

Lesson 6—April 5, 2020

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 98
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 42
PRINT PASSAGE: Isaiah 42:1-9

Key Verse—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. (Isaiah 42:1, KJV)

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“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.” (Isaiah 42:1, NIV)

Seeking a Champion of Justice



Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Commentary: Teacher's Edition
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults
- (Optional: Adults/Young Adults Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things

- Explore the concept of “Messiah.”
- Sense the wonder of Jesus’ role as servant to the nations.
- Emulate Jesus as a servant of God who executes justice.



*Key Terms

Light (verse 6)—Hebrew: *or* (*ore*): bright; clear; illumination.
Servant (verse 1)—Hebrew: *Ebed* (*eh’-bed*): slave.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)

Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!).
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week’s lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.

- See page 113 for the *Faith in 3-D* as it explains how to live out their faith in the world.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People seek a champion of justice. Who can and will defend and uphold the cause of justice? In Matthew 21, Jesus upholds God's justice in the Temple, fulfilling Isaiah 42's vision of the Messiah.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Throughout the history of humankind, there have been those who boldly defended the right to justice and freedom for their cultures and native countries. In this nation alone, the list of men and women who have championed justice is long and continues to grow. These champions have come from every level of the "social ladder" but were driven by the truth that all of humankind deserves to experience and enjoy the benefits of true social justice. They endured ridicule, oppression, and inhumane treatment, and some gave their lives for the sake of others. Our Creator never intended for any among humankind to endure injustice. The principles by which He expected all to live included the embrace of justice or equity. When He chose Israel to be His special emissaries in the world, He gave specific commands designed to protect the rights of others in their relationships, especially the poor, widows, orphans, and aliens (non-Jews) among them. The nation of Israel was to have been the model of His kingdom of justice. With the coming of Christ and the establishment of His church came this same expectation. Just as Israel failed, so have we as His representatives in the world today. Throughout Israel's history and despite their repeated sins against Him, God promised to send and commission the ultimate champion of justice to establish His kingdom of justice for all of redeemed humankind. Isaiah's prophecies present this Servant/Messiah in several "Servant Songs" or poems in his book (see 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12).

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Isaiah was called and commissioned as a prophet in the year of King Uzziah's death (see Isaiah 6). A contemporary of Hosea's and Micah's, Isaiah's ministry paralleled the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Uzziah's fifty-two-year reign had made Judah prosperous materially and a strong military state. However, internally, Judah's spiritual status was declining and continued to do so despite Hezekiah's efforts to bring about a religious revival. Through Isaiah, God warned His people and the nations around them of impending judgment because of their sins (chapters 1-39). Though it was future during Isaiah's ministry, he foretold Judah's captivity in Babylon, but also the hope of a blessed future beyond this event (chapters 40-66:24). Beginning in chapter 42, God announced His plan of future salvation and deliverance of Israel by sending His Servant/Messiah who would be empowered, Spirit-guided, and commissioned to establish justice and salvation even to the Gentile nations.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below)

1. How does God present His Servant? (verse 1)
2. What is the unique character of the Servant? (verses 2-3)
3. Who is the Servant's source of power? (verses 5-6)
4. What is part of the Servant's task? (verse 7)
5. What is the basis of the Servant's success? (verse 8)

INSIGHTS

As an elementary teacher for thirty of my forty-seven years as an educator, I specifically and intentionally promoted fairness and equity as a standard for my classroom. I was especially sensitive to those who were not the children of the more well-to-do and those who struggled academically and were more subject to ridicule or ostracism. It was a tremendous challenge to say the least in those early

years of integration. However, trust in God and the display of a caring and concerned demeanor made it possible to maintain a classroom atmosphere of justice. Looking back, I suppose that I was a “champion” of justice for the students entrusted in my care. It is encouraging to hear from many of them how their lives were changed by being in a supportive environment. Most people desire to have the kind of leaders who will defend and uphold the cause of justice, especially when personally involved or affected by injustice in society. Upholding justice is God’s expectation and His ultimate goal for all humankind to enjoy in His kingdom economy. The reality of His expectation is far from being realized, but its fruition is certain. As He foretold through the prophet Isaiah, He did send the ultimate champion of justice, Jesus Christ, the Servant/Messiah to secure its establishment.

EXPLORATION

This lesson provides an excellent platform for exploring practical ways to champion justice in all areas of society—the church, government, and corporate institutions. Encourage self-reflection among your students and challenge them to identify specific ways they may be guilty of practicing injustices and suggest ways to correct them. Focus on Jesus, God’s chosen Servant/Messiah, as the supreme model of promoting justice for all humankind. As a class, develop a project that will provide an opportunity to put the focus of this lesson into practice.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on Isaiah 42:1-4

KJV

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 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.

NIV

“HERE IS my *servant*, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 “He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.

3 “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

4 “he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”

Our redemption is not a trophy to be admired, but a vehicle for God to use to build His kingdom. This requires understanding of the ultimate purpose of salvation—to make disciples. Making disciples involves engaging in human relationships that are flawed by our own internal struggles with self. There are times when we fail to practice justice toward others in these relationships and need to refocus on the example of the ultimate champion—God’s Servant/Messiah. In the first of four “Servant Songs,” the Servant is formally introduced. The Servant is not named, and differing views are held about this Servant’s identity. What is most significant is the Servant’s credentials and God’s estimation of Him. First, the Servant belongs to God and He delights in Him. This would suggest a personal, intimate relationship between them. Second, because the Servant belongs to God, He upholds the Servant and has empowered Him with His Spirit for the purpose of bringing justice to all people. The manner by which the Servant will accomplish that task is also unique. Although the recipient of divine power, the Servant will not use it to dominate or dismiss others (verses 2-3). Rather, the Servant will be the source of comfort and encouragement for the helpless and oppressed by

bringing them justice. Nothing will be able to discourage the Servant nor prevent the completion of the task of this assigned mission and the revelation of the Law to all (verse 4). This was the task Israel was assigned as God's representatives and what they failed at accomplishing. Through the finished work of Christ, the promised Messiah, God's people today have been chosen and given the credentials to join Him in His work of championing justice for all. Relying on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can boldly and appropriately challenge injustice and proclaim the message of salvation to the lost in our immediate spheres of ministry.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

How can we successfully overcome discouragement over the injustice that we observe and experience daily and remain committed to championing justice?

- **Young Adult Question:**

As a church, we study and worship our servant and savior, Jesus Christ. What more can we do to teach others about the Chosen Servant of God?

Commentary on Isaiah 42:5-7

KJV

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.

NIV

5 This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

6 “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a *light* for the Gentiles,

7 “to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”

God is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all life on it (verse 5). As Creator, He has the power to control and direct all things. He speaks directly to the Servant in His position of Creator and promises His divine assistance because He had called the Servant to accomplish His will (verse 6a). Both sinful Israel and the Gentile nations were spiritually blind and in spiritual bondage. By completing God's will, the Servant would fulfill God's covenant promises to Israel and provide the way to salvation to the Gentiles (verse 7).

The passage “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (see Philippians 4:13) is perhaps one of the most often repeated passages in the New Testament. It expresses faith in and reliance on the divine assistance of God to complete any tasks assigned within His will for our lives. The promise God gave the Servant of His divine assistance in completing His assigned task is ours as well. It is assuring to know that when we engage in ministry and reach the limit of our resources, God will step in with a divine subsidy to strengthen us to finish victoriously.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

We have the assurance of success if ministry relies on the power of the Holy Spirit. What evidence

is there that suggests that our ministry efforts are Spirit-controlled and not self-centered?

- **Young Adult Question:**

As believers, we have already accepted Jesus as our Savior. When we experience injustice, what can we do to make sure we are not blaming God for the incident?

Commentary on Isaiah 42:8-9

KJV

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

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

NIV

8 “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.

9 “See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”

The sin of idolatry led to the nation of Israel’s downfall. They had repeatedly broken God’s commandment concerning making and worshipping idol gods and elevating them above Him. In Isaiah 42:21-24, God issued a challenge to Israel’s idol gods to prove their deity by predicting future events as He had done. The “former things” in these verses referred to His delivering Judah from the Assyrian invasion and the healing of Hezekiah which they would have known if they were true gods. In verses 8-9, the Lord guarantees the work of the Servant to accomplish “new things” based on the evidence of the fulfillment of the former things He had already done for Israel. This guarantee is based on His name and honor. He will not allow honor for what He alone had done and will do to be given to the lifeless idols of Israel and the nations around them. Since His other prophecies had come to pass, He alone was worthy of praise

for announcing the coming of His servant. The calling of the Servant and the mission to be accomplished were the Lord’s doing. God’s people today, like the Servant, have been called, commissioned, and empowered to do His work in the world. In this context, the work involves championing justice for all humankind. It must be remembered, however, that the divine guarantee for success is not for our self-aggrandizement, but for His glory. Paul’s command to the Colossians should become our mantra as we join Him in this mission: “And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father (Colossians 3:17, NLT).”



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

In what ways would ministry change if the focus were totally on the Servant’s God-given commission?

- **Young Adult Question:**

As God’s servants, we must do our best on a daily basis to emulate Jesus. Why would it be good for pastors and church members to emulate Jesus’ gentleness with brokenhearted sinners?

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— The Servant/Messiah Jesus Christ challenges us as the people of God to emulate Him and become models of justice for others to follow. We have access to the same power He was given by the Father to champion justice in our communities as we await His coming to make it an eternal reality for redeemed humankind.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

— God’s people in the world today are surrounded by reminders that His kingdom of justice has not yet arrived. However, we have His guarantee that it will come because

of the finished work of His Servant/Messiah on our behalf and His infallible Word. Our task is to practice “active waiting” by intentionally confronting injustice for the disenfranchised and discouraged among us.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— We must do our best to exercise righteousness and justice in our own lives privately and publicly, which is pleasing to God. In practicing this, we will receive divine blessings that God has just for us as His faithful servants.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

— In this world, it may seem as though evil times will never end. We have to stay faithful and trust that Jesus is our champion, since He has already paid the ultimate price for all of us to win.

NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, April 12, 2020, is “Hope for a Better Life.” The Devotional Reading is Isaiah 53:4-12, the Background Scripture is Mark 16; 1 Corinthians 15, and the Printed Text is 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-14, 20-23, 42-45.



Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for providing those that will defend and uphold the cause of justice for Your glory. We praise You for the promise of a kingdom made possible through the finished work of the supreme champion of justice, the Servant/Messiah. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY , April 6	“Women Find Jesus’ Tomb Empty”	(Mark 16:1-8)
TUESDAY , April 7	“Saul Meets Jesus on the Damascus Road”	(Acts 9:1-9)
WEDNESDAY , April 8	“The Free Gift of Grace and Hope”	(Romans 5:12-17)
THURSDAY , April 9	“The Dead in Christ Will Rise”	(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
FRIDAY , April 10	“All Things Are under God’s Control”	(1 Corinthians 15:24-28)
SATURDAY , April 11	“Victory through Our Lord, Jesus Christ”	(1 Corinthians 15:50-58)
SUNDAY , April 12	“All Are Made Alive in Christ”	(1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-14, 20-23, 42-45)

INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to provide a more interactive approach to the teaching of today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. It can be formulated to use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

Materials needed:

- The movie *Amistad*
- Computers/Speakers
- Wi-Fi

Interaction—Introducing the Lesson (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Seeking a Champion of Justice."
- Have someone read the "Life Happens" section on page **32** aloud and then, as a class, discuss the corresponding questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "People seek a champion of justice. Who can and will defend and uphold the cause of justice? In Matthew 21, Jesus upholds God's justice in the Temple, fulfilling Isaiah 42's vision of the Messiah."

Exploring the Word (25-30 minutes)

- Show the clip "To Make a Statement" from the movie *Amistad*, directed by Steven Spielberg. This can be found at www.wingclips.com. Share this: "Put to the task of defending African slaves who lead a mutiny on board a slave ship, Tappan suggests that winning the case is not as important as giving the men their dignity." Discuss the characteristics of a champion of justice.

- Give a brief overview of the book of Isaiah.
- Have someone read Isaiah 42:1-4.
- Unpack the meaning of bringing justice to the nations.
- Compare and contrast Jesus' cleansing of the Temple in Matthew 21:12-17 and Isaiah's vision of the Messiah in these verses.
- Have someone read Isaiah 42:5-7.
- Isaiah's contemporary prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah attack social injustices among the people and encourage them to exercise righteousness and justice in their private and public lives. Pause for a moment and have students examine their lives to determine how they may be practicing injustices and how they may correct these practices.
- Have someone read Isaiah 42:8-9.
- Discuss what new things God is doing with His people during this generation. Invite the students to share how they are participating in bringing God's justice in their community.

Life Application (10 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page **36**.

Life Response (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page **36**.
- Discuss how Jesus, as Messiah and Servant, shows us how to live just lives.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.