

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 20, 2016

Isaiah 41:1–42:9. Israel and Jesus.

Luke 15:1–32. Three parables.

Job 9:20–24. Job implies that God is evil.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 41:1–42:9. We can see that God views Israel as a special nation among the nations of the world in **chapter 41**. In this chapter God reminds His people of their special position as descendants of Abraham and assures them that He would protect them and eliminate their enemies. Comparing their distress to the plight of a thirsty man in a desert, the Lord promised to transform their condition. He would, as it were, cause the desert to overflow with abundant waters and blossom into a forest, resulting in universal recognition of His sovereignty. Note how the Lord challenges the nations’ idols to present evidence of their power to predict and fulfill. In response to their silence, He pronounced them to be “less than nothing” and “false.” As proof of His own power, He pointed to Cyrus, the “one from the north” whom He was raising up to conquer the nations (**41:25**). It should be noted that Isaiah called Cyrus *by name* over a century before he was even born. **Chapter 42** extends to the Messiah Jesus Christ. In addition to Cyrus, the Lord would raise up another Servant, whose ministry would be characterized by humility and by gentleness toward the downtrodden. Energized by the Lord’s Spirit, He would establish justice *over the entire earth*, mediate a new covenant for Israel, and release the oppressed. Like Cyrus’s conquests, His divinely decreed accomplishments would demonstrate the Lord’s sovereignty over history and His superiority to idols. The proper response to this announcement is universal praise. While some believe that the Servant in Isaiah 42 is Israel, it should be noted that this passage is quoted in Matthew 12:18–21 (with some minor variations), as referring to Jesus and His ministry in Israel. As God’s Servant, Jesus did what Israel could never do. He perfectly carried out the will of the Father so that people everywhere may believe in the Holy One of Israel. Note God’s power in **42:5-7**.

Luke 15:1–32. This chapter contains some of the best known parables of Jesus: The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Prodigal Son. Note how Jesus contrasts God’s love with self-righteous exclusivism of the religious leaders. Note the attitude/will of the Pharisees. The religious people who intensely studied the Scriptures should want to hear Jesus—the Pharisees and scribes—instead of complaining about Him. Their two-fold complaint grew out their self-righteousness and jealousy as Jesus sought to reach everybody’s heart/will. The sheep was lost because of foolishness. Sheep have a tendency to go astray, and that is why they need a shepherd. The scribes and Pharisees had no problem seeing the publicans and sinners as “lost sheep,” but they would not apply that image to themselves! And yet the prophet made it clear that all of us have sinned and gone astray, and that includes religious people. The sheep was lost because of its foolishness, but the coin was lost because of the carelessness of another. The Parable of the Prodigal Son” (the word prodigal means “wasteful”), but it could also be called “The Parable of the Loving Father,” for it emphasizes the graciousness of the father more than the sinfulness of the son. Unlike the shepherd and the woman in the previous parables, the father did not go out to

seek the son, but it was the memory of his father's goodness that brought the boy to repentance and forgiveness (Rom. 2:4).

Job 9:20–24. Job declares, “If I could declare my innocence, what then?” The point is that there is no assurance that God will set Job free. Both Eliphaz and Bildad claimed that God rewards the righteous and judges the wicked, but Job said that sometimes God destroys both the righteous and the wicked. Wicked judges condemn the righteous and help the ungodly, and God apparently does nothing about it. It is obvious, at least here, that Job is accusing God of injustice, not only toward Job and his family but also toward other innocent people in the land. Note the attribution of evil to God by Job in **verse 24**. Of course, this charge is softened a bit since it is a question and not a declarative statement.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don