

To Serve *and* to Save



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *Isaiah 41, Isa. 42:1–7, Isa. 44:26–45:6, Isa. 49:1–12.*

Memory Text: “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.” (*Isaiah 42:1, NKJV*).

Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 640.

Isaiah spoke of a Servant of the Lord with a similar mission of mercy: “a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; . . . to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” (*Isa. 42:3, 7, NRSV*).

Let’s take a look at this Servant. Who is He, and what does He accomplish?

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, February 27.

Servant Nation *(Isaiah 41)*

In Isaiah 41:8 God speaks of “Israel, my servant” (*NRSV*), and in 42:1 He introduces “my servant.” Who is this Servant?

Is it Israel/Jacob, the ancestor of the Israelites? The nation of Israel? The Messiah/Christ, identified in the New Testament as Jesus?

There are two kinds of references to servants of God woven through Isaiah 41–53. One servant is named “Israel” or “Jacob,” as in Isaiah 41:8; Isaiah 44:1, 2, 21; Isaiah 45:4; and Isaiah 48:20. Because God addresses Israel/Jacob in the present, it is clear he, Jacob, represents the nation descended from him. This is confirmed by the fact that redemption for the Lord’s “servant Jacob” is accomplished at the time when he is to go out from Babylon (*Isa. 48:20*).

In other instances, such as Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 50:10, Isaiah 52:13, and Isaiah 53:11, God’s Servant is not named. When He is first mentioned in Isaiah 42:1, His identity is not immediately apparent. However, as Isaiah develops His profile in later passages, it becomes clear that He is an individual who restores the tribes of Jacob (Israel) to God (*Isa. 49:5, 6*) and dies sacrificially on behalf of sinners (*Isa. 52:13–53:12; see also Isa. 49:5, 6*). Therefore He cannot be the same as the nation. So, it is clear that Isaiah speaks of two servants of God. One is corporate (the nation) and the other is individual.

What is the role of the servant nation? (*Isa. 41:8–20.*)

God assures Israel that the nation is still the servant of the Lord: “‘I have chosen you and not cast you off’ ” (*Isa. 41:9, NRSV*). Then God gives to Israel one of the most magnificent promises in the Bible: “Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” (*Isa. 41:10, NRSV*). Here and in the following verses one of the basic roles of Israel is to trust the true God to save them (as King Ahaz did not) rather than to trust in other gods and their images as other nations do (*Isa. 41:7, 21–24, 28, 29*).

Notice how in Isaiah 41:14 the Lord calls the nation a worm. What point was He making? Look at the whole text to get a better answer. What should this teach us, as well, about our need to depend totally upon the Lord?

Unnamed Individual Servant *(Isa. 42:1–7)*

What is the role and character of God’s unnamed Servant, whom God chooses and on whom He puts His Spirit? *(Isa. 42:1–7.)*

Choose the best answer or combination of answers:

1. He provides justice for the nations.
2. He accomplishes His goals quietly and gently, but successfully.
3. He is a teacher.
4. He serves as a covenant between God and the people.
5. He gives light or hope by healing blindness and liberating prisoners.
6. All of the above.

How does the role and character of this Servant compare with that of the “shoot from the stump of Jesse,” on whom the Spirit of the Lord also rests *(Isaiah 11)*?

As in Isaiah 42, the Davidic ruler of Isaiah 11 acts in harmony with God, providing justice and deliverance for the oppressed, as well as wisdom and knowledge of God. We found that this “shoot” and “root” of Jesse is the Messiah, the divine Child of Isaiah 9:6, 7, who also brings “peace for the throne of David and his kingdom” with “justice and with righteousness” *(Isa. 9:7, NRSV)*. The Servant in Isaiah 42 is, obviously, the Messiah.

How does the New Testament identify the Servant of Isaiah 42:1–7, who provides justice? *(Matt. 12:15–21.)*

Matthew 12 quotes from Isaiah 42 and applies it to the quiet healing ministry of Jesus, God’s beloved Son, in whom He delights *(Isa. 42:1; Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 17:5)*. It is He whose ministry reestablishes God’s covenant connection with His people *(Isa. 42:6, Dan. 9:27)*.

Jesus and His disciples gained justice for people by delivering them from suffering, ignorance of God, and bondage to evil spirits, caused by Satan’s oppression *(Luke 10:19)*. Then Jesus died to ratify the “new covenant” *(Matt. 26:28, NKJV)* and to gain justice for the world by casting out Satan, the foreigner who had usurped the position of “ ‘ruler of this world’ ” *(John 12:31–33, NRSV)*.

Look at Isaiah 42:1–4, the depiction of Christ. Spend some time dwelling on the life of Jesus. What specific characteristics of His ministry so aptly fulfilled this prophecy? What lessons can we learn about how we should be ministering to others, as well?

Persian “Messiah” *(Isa. 44:26–45:6)*

What stunning prediction appears in Isaiah 44:26–45:6?

Isaiah’s ministry lasted from about 745 B.C. to about 685 B.C. After mentioning a conqueror from the east and from the north (*Isa. 41:2, 3, 25*) and implying that this was to be good news for Jerusalem (*Isa. 41:27*), Isaiah accurately predicted Cyrus *by name* and described his activities. He did come from north and east of Babylon and conquer it in 539 B.C.; he did serve God by releasing the Jews from their Babylonian exile; and he did authorize the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (*see Ezra 1*).

Put this prediction into perspective. Since there are about one hundred forty-six years from the time of Isaiah’s death to the fall of Babylon, his prophecy was a century and a half ahead of its time. It would be like George Washington predicting that a man named General Dwight Eisenhower would help liberate Europe in 1945!

Because the actions of Cyrus are well attested from a variety of ancient sources, including Babylonian chronicles, his own report in the “Cyrus Cylinder,” and the Bible (*2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1; Daniel 5; Dan. 6:28; Dan. 10:1*), the accuracy of Isaiah’s prophecy is beyond dispute. This confirms the faith of people who believe that true prophets receive accurate predictions from God, who knows the future far in advance.

Why does God call Cyrus “His anointed”? (*Isa. 45:1*)

The Hebrew word for “anointed” here is the word from which we get the word *Messiah*. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, this word could refer to an anointed high priest (*Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; Lev. 6:22*), an anointed Israelite king (*1 Sam. 16:6; 1 Sam. 24:6, 10; 2 Sam. 22:51*), or the Messiah, a future ideal Davidic king and deliverer (*Ps. 2:2; Dan. 9:25, 26*). From Isaiah’s perspective, Cyrus was a future king, sent by God to deliver His people. But he was an unusual messiah, because he was non-Israelite. He would do some things the Messiah would do, such as defeat God’s enemies and release His captive people, but he could not be the same as the Messiah, because he was not descended from David.

By predicting Cyrus, God proved His unique divinity by demonstrating that He alone knows the future (*Isa. 41:4, 21–23, 26–28; Isa. 44:26*). He also reached out to Cyrus: “I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name” (*Isa. 45:3, NRSV*).

Think about some other Bible prophecies that have come to pass as predicted (such as all the kingdoms of Daniel 2 except the last, Daniel 7, or regarding the time of Christ in Daniel 9:24–27). **What kind of hope do these prophecies offer us as individuals?**

Hope in Advance

The fact that Isaiah accurately predicted Cyrus by name disturbs people who do not believe that prophets receive predictions from God. To cope, they accept the theory that a “second Isaiah,” another prophet living in the time of Cyrus, wrote Isaiah 40–66. Thus, the book of Isaiah is “sawn in two,” the same fate traditionally understood to have befallen the prophet himself (*see Heb. 11:37*).

There is, however, no historical witness to the existence of a second “Isaiah.” If he did exist, it would be strange for the Bible not to mention him, because his message is profoundly important, and his literary artistry is phenomenal. Not even the oldest Bible manuscript, the Isaiah scroll from Qumran, has any break between Isaiah 39 and 40 that would indicate a transition to the work of a new author.

Isaiah’s basic message is consistent throughout his book: Trust the true God, including His Messianic Deliverer, rather than other powers. Scholars rightly emphasize the shift in focus from the Assyrian period in Isaiah 1–39 to the Babylonian period in chapters 40 and following. But we have found that Isaiah 13, 14 and 39 already envisage a Babylonian captivity. It is true Isaiah 1–39 emphasizes judgment and Isaiah 40–66 emphasizes consolation. But in the earlier chapters, divine comfort and assurance are abundant also, and later passages, such as Isaiah 42:18–25, Isaiah 43:22–28, and Isaiah 48:1–11, speak of God’s judgments on Judah for forsaking Him. In fact, Isaiah’s predictions of *future* comfort imply suffering in the meantime.

Though the nation did face terrible calamity because of the people’s sins, some among them did not give up hope. They clung to God’s promises, such as those found in Leviticus 26:40–45. Read the verses carefully. Put yourself in the place of those Hebrews who were alive after the nation’s defeat by Babylon. What hope could you find in these words?

Read once more through Leviticus 26:40–45. What spiritual principle do you see at work in those verses? What is the Lord saying to Israel there? How does the same principle work in our own lives?

A Feeling and Suffering Servant *(Isa. 49:1–12)*

Who is God’s Servant in Isaiah 49:1–12?

God calls and names Him before He is born, makes His mouth like a sword, and will be glorified in Him. God uses the Servant to bring the nation of Israel back to Himself, to be a light of salvation to all the world, to be a covenant, and to release prisoners. There is plenty of overlap between this description and that of Isaiah 42, where we identified the Servant as the Messiah. The New Testament finds the Servant’s attributes in Jesus Christ, in both comings (*Matt. 1:21, John 8:12, John 9:5, John 17:1–5, Rev. 1:16, Rev. 2:16, Rev. 19:15*).

If this Servant is the Messiah, why does God call Him “Israel” here? *(Isa. 49:3.)*

Earlier we found that in this section of Isaiah, God’s servant “Israel” or “Jacob” refers to the nation. But here the name Israel (without a parallel reference to Jacob) clearly applies to the individual Servant, who restores the nation to God (*Isa. 49:5*). The individual Servant has become the ideal embodiment or representative of the nation whose failure has compromised its use of the name “Israel” (*Isa. 48:1*).

What new element appears here? *(Isa. 49:4, 7.)*

Here is the first intimation of the difficulty involved in the Servant’s task. He laments, “ ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity’ ” (*Isa. 49:4, NRSV*), an idea echoed in Daniel 9:26: “ ‘an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing’ ” (*NRSV*). But He clings to faith: “ ‘Yet surely my cause is with the LORD, and my reward with my God’ ” (*Isa. 49:4, NRSV*). J. Alec Motyer observes: “Thus, Isaiah foresaw a Servant with a real human nature, tested like we are and proving himself to be the author and perfecter of the way of faith, a real, personal faith that can still say *my God* when nothing any longer seems worthwhile.”—*The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 387.

Isaiah 49:7 is startling. The Servant is “deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the slave of rulers,” but the Lord says to Him: “ ‘Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you’ ” (*NRSV*).

Look back at Christ’s ministry. Right up until the end, didn’t He have reasons for discouragement? Yet, He stayed faithful, despite outward appearances. How are we to do the same—despite outward appearances?

Further Thought: Read Ellen G. White’s description of Jesus’ healing and teaching ministry in “At Capernaum,” *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 252–261.

“In the work of soul winning, great tact and wisdom are needed. The Savior never suppressed the truth, but He uttered it always in love. In His [dealings] with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave unnecessary pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He never made truth cruel, but ever manifested a deep tenderness for humanity. Every soul was precious in His sight. He bore Himself with divine dignity; yet He bowed with the tenderest compassion and regard to every member of the family of God. He saw in all, souls whom it was His mission to save.”—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 117.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, read over what Ellen G. White wrote above about how Christ ministered to others. Discuss the principles there, and then as a class discuss how well your own church reflects those principles corporately.
- 2 Do you know a “bruised reed” or “dimly burning wick” (*Isa. 42:3, NRSV*)? How can you help this person without “breaking” or “quenching” him or her? In what ways can you point such people to the Lord? In a practical sense, what would you tell them to do in order to get healing and help?
- 3 The argument for different authors of Isaiah originated from the premise that people cannot tell the future the way Isaiah did. What is the fundamental problem with this argument, and why must we, as Christians, reject that premise outright?

Summary: Deliverance requires a Deliverer. God’s servant nation would be delivered by two deliverers: Cyrus, who would set the captives free from Babylonian exile, and an unnamed Servant, whose identity as the Messiah is progressively revealed. This Servant would restore justice and bring the community of survivors back to God.

Garage Church

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, Adventist Mission

Ten-year-old Luis moved with his parents to La Apartada, a town without a Seventh-day Adventist church in northern Colombia.

Father and Mother wanted Luis to go to church on Sabbath. Luis wanted to go to church. But the nearest Adventist church was located far away in another town. The district pastor had an idea. "You should open a church," he said.

Father liked the idea. Mother liked the idea. Luis liked the idea. But where could people meet to worship? Their house was too small for many visitors.

"Why don't we use our garage?" Father said.

It was a good idea. The garage was bigger than the house. Besides, it was empty because the family didn't own a car. Father told Luis to invite his new friends from school to come to the garage on Tuesday for a one-hour meeting.

"Come to my garage to hear something interesting and get some good food," Luis told his friends.

"Sure, we'll come!" they replied.

Thirty-seven children between the ages of 5 and 14 showed up the first Tuesday. Luis spoke to the children about the importance of keeping promises. He read from a church-created program about good values. Afterward, Mother gave the children *arroz con leche*, a dessert made with rice and milk.

Luis invited the children to return the next week. Sixty-five children came. The garage was not big enough, so after three months Father asked town authorities for a new place to meet. The mayor liked that Luis was teaching good values to the many children. "You can meet in the old town hall," he said.

With so many children, Father decided to create Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs. The two clubs met in addition to Luis's weekly meetings on good values.

Father saw an abandoned building that looked like an even better place to meet and received permission from the mayor to move. The mayor also gave one million pesos to renovate the place.

On a July morning, just four months after the group first met in the garage, 70 children and adults gathered in the renovated center for the first Sabbath worship service. Luis was happy. Most attendees were children he had invited.



Today, nine months after the garage first opened, 80 children and 20 adults worship in the center every Sabbath. Thirty-eight people have been baptized. Luis's town now has an Adventist church.

"I'm very happy because I've learned many new things," Luis said. "Most of all, I have learned that I can invite children to Jesus' feet."

Study Focus: *Isaiah 41****Part I: Overview***

There is a link between Isaiah 1 and 41. We see it in the call to Judah in Isaiah 1:18: “Come now, and let us reason together.” Isaiah 41:1 expresses a similar invitation: “Let us come near together to judgment.” However, in this case, the invitation encompasses a broader arena and, by implication, a larger event: “the ends of the earth” (*verse 5*).

The expression *mišpāṭ* (*judgment, Isa. 41:1*) in the Hebrew language could also be rendered “dispute, case,” “legal claim” (Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 651). This concept is quite similar to the meaning of the Hebrew word *niwwākhâ* (to argue [in a lawsuit]) in Isaiah 1:18 (Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 410). Isaiah 41:21 reinforces the idea of a legal dispute, and the verse is almost an echo of Isaiah 1:18: “ ‘Present your case,’ the LORD says. ‘Bring forward your strong arguments’ ” (*NASB*).

In the following verses, the two parts of the case are revealed. On one side, the Lord, and on the other side, Israel, the servant.

The Lord, in chapter 41, is described in many ways: “the Holy One of Israel,” the Redeemer, the Creator, and the King. And Israel or Judah is described as “my servant”; “my chosen one”; and “my friend,” a reference to Abraham.

Three main topics are explored in this study: (1) the God of the covenant, (2) God and other titles, and (3) Israel, the servant.

Part II: Commentary**The God of the Covenant**

God is portrayed in several ways in Isaiah 41. When God is referred to in relation to His people in a covenantal relationship, the Bible uses the name YHWH, “the Lord.” Isaiah uses this name approximately four hundred and fifty times in his book. The expression occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew Bible (David J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 4, p. 122).

The Pentateuchal account gives clear insights into this name. This study reviews some verses related to the personage to whom Isaiah alludes: Abraham. There are three moments in the covenant relationship

between God and Abraham, and the divine name used here is YHWH: (1) the Lord (YHWH) calls Abram and promises to make him a great nation (*Gen. 12:1–3*); (2) the Lord (YHWH) makes the covenant (*Gen. 15:1–21*); and (3) the Lord (YHWH) affirms the covenant (*Gen. 17:1–27*). Several expressions in Genesis 12 reveal a personal relationship between the Lord and Abraham. “I will show you; . . . I will bless you, . . . make your name great” (*Gen. 12:1, 2; NASB*).

The other section, Genesis 15, is also introduced by using the expression YHWH. The covenantal scene includes God’s language of personal care toward Abram: “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you” (*Gen. 15:1, NASB*). Genesis 15:2–6 describes the discussion of an individual concern before the Lord, wherein Abram states his concerns about the fulfillment of the covenant. The Lord, in Genesis 15:7, reiterates to Abram His name. “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it” (*Gen. 15:7, NASB*). And Genesis 15:18 shows us clearly the link between the name YHWH and the covenant. “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants I have given this land” (*NASB*).

In Genesis 17, the Lord (YHWH) is once again interacting with Abram. The narrative denotes a personal relationship—“walk before me” (*Gen. 17:1*)—and it tells us that the covenant is going to be real: “I will establish My covenant between Me and you” (*Gen. 17:2, NASB*). It is repeated in Genesis 17:4, and it also affects the personal name of one of the members of the covenant, Abram: “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham” (*Gen. 17:5, NASB*).

Sometimes in covenantal formulas, the expression *’elōhim* (God) is added to the name YHWH. Thus, in this type of literature, the subject of a covenant is YHWH, and sometimes the Lord God or the Lord your God. In the experience of Abraham, we have seen that the name is associated with the covenantal act and personal relationship with YHWH, the Lord.

There are covenantal elements in Isaiah 41. We infer this not only from the use of the name YHWH but also from the reference to Israel as the “chosen” one (*Isa. 41:8*). The allusion to Abraham, a great name in the covenant with Israel, is also another factor that suggests those elements. However, as it has been said above, the name YHWH (the Lord) is associated with God’s personal relationship with His people. Isaiah 41 makes the personal nature of this relationship clear. The Lord calls Abraham His friend (*Isa. 41:8*), as does the last of the expressions in “I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he” (*Isa. 41:4*).

The expression “I am he” is explained by John Oswalt in the following terms: “He is with us, for good or ill, depending on our response to him. He is the one like whom there is no other; he is the only noncontingent being in the universe, the only one who can say ‘I Am.’ ”—*The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company,

1998), p. 84.

Oswalt also sees some connection here with Isaiah and the New Testament. He says, “The regular LXX translation of *’ani hû’*, ‘I am he,’ is *egō eimi*. That Jesus would calmly apply this phrase to [H]imself (compare John 8:58 and John 18:5) speaks volumes about [H]is sense of self-identity.”—*The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, pp. 84, 85.

God and Other Titles

Additional characteristics of the Lord are emphasized in Isaiah 41. He is the Holy One. “ ‘I will help you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel’ ” (*Isa. 41:14, NASB*). A similar idea is expressed in Isaiah 41:20: “ ‘The hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.’ ”

“The Holy One” is one of the main titles for the Lord in the book of Isaiah, and it constitutes one of the main topics of the book. The expression “Holy One” is used 33 times by Isaiah. As shown in lesson 2, “holy” refers to “the purity, the perfection, the hidden glory of YHWH.” Holiness is the essence of His being. The title “Holy One” implies the moral standard for the nation. This call to holiness is rooted in Mosaic law, based on God’s self-proclamation of His own perfection: “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (*Lev. 19:2*).

The prophet Isaiah uses the title “Holy One” to tie together two other related characteristics of God: God as Creator and Redeemer. The idea of God as our Creator is expressed in beautiful parallelism in Isaiah 41:20:

“That the hand of the LORD has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has created it” (*NKJV*).

The Lord is featured as Redeemer in Isaiah 41: “Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel” (*Isaiah 41:14, NASB*). The Hebrew word commonly translated as Redeemer means “to reclaim as one’s own” or “to claim for oneself.”—Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 169.

The features of the Lord as the Creator (in this case, of Israel) and as the Redeemer of Israel are evident in this section of the book. An example is Isaiah 43:1:

“Thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel,
‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are Mine!’ ” (*NASB*).

Another title Isaiah uses in parallel to the Lord is “the King of Jacob” (*Isa. 41:21*). There is no doubt that this is a Messianic title.

Thus, Isaiah 41 reveals different names and titles by which God is described. Interestingly, the author uses in Isaiah 43:15 almost the same expression for referring to God: “I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.”

Israel, the Servant

The Lord has been designated by different titles in Isaiah 41. Israel in its covenantal relationship with God has likewise received several titles. For example, Israel in relation to God is “the servant,” “the chosen one,” and “the friend.”

In many sections of the book of Isaiah, Israel, or more particularly, the nation of Judah, is the servant of the Lord. Among other verses, compare Isaiah 41:8, 9; Isaiah 44:1, 21; Isaiah 45:4; Isaiah 48:20; and Isaiah 49:3.

Isaiah 41:8 implies many important things about the servant:

“But you, Israel, My servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
Descendant of Abraham My friend” (*NASB*).

J. Alec Motyer identifies four features of the servant in this verse: “first, that Israel came to be the Lord’s servant by divine choice ([*Isa. 41:8b, 9d; Eph. 1:4*]); secondly, that the relationship began with Abraham. My friend (2 *Chron. 20:7, [James] 2:23*) is literally ‘my loving one’/‘who loved me.’ Thirdly, it tells us that the extension of the covenant promise to Abraham’s descendants (lit. ‘seed,’ *Gen. 17:7*) still stands (chosen you . . . not rejected you); and, fourthly, that in his choice and calling of Abraham the Lord showed that his power extends to the ends of the earth . . . its farthest corners. In all this there is nothing of any function the servant may perform; only that Israel has an honoured status.”—*Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), vol. 20, p. 286.

Part III: Life Application

1. **Our God is presented in the Bible in many ways. He is the great *’elōhim*, the sovereign of the universe, and the transcendent God. However, God is also a personal God, and, to show this, biblical authors use the name YHWH, the Lord. YHWH is the God of the covenant, the God of personal interaction with human beings.**

How can you distinguish those two aspects of God in relation to His creatures? Read Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 12:1 to help you answer the question.

- 2. Isaiah 41 reveals God in many different ways. The book refers to the Lord as “the Holy One of Israel,” Redeemer, Creator, and King. Which of these titles is particularly relevant to you in your life, and why?**
