

THE MIGHTY GOD OF JACOB

BIBLE TEXT : Isaiah 41:1-18; 42:1-8; 43:1,2.

LESSON 366 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 41:1-18

¹ Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew *their* strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.
² Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over kings? he gave *them* as the dust to his sword, *and* as driven stubble to his bow.
³ He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet.
⁴ Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he.
⁵ The isles saw *it*, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.
⁶ They helped every one his neighbour; and *every one* said to his brother, Be of good courage.
⁷ So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, *and* he that smootheth *with* the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It *is* ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.
⁸ But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.
⁹ *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou *art* my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.
¹⁰ Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee;

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Deliverance for Israel

1. The Lord calls the nations to come near to judgment, to decide the point at issue between them, Isaiah 41:1;

Zechariah 2:13

¹³ Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

2. A prediction of one's being raised up to deliver the Israelites from captivity, with the Messiah in the end days as the antitype, Isaiah 41:2, 3;

Isaiah 45:1-3

¹ Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

² I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

³ And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel.

Ezra 1:1-2

¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,

² Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3. The origin of nations is from the Lord, Isaiah 41:4;

Deuteronomy 32:8

⁸ When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

Acts 17:26

²⁶ And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

4. The nations are alarmed and come together for mutual defence. One workman encourages another to make new gods to avert the impending danger, Isaiah 41:5-7;

Joel 3:9-12

⁹ Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong.

¹¹ Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

¹² Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

5. The Lord encourages Israel to fear not for He is with them and will help them, Isaiah 41:8-14; 43:1, 2;

yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

¹¹ Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

¹² Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

¹³ For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

¹⁴ Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. ¹⁶ Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, *and* shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁷ *When* the poor and needy seek water, and *there is* none, *and* their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

¹⁸ I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Isaiah 42:1-8

¹ Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

³ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall

Isaiah 44:2

² Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Joshua 1:9

⁹ Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Romans 8:31

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

6. Israel will be a new threshing instrument to thresh the mountains, Isaiah 41:15, 16;

Isaiah 64:1-3

¹ Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

² As *when* the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at thy presence!

³ When thou didst terrible things *which* we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

Micah 4:13

¹³ Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

II A Vision of the Coming Messiah

1. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, the Lord will open rivers in high places, Isaiah 41:17, 18;

Isaiah 35:6-7

⁶ Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

⁷ And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

Isaiah 43:19

¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 44:3

³ For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Psalms 107:35

³⁵ He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

2. The Spirit of the Lord will be upon Him (Jesus). His character is described, Isaiah 42:1-4;

Matthew 3:17

¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 3:34

³⁴ For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

3. The Lord who created the heavens and giveth breath to the people will not give His glory to another, Isaiah 42:5-8;

Psalms 136:5-9

⁵ To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

⁶ To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

⁷ To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

⁸ The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

⁹ The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy

he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

⁴ He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

⁵ Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

⁶ I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

⁷ To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

⁸ I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 43:1

¹ But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

Isaiah 43:2

² When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

endureth for ever.

NOTES:

Folly of Idols

The Lord has a controversy with the idolatrous nations for their worship of images made of wood and stone. He calls them to come near and reason with Him; then He points out the worthlessness of an idol.

One man will take a tree and cut it down and build a fire with part of it. He will warm himself by it and then take the coals and bake his bread. Upon the rest of the tree the carpenter will stretch out his rule, and with a pencil and compass mark out the figure of a man. The smith with his tongs works in the coals and fashions a covering with hammers and puts it together with the strength of his arm. Thus he makes a god, falls down and worships it, and prays unto it and says, "Deliver me; for thou art my god" (**Isaiah 44:12-17**) ¹² The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. ¹³ The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. ¹⁴ He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*. ¹⁵ Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. ¹⁶ He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: ¹⁷ And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god.).

In this controversy the Lord is showing the vanity of idols; how impossible it is for them to have power to do anything! They cannot see, they cannot hear, they cannot move, yet men are so much impoverished spiritually that they bow down and worship and expect the idols to deliver them in time of war. Israel was to be a nation different from the nations around.

False Religions

From the very first temptation in the Garden, people have been prone to go after other gods. In our day false cults and false religions have taken the place of much of the idol worship. The devil is promoting the formation of many new religions. There are many devoted followers among the "high-minded," the materialist, and those who see this world governed only by natural laws. The devil uses some truth to cover a lot of lies and dangles it before the eyes of men who are ready to grasp almost anything to ease their conscience and cover a life of sin.

Pride and egotism are two terrible things injected into the hearts of fallen humanity. Men want to be great and, like the devil, want to exalt their "throne" above the throne of God.

A worm

The Lord calls Israel a worm, something that is looked down upon and trodden under the foot of men. Jesus Himself was despised and rejected of men. But the Lord says he will make Israel a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth, and he will thresh the mountains and beat them small and make the hills as chaff. There is coming a time when the Lord will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. All they who warred

against Israel “shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.”

God declares that before Him there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Him, and besides Him there is no Saviour.

A God of Power

The mighty God of Jacob is a God of power. He spoke, and this world came into existence. He set the sun, moon, and stars into their sphere. He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. He created man out of the dust of the earth and breathed life into his nostrils. A God of miracles, a God of power! He is so high and holy that He inhabits all space, yet so meek and lowly that He hears the faintest cry from a troubled heart; a God so great that He holds the waters of the sea in the hollow of His hand and weighs the hills in a balance; a God so mighty that the nations are but a drop of a bucket! Yet man, the created, will stand up and defy God, the Creator. But God in His majesty and in His power still remembers poor, helpless humanity. He plucked the brightest Jewel out of Heaven and sent Him down to earth to lift men from the slime pits of hell and the bondage of slavery into the glorious liberty and freedom of the sons of God. What a changed! What a transformation! It is the Mighty God of Jacob who brought it about.

It pleased Him to bruise His Son that He might know how to care for the bruised. He will not break the “bruised reed” nor quench the “smoking flax,” but He will bring forth judgment unto truth.

No Discouragement

Though Christ was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the Word tells us that He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ shall never lose its power. From its first proclamation to the present time, it has opened the eyes of the spiritually blind and unstopped spiritually deaf ears. It has brought light and liberty to millions of people, and millions more have a chance to partake of its healing power.

“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” He will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of valleys.

The Lord has a peculiar way of leading people to the place where they can hear the truth. Either He will open a fountain right in their midst or He will lead them across the desert to where there is a fountain. He led the Ethiopian across the desert and brought Philip down to the desert to bring the living waters to the Ethiopian. Tradition tells us that the Ethiopian went back and helped open up a living fountain in his own land.

David Livingstone went as a missionary to Africa, and fountains bubbled forth in many places in that dark Continent.

The Lord is looking for channels through which the Living Waters can run. Will you be a channel for Jesus? By your life, by your prayers, by your means, you can help exalt the Mighty God of Jacob, and His Son, Jesus Christ, who died to redeem a lost world from sin and bring back righteousness, truth, and holiness into the hearts of the children of men.

A Light to the Gentiles

This lesson also tells us that the Gospel will be a light to lighten the Gentiles. It was hard for the Jews to believe that anyone who did not come fully under the rituals of Judaism could be partaker with them of the Gospel light. Even the disciples wanted to send the Syrophenician woman away. But the Gentiles

received the Gospel and were grafted in. That brings you and me into relationship with God, provided we accept the terms laid down by the Gospel.

We can claim the same promise He gave to Israel, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” These are the words of the Mighty God of Jacob.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the issue in question between the Lord and the nations around?
2. Describe how an idol was made in olden days. What may constitute an idol today?
3. Why did the nations join one another?
4. What was the promise of the Lord to the Israelites?
5. Quote some of the prophecies concerning Jesus.
6. What did the Lord say concerning giving His glory to another?
7. What was the Lord’s promise to the poor and needy?
8. To whom, besides the Jews, was the Gospel promised?