



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"The Former Things"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Is 42:5-25; Is. 40:12, 26; Gen. 15:13-16; Luke 4:18-21; Eph. 2:1-5; Is. 43:1; 59:16

The Servant of the LORD stands under the same pressures everybody else feels. Others have been made to smolder—burning low, going numb, going expressionless—but He doesn't. And when Isaiah says He won't break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick, that isn't weakness. That gentleness isn't fragility. The Servant will still establish justice on the earth, and *"the islands will wait for His Torah."* (Isa. 42:4). He's gentle, yes—but He's not collapsing. He's not quitting. He's not a crushed reed. He's the One who brings God's loving order back into the world.

So verse 5 is where we pick up: *"Thus says God, ADONAI, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and Ruach to those who walk in it."* (Isa. 42:5). That's the foundation. The One who calls the Servant to establish justice is the Creator of the earth. Isaiah piles up the language on purpose—God creating, God stretching, God laying it out like a tent, like a sheet on a bed, God hammering out the earth like a craftsman flattening metal. None of this is haphazard. And if He wasn't careless with creation, He won't be careless with His people either.

1. THE CREATOR WHO CALLS AND HOLDS YOUR HAND

The LORD wants you to see the His "hands-on-ness." The creation is not an assembly line; it's personal craftsmanship. He measures, He names, He misses nothing. *"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand... and measured out heaven with a span... or weighed the mountains in scales?"* (Isa. 40:12). And again: *"Lift up your eyes on high and see! Who created these?... the One who calls them all by name... not one is missing."* (Isa. 40:26). That is the same LORD speaking in Is. 42:5—the detailed Creator, the faithful Sustainer. And then He takes you to what matters most to Him: people. He gives **neshem**—life-giving breath—and He gives **Ruach**—His Spirit. That means He's not distant. He originates life, maintains life, and directs history toward His purposes.

Then the LORD says it plainly, with emphasis: *"I, ADONAI, called You in righteousness, I will take hold of Your hand, I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations."* (Isa. 42:6). Notice how the calling comes with companionship. He doesn't summon and then abandon. He takes hold of your hand. He guards. He keeps. He strengthens. And His purpose is beautiful: covenant and light—not favorites, but mission. Who is the Servant? Is He talking about Israel? Is He talking about Yeshua? The Answer is, YES. Israel was chosen to be a light to the nations, and Yeshua is the faithful Servant who actually fulfills what Israel has failed to do in her humanity.

2. THE COVENANT LIGHT WHO OPENS EYES AND LEADS THE BLIND

The call leads into the mission: *"to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those sitting in darkness out of the prison house."* (Isa. 42:7). On one hand, that is exactly what we see in Yeshua's ministry—Luke shows Him taking up this very language: *"The Ruach of*

ADONAI is on me... He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives... and to set free those who are oppressed." (Luke 4:18). On one hand, this is a passage that points to what we see Yeshua having done. And at the same time, the imagery here does point back to God's purposes through Israel, to God Himself coming to us when we were enslaved in Egypt, and opening our eyes, bringing us out of captivity, bringing us out of the prison house.

And so this begins the Lord talking about the former things. He says, *"Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things... before they spring forth I announce them to you."* (Isa. 42:9). The LORD points backward and forward: "Look at the former things," and "I'm about to declare new things. I'm about to disclose new things. I'm going to tell you about them before they come forth," just like He always had, just like He has before. He's reminding Israel: I'm not guessing. I'm not improvising; I'm ANNOUNCING. I WILL FULFILL

3. THE TRAGEDY OF A BLIND SERVANT—AND THE MERCY OF A GREATER PLAN

The LORD exposes idols as shameful, powerless, unable to save. *"They will be turned back, utterly put to shame—those trusting in idols."* (Isa. 42:17). And then He cries out: *"Hear, you deaf! Look, you blind, so you may see."* (Isa. 42:18). But the shocking heartbreak is who He's talking to: *"Who is blind, but My Servant? Or deaf as **My Messenger** that I send?"* (Isa. 42:19). The ones delivered from captivity were supposed to help set captives free. The people called to show the nations the living God ended up turning to the gods of the nations. *"You have seen many things, but you do not pay attention... Though ears are open, no one hears."* (Isa. 42:20). It's not a lack of information—it's a lack of obedience. It's not that the ears don't function—it's that the heart won't listen.

And then Isaiah gives you the LORD's desire and Israel's reality side-by-side. *"ADONAI was pleased, for the sake of His righteousness, to make Torah great and glorious."* (Isa. 42:21). That was His will—His pleasure—that His instruction would be radiant through His people, a light to the nations. *"But this is a people robbed and looted... hidden away in prisons... with no one to deliver... none to say, 'Give them back!'"* (Isa. 42:22). And the LORD asks the question that hits the soul: *"Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and heed hereafter?"* (Isa. 42:23). How did we get here? *"Have we not sinned against the LORD? In His ways they were unwilling to walk and His Torah they did not obey."* (Isa. 42:24). The fire blazed—and still they didn't perceive it; it burned—and still they wouldn't take it to heart (Isa. 42:25). Yet even here, the LORD is NOT saying, "I'm done." He's saying, "Will you learn? Will you *shema* now?"

CONCLUSION:

This is where the chapter leaves you: staring at "former things" so you can finally draw the lesson and respond "hereafter." The LORD is showing His people their inability—not to humiliate them, but to awaken them. He wanted to make His Torah great and glorious, but in our weakness we could not fulfill what we were summoned to do. And that revelation is not the end of God's plan; it's the doorway into God's greater plan. That's why Isaiah 43 begins the way it does: *"But now thus says ADONAI... 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are Mine.'"* (Isa. 43:1). The "but now" is mercy. The "but now" is covenant love.

And this is where it lands on us, too. We were also caught in the cravings of our flesh. We were also blind in our own ways. But the Good News is not, "Try harder and become enough." The Good News is: *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us..."*

made us alive together with Messiah.” (Eph. 2:4–5). The LORD saw that there was none doing justice, and His own arm accomplished it (Isa. 59:16). In other words: the Servant succeeds where we fail, and then He opens our eyes so we can finally walk as children of light.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In Isa. 42:5–6, what stands out to you about the LORD as Creator—and how does that affect the way you think about His faithfulness to His people?
2. The LORD says, *“I will take hold of Your hand... I will keep You.”* (Isa. 42:6). Where do you most need God’s “hand-holding” and safeguarding right now?
3. How do you see the Exodus imagery echoing through Isa. 42:7–16, and how does Luke 4:18–21 help you understand the Servant’s mission?
4. In Isa. 42:19–20, what do you think it looks like to “see many things but not pay attention” spiritually? What practices help you regain discernment?
5. The LORD was pleased “to make Torah great and glorious” (Isa. 42:21). What does that reveal about God’s heart for His instruction—and what might it mean for us to reflect His light to others?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkenu, Our Father, Our King, Adonai, Creator of the heavens and the earth—the One who stretched them out and hammered out the world with care—we honor You. Thank You for giving us breath, and for giving Your *Ruach* to those who walk upon the earth. Forgive us for the ways we have been unwilling to walk in Your ways, and for the times we have heard Your words but refused to take them to heart. Open our eyes, LORD. Lead us by the way we do not know. Turn darkness before us into light, and make the rough places smooth.

Thank You for Yeshua, Your faithful Servant—the One who is gentle, yet strong; compassionate, yet unshakable; the One who establishes Your justice and brings Your loving order into our lives. Teach us to *shema*—to listen and obey—so that what You intended to be great and glorious in us would truly shine. We turn from every false trust, and we place our hope in You alone.

B’Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.