

## Thus Says the Lord

*Isa 42:5-9 Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."*

Who is the author of the words we have just read? Is it just a toothless old shepherd by the name of Isaiah speaking here, or is it as Isaiah writes, "Thus says God"? We might say it thus; this is God speaking, God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it. Isa 42:5. Why would I ask such a thing? Because recent church history tells us that liberal churchmen of the 1900's, who referred to themselves as the "higher critics" and "Biblical scholars" spoke of the authors of the Old Testament as "rotten-toothed desert tribesmen" who could not see beyond the "myths and conceptions belonging to the childhood of mankind." Or even as in our day when a Dr. Karl Giberson, professor at Eastern Nazarene College writes "Genesis is a story that began as an oral tradition for a wandering tribe of Jews thousands of years ago"? Therefore I do ask Is the Bible nothing more than the musings of toothless old shepherds in ragged clothes? Is the Old Testament merely a compilation of myths and oral traditions of a wandering tribe of Jews who lived a few thousand years ago? Or, is Scripture what it claims to be, the writings of men who received revelation from God Himself. When we read Holy Scripture can we not say, "Thus says the Lord"? Can we not say the Bible is indeed God Himself speaking to His church in the sacred pages we call Holy Scripture? Dear flock of our Lord Jesus Christ I can, with all authority and full assurance, say to you this morning it is as Isaiah says here. "Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it." (Isa. 42:5) It is as we read In the book of Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." The question before us then is this - Who is this one who is speaking here in this passage? What is His message and to whom does He speak?

A. Who is this one who is speaking here in this passage?

1. The magnitude of the message is now strengthened and confirmed by the very voice of God the Creator
2. Isaiah is making it clear, these are not his words, his thoughts but God Himself is speaking through his pen
  - a. The words Isaiah writes here are the very words of the Creator of all things
  - b. The Apostle John writing in Revelation chapter one may best illustrate the means of this revelation

*Rev 1:10-11 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, **write in a book.**"*

- (1) Here our Lord appears to John and tells him to write in a book what he sees and of course this would include what he hears. (cf. Rev. 19:9)
- (2) Isaiah in his book of prophecy is simply writing in a book what he has seen by vision and heard by the very voice of God

3. The One speaking here is the God who created all things and gives to all life and breadth

B. What is the message of the Creator God and to whom does He speak?

1. Note that Isaiah now changes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> person to the 1<sup>st</sup> person speaking
  - a. Isaiah is no longer speaking about God
  - b. The speaker now identifies Himself, and places the pronoun *I* in the position of emphasis - *I the Lord*
2. And the first thing God would have us to know is that He is a covenant keeping God
  - a. This is the God who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush as "I Am, Who I Am"
  - b. This is the God who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
  - c. The God that covenanted with Abraham that in His Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed
3. God personally proclaims here that He will sovereignly dispense the covenant through the Servant He has called
4. But what is to be noted is that God the Father speaks directly to His Servant, His Elect one in the emphatic first person.
  - a. I, the Lord have called You in righteousness

- (1) That is, You will fulfill all the righteous requirements of the Law
  - (2) God is proclaiming that in His Servant He will be both just and the justifier of His chosen people
  - b. Next we hear the Father say I will hold Your hand
    - (1) He speaks thus to His Servant even though He will for a moment forsake Him permitting Him to bear His wrath upon the cross in our place
    - (2) Yes, for our sake we will hear those dreadful words on the cross, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”* But then we read that God raised Him from the dead
  - c. At this time we hear the Father say to His Servant, I will keep You and give you as a Covenant to the people
    - (1) We understand in those words that all the promises of God are in Christ, Yes, and in Him Amen (2 Cor. 1:20)
  - d. Finally the Father says to His Servant I will give You as a light to the Gentiles
    - (1) That promise given to Abraham, in your Seed all the nations of the earth will indeed be fulfilled
    - (2) In Christ those that sat in darkness will see the glorious light of God’s salvation
    - (3) In Christ those who were imprisoned in sin will be set free
5. God here is saying to His servant, in You all the covenant promises of the Old Testament will be realized

CONCLUSION: Hear the words of assurance given us from the very lips of God - *I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.*"

Jesus declared that He had indeed come to perfectly fulfill all the covenant promises of God given to His people in the Old Testament

*Matt 5:17-18 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Jesus declared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that He had indeed fulfilled all the covenant promises of the Old Testament

*Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

Jesus has fulfilled the promise that He would be a light to the Gentiles and a deliverance from the prison of darkness, which came to pass in the ministry of Paul

*Acts 13:47-48 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

What have we learned this morning:

The Scriptures are not the mere raving of toothless vagabond desert tribesmen

Nor are they the rantings and ravings born of traditions told by a wandering tribe of Jews

But they are the very written prophetic word that *“never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Pet. 1:21)

As the covenant promise included Gentiles, we as Gentile believers can rejoice this morning in the words of Peter to the Church

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **who once were not a people but are now the people of God**, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.* 1 Peter 2:9-10

As Peter proclaimed, *"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but **the word of the Lord endures forever.**"* (1 Pet. 1:24-25)