

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LXIV: Israel's Lack Of Blessing Due To Her Spiritual Hardness And Blindness (Isaiah 42:18-25)

I. Introduction

- A. Isaiah 42:10-17 that we viewed in our last lesson in this series focused on God's future unleashing of His emotions in judging the oppressors of His people and His blessing His flock at Christ's Second Coming.
- B. However, when Jews in their coming affliction under the Babylonians would later read this section, "they might wonder why they were experiencing such difficulties," Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1096.
- C. Isaiah 42:18-25 answers this question for that era, and we view this passage for our insight and application:

II. Israel's Lack Of Blessing Due To Her Spiritual Hardness And Blindness, Isaiah 42:18-25.

- A. In Isaiah 42:18, the prophet of God addressed sinful Israel, people presented as being spiritually insensitive to hearing God's Word as if "deaf" and spiritually "blind" to discerning His truth and insight to "hear" and "look for the sake of seeing," Edward J. Young, The Book Of Isaiah, 1974, v. III, p. 131-132. The verse closes with the infinitive "to see" to indicate purpose so that Israel was supposed to look "to see what is to be seen," *Ibid.*
- B. The servant in Isaiah 42:19 is Israel, and the four questions asked of her show that "none are as blind and deaf as that nation whom God had chosen to bring light to the Gentiles . . . Israel cannot call the Gentiles to see if she herself is blind, nor being deaf can she cause them to hear," *Ibid.*, p. 132. Israel was "one in a covenant of peace" (*meshullam*, not KJV "perfect") with God, but she had failed and could not serve Him, *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- C. Indeed, Israel had seen many things of the Lord from His prophets but she had not heeded them, she had ears and had heard their messages but she still did not obey the Lord, making her useless as His witness, Isa. 42:20.
- D. Regardless of Israel's spiritual blindness and deafness, the Lord was willing to bring His Word into force and magnify it by way of His exercising disciplinary judgment on His wayward people, Isaiah 42:21a. The Lord would carry out His purpose, showing His "law," a term that refers to all the revealed Word of God (*Ibid.*, p. 134-135), to be His glorious and honorable Word, Isaiah 42:21b.
- E. Isaiah 42:22 then described the state of God's people in their position of spiritual defeat and lack of blessing:
 - 1. They were a people "plundered and looted" by invading Gentiles due to divine judgment, Isa. 42:22a ESV.
 - 2. They were "all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons" of sin and darkness, Isaiah 42:22b ESV.
 - 3. Furthermore, they had become plunder with no one to rescue them, spoil with none to say, "Restore!" (Isaiah 42:22c ESV) In other words, "(d)eliverance can be the work of God alone," *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- F. In Isaiah 42:23, the prophet asked if there was no one in the nation who would heed his message, who would hear and obey what was being said that there might be a reprieve of Israel's lack of blessing, *Ibid.*, p. 135-136.
- G. Isaiah then asked the nation once again just who had given them for booty to spoilers, for the people might claim that false pagan gods had been responsible for their calamity, Isaiah 42:24a; *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- H. However, Isaiah anticipated this future confusion and error, answering that Israel's own God had brought this suffering upon the nation in judgment for its own sin, Isaiah 42:24b. God's people were not willing to walk in His ways and they did not hearken unto His law, His Word, so He had poured out on them His wrath, His anger and the might of battle, Isaiah 42:25a ESV.
- I. However, God's judgment with its figurative burning fire was not understood by wayward Israel nor was it therefore productive by yielding her obedience to the Lord due to her spiritual darkness, Isaiah 42:25b. The servant of God in the nation Israel neither heeded nor understood her judgment, a tragic state, *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- J. [This sad darkness is illustrated in Jeremiah 44:15-30: after the Babylonian invasion, the people of Judah objected to Jeremiah's teachings that warned they were under judgment for departing from the Lord. They instead claimed that their troubles had been due to their failure to keep burning incense to Babylon's queen of heaven, v. 17-18. Jeremiah countered this error, warning of further judgment for such darkness, v. 24-28.]

Lesson: *The people of Israel who would wonder why they were facing trouble from Babylon needed to understand that their spiritual darkness caused by spiritual hardness against the Lord and His Word had led to their troubles, and that these troubles would continue until they finally realized their waywardness and repented.*

Application: *(1) If we face ongoing trials, we should examine ourselves in light of Scripture to discern if we have done what is displeasing to the Lord so as to repent and confess our sins. (2) Spiritual darkness is so enveloping and intense that we can become insensitive to our own darkness, so we must always check God's Word for truth.*