this covenant, embrace Jesus Christ as our covenant with God, believing on Him alone to do for us that which we

cannot do for ourselves. We trust Him to atone for our sins. We trust Him to deliver us from the tyranny of sin. We trust Him to see us securely into our everlasting habitation with Him and His people before the presence of His Father forever.

This was the promise of God of an entirely new covenant, that was absolutely necessary. For the reason the people were in the predicament they were in was because they had violated the terms of the existing Mosaic covenant. And having broken its stipulations had incurred their just penalty. (cf. Isaiah 1:2ff; Deut. 32:1). Their bondage and enslavement was due to their having forsaken God and the covenant He had established with them. They were in need of a new covenant (cf. Isa. 42:9), and this new covenant would be in His Servant/Son and it is this covenant that you and I enjoy today as Christians (cf. Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:19, 20). A new covenant was inaugurated to which fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy. Christ Himself is regarded as the basis, the covenant, upon which God would establish and maintain a relationship with His people.²

This verse also prophesies that this covenant would be made with Gentiles also, bringing them the light of God. They too, would hear and come to experience the blessing that the Servant would bring. Historically, this too has come to pass in this present church age.

Now in **Isaiah 42:7** God declared the end to which He appointed His Servant as a covenant for the people--to affect their deliverance from their sin. He was appointed to be the covenant so as to be...

*As a light to the Gentiles,
To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*

These words describe the condition of the remnant of Israel and under the judgment of God. They were made to suffer for their rebellions. They were taken captive and enslaved. But the Servant would affect their deliverance from the wrath of God that was upon them.

Two works are described as being performed by the Servant for this people: They would be given sight, and then they are escorted to freedom, having been released from bondage.

1. They would be given sight. In order for Christ to bring deliverance to His people He must first give them spiritual sight so that they see their condition and so that they might see Him Who alone can deliver them (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4-6). It is a truism: *“Until Christ shines upon a sinner as Redeemer, that sinner remains most wretched, empty, destitute of all spiritual blessings, surrounded and overwhelmed by innumerable distresses”* (John Calvin).

2. They would be set free. He was commissioned “to bring out prisoners from the dungeon. The Lord Jesus was commissioned by God to “bring prisoners out of dungeons.” This, of course, is a reference to bringing captives back from exile and alienation in order for them to live before God in liberty and righteousness. Christ not only delivers from *sin's penalty*, but he delivers from *sin's power* also. In fact, there is no forgiveness if the power of sin still maintains control of the individual. When true salvation comes, freedom results; deliverance comes. “If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed.”

Next we have a **word to the captives (42:8, 9)**

*⁸I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass,*

² There is but one everlasting covenant by which God could and would maintain a relationship with fallen humanity (cf. Heb. 13:20). It was promised to Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” affirmed to David (2 Sam. 23:5), promised through the prophets (Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 37:26), and fulfilled in Christ.

*And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”*

Here God still is speaking. But whereas before He was addressing His Servant, here He addresses *the captives*. In essence He is telling them beforehand that He is going to deliver them so that when it does occur no one else may claim credit, thereby robbing Him of glory.

Nothing angers God more than human pride. This in effect takes credit for His working. People fail to acknowledge that He is the cause of all good things. There is nothing we have that is good that He did not give us. We merited nothing. All we have was bestowed freely upon us according to His own purpose in grace. But what happens? Man takes credit for it. **Here, God indicates that He was making known His deliverance before it occurred so that no one could legitimately claim that it was not Him but they or some other gods that they claimed performed the work.** He promises a whole new beginning. Judgment had come upon them as He had said they would. He was righteous to have done so unto them. But now He promises new things, glorious things. These, too, will come to pass.

God’s way of dealing with His own is to inform them beforehand what He intends to do, and then has them wait upon Him for Him to bring it to pass. In this way they are taught to look to Him only, trust Him wholly, and give Him glory solely, for the great things He has done.

Now, I wish to set before you a general principle that is found in Scripture and is displayed for us in this verse. Our God usually deals with His people in the way of His promising them blessing. *Before God acts, it is common in Scripture that our gracious Lord gives a promise of that which he means to bestow.* God’s way of dealing with His own is to inform them beforehand what He intends to do, and then has them wait upon Him for Him to bring it to pass. We ask the question, “Why does He deal in this manner?” *“Why is He a God of Promise?”*

(1) God promises blessing beforehand in order to display His glory, and particularly His glory in grace.

We have already considered the chief reason for God declaring beforehand what He intend to do: chiefly, so that He alone may receive the glory. When Isaiah recorded these words, Israel was not yet due to be delivered from Babylon; in fact, Israel had not yet even been removed to Babylon. These “blind and captive persons had not sought grace, they had not pleaded for eyesight or asked for liberty. They had not yet even been born.”

Grace is displayed in that He makes the promise even before the need arose. We know, of course, that even before creation God had made provision for the recovery of His people from a fall they had not yet encountered! Such is His grace. “The Lord comes to men/women, not to them who are looking for Him, but to those who have blind eyes, who cannot look . . . who cannot come to Him” (Spurgeon). He does for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. He does for us that which only He can do. He states beforehand what He intends to do so as to demonstrate that He “works all things after the counsel of His own will to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:11,12).

(2) God promises blessing beforehand in order to arouse faith. Abraham and Sarah were given great promises by God. (see Heb. 11:8-12). This was prospect by which God led them to believe upon Himself. God promises so that His people may trust Him and rest in Him and by which they order their lives. God is glorified in this. The believing ones are saying in effect, “I believe God is powerful and faithful to bring these things about. His Word is true, I can and will trust Him.” This delights God and glorifies Him. This is particularly true when we trust His Word with respect to something that is humanly or even rationally impossible--like the resurrection of the dead. But God regards as His friends who take Him at His word.

(3) **God promises blessing beforehand in order to arouse *hope*.** Prisoners are cheered when they hear of their soon release. Depression, I believe, is the absence of hope. When a person feels that nothing is going to change, that their circumstances will remain the same, that they are consigned to this misery indefinitely, they are hopeless, without strength and encouragement. But when one has been given the promise of sure deliverance and the prisoner believes it is so, he can be cheered even in his situation as he believably anticipates his deliverance. Though he may yet be suffering the misery of his confinement, his spirit is revived, and it makes the suffering of his dungeon quite bearable in his anticipation of his release. And so, God promises beforehand what He intends to do in order to engender hope thereby encouraging His people.

(4) **God promises blessing beforehand in order to produce *love*.** The promise goes beforehand and is given to the individual even while he is hopelessly in prison in order to generate love. “That He would do this for me! Why, when He saves me I will let the world never hear the end of His glories. I will proclaim Him and my devotion to Him far and wide, and follow Him wherever He leads me.”

We now arrive to the next section of Isaiah’s Book of Consolation, in which we read that the people of God are to...

E. Sing to the Lord a New Song (42:10-17)

Here the ones that are to be the objects of God’s saving work through His Servant are commanded to sing to the Lord a “new song.” This is a “new song” because God is about to do a new kind of work in bringing salvation to His people. That it is a “new song” also serves to accentuate the special and remarkable salvation that the Servant will bring to His people. One once described these verses in this way:

He now exhorts the people to gratitude; for God’s favors ought always to excite us, by the remembrance of them, to give thanks and to celebrate his praises... We ought to observe this as the design of the Prophet, that there is no reason why believers, though they are severely oppressed, should give way to sorrow, but that good hope ought to encourage them to gladness, that they may now prepare to render thanksgiving.

Verse 10 reads,

*Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the ends of the earth,
You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!*

This command is given to the people of God to praise Him for His salvation. Again, we have even Gentiles brought into view. Isaiah has a broader scope of the salvation of God than just touching Israel. There is a universalism in God’s purpose reflected in our passage. God has purposed to save an innumerable number of people from every tribe and nation. This is a world-wide work of salvation and the Lord’s people will sing unto Him in the farthest places from Palestine. All who are the objects of God’s saving action, but only them, are encouraged to join in this song.

We then read **verse 11**:

*¹¹Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice,
The villages that Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.*

In verse 10 the areas to the West are mentioned but in verse 11 the places to the east of Palestine are described. In verse 10 we read of those “*who go down to the sea, and all that is in it*”, which would be the shores of the Mediterranean Sea from which the ships would sail to the West, the coastlands. Again, the

“coastlands” would have been understood as Gentile country. But in verse 11 we read of points East of Canaan. In other words all peoples everywhere who are recipients of God’s salvation should join in praise.

All people who are the objects of the Lord’s salvation are to praise God for what He purposed to do. **Verse 12** reads,

***¹²Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.***

God is praised in the world at large for bringing His salvation to people in other lands to other people.

We then read of the resolve of our Lord to go forth. He is as a mighty Warrior who goes forth to battle with the strength and resolve to conquer and subdue His enemies.

***¹³The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man;
He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.***

Here we read that God’s zeal in bringing salvation is likened to the intensity and resolve of ***a warrior***. There is zealotry and anger and fury expressed in these words. God Himself is described in terms depicting an avenging warrior who has waited for the time to descend into battle to fight against his people’s enemies and that time has arrived. The Lord lets out a war cry and rushes into battle. God Himself is seen as going to slaughter the enemies that had held His people in bondage. So it is with great zeal God opposes our sins that binds us and sinners who would afflict us and attempt to keep us in misery. And He will be victorious! The God of Israel alone is to be given credit for this great work of deliverance but His glory is not merely to be acknowledged, but it is to be broadcast abroad.

F. God declares His resolve to battle on behalf of His people (42:14-17)

¹⁴“I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
¹⁵I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
¹⁶I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
¹⁷They shall be turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,
Who say to the molded images,
‘You are our gods.’”

God Himself will now speak, actually, ***“He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud”*** (v. 13). Not only is God likened to a warrior (v. 13), but He is also like ***a woman crying out as she gives birth to a child***. This may speak of His longing for the day when His people would be delivered as a woman looks forward to the day

when her child is born. But perhaps the metaphor is simply to describe the shriek of His war cry as He enters battle. The prophet then continues the idea of God waging a battle in v. 15.

***¹⁵I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.***

The Lord sees to it that He will devastate the land and possessions of His enemies. Those things in which they trusted and sustained themselves are removed. His foes are left in utter ruin.

But with respect to His own, He brings them out and leads them in paths to the place where they may dwell in safety and peace in fellowship with Him. We read in **verse 16**:

***¹⁶I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.***

These people in and of themselves have no clue as to which way to journey nor do they have any means by which they may enable themselves to make a journey. God must direct them and assist them and this He promises to do. And when He sets out with them He does not leave them but He escorts them to their final destination.

It is often advantageous to us also to have no way open to us, to be straightened and hemmed in on every hand, and even to be blinded, that we may learn to depend solely on God's assistance and to rely on Him; for, so long as a plank is left on which we think that we can seize, we turn to it with our whole heart. While we are driven about in all directions, the consequence is, that the remembrance of heavenly grace fades from our memory. If, therefore, we desire that God should assist us and relieve our adversity, we must be blind, we must turn away our eyes from the present condition of things, and restrain our judgment, that we may entirely rely on his promises. Although this blindness is far from being pleasant, and shows the weakness of our mind, yet, if we judge from the good effects which it produces, we ought not greatly to shun it; for it is better to be "blind" persons guided by the hand of God, than, by excessive sagacity, to form labyrinths for ourselves. (Calvin, 16th c.)

"Remember us, O LORD, with the favor You have toward Your people; Oh, visit us with Your salvation, that we may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, that we may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, That we may glory with Your inheritance." (cf. Psa 106:4)