



**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Advanced

Bible Study

ADULTS • KJV

FALL 2025

THE GREATEST TRUTHS OF ALL TIME

HOW TO HANDLE LIFE'S INTERRUPTIONS

THE PERFECT GIFT

Most of us never outgrow the childlike delight of receiving a gift, but as we become adults, we discover the joy is just as rich when we give a gift. We save for weeks and shop for just the right present, or we invest time in making or planning the gift. Then we watch with joyful anticipation as the recipient opens it. Seeing those smiles only increases our joy.

As much as we enjoy giving gifts, God enjoys it far more. Because He loves us so much, He gave us the greatest gift possible: Himself. Left to ourselves, we are lost; our sin keeps us from the joy of eternal life with God. But Jesus came to earth as a child, lived the sinless life we could not, and then died as a substitute for our sin. That was His perfect gift to us. But the gift does not stop there. God raised Jesus from the dead, conquering sin and death for us.

Through Jesus, God offers you the gift of forgiveness, freedom, a new beginning, and a life with Him that never ends. But to receive this gift, you must let go of your sin. Repent and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I’m sorry for all the wrong I’ve done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus’s name, Amen.”

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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Introduction

THE GREATEST TRUTHS OF ALL TIME

G.O.A.T. is an acronym that has entered popular culture chiefly in the sports arena. Rather than animals with horns and beards, these G.O.A.T.s are those in their field who are considered the Greatest of All Time. People will always debate who deserves that title in various fields, but the Bible mentions several G.O.A.T.s about which there is no debate. This study looks at six of these as presented in Scripture. We begin with the one truly Greatest of All Time, God Himself, and consider five great truths that lead us to the greatest hope of all time.

How this study supports the Discipleship Plan (p. 178)

Exercise Faith. The Christian life is a call to faith and trust. Sometimes it's easy to trust, but at other times, obedience to God feels risky. Growing in Christ is learning to trust Him more and more in every area of life.

Session 1 The Greatest Name (Isaiah 42:1-12)

Session 2 The Greatest Need (Luke 5:17-26)

Session 3 The Greatest Sin (Matthew 12:22-32)

Session 4 The Greatest Gift (Romans 5:6-11, 18-21)

Session 5 The Greatest Command (Mark 12:28-34)

Session 6 The Greatest Return (1 Thessalonians 4:16–5:8)

The Greatest Name

THE POINT

There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.

THE PASSAGE

Isaiah 42:1-12

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

People love to debate who is the G.O.A.T.—the Greatest of All Time—in this field or that field. Usually, opinions will vary, making for interesting conversation. But there is One who stands above all others regardless of the field. God Himself is the greatest! Period. We might give applause and accolades to others for their accomplishments, but there is only one God and He alone is truly glorious and praiseworthy.

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THE SETTING

The Book of Isaiah is one of the most popular books in the Old Testament, especially among the books of the prophets. It is also one of the most quoted in the New Testament. The majestic language and literary style proclaim God's message of redemption with a focus on messianic prophecies and the description of a new world to come.

Four so-called "servant songs" have been identified in Isaiah. Here is one Bible expositor's assessment of the theme of each.¹ Isaiah 42:1-9, which is part of the study for this session, emphasizes the servant's origin. Isaiah 46:1-6 forecasts the servant's mission. The suffering of the servant is the subject of Isaiah 50:49. Isaiah 52–53:12, which may be the most well-known of the servant passages, begins with a portrayal of the servant's victory that was achieved through the suffering described in detail in chapter 53. The servant's glory would come through suffering, which was an unusual messianic perspective to those who saw the messiah as a mighty warrior in battle.

Of course, the great mystery associated with the Servant Songs is the identity of the servant. Who is he? Opinions vary from it being Isaiah himself, to King Cyrus of Persia, to the nation of Israel, or to some other historical personality of the time through whom God was at work. Whoever else the servant might have been, there is only One who is the ultimate fulfillment; there is only One who was sent by the Lord God, commissioned for a divine purpose. He suffered because of His commitment to His calling. He was victorious as the true Messiah and thereby brought glory to the name of the Lord. Does that sound like anyone you know or have heard about?

Isaiah 42:1-4

To whom does the Lord through His prophet call attention? What makes this servant worthy of the mission he is assigned? What are some attributes that help define the servant? What will he accomplish? Who will be affected by his mission?

¹Behold 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.

²He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

³A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

⁴He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

God brings glory to His great name through calling His servant.

Chapter 41 concludes with an indictment of the false gods of Babylon, who were mere created images with no power. They were incapable of doing anything good or bad, for they were lifeless objects. Over against them, the Lord through a prophetic oracle introduced an antithesis, one whom He called His **Servant**. The appeal to **Behold my servant** is more than an admonition to look upon him with one's eyes. *Behold* is a Hebrew particle of interjection intended to induce an audience's rapt attention. Often it is used to express a surprising event. The ESV and NASB retain its use, but other English translations do not. The CSB replaces it with "This"; the NIV reads "Here." The point is to not ignore what is to follow because it is especially important.

The possessive pronoun *my* establishes that a relationship exists between this *servant* and the Lord. Of course, the word *servant* implies subservience to another. However, "servant of the Lord" is a title given to the likes of Moses and David and denotes a position of honor as well. What a privilege to be enlisted as a

NOTES

servant of the Lord God of all creation! The rest of the verse defines some characteristics or qualities of this servant that further attest to his uniqueness as a servant of the Lord.

Whom I uphold implies the servant will face opposition or struggles. However, he will be strong and resistant because He has the support of the Lord. The Lord holds him fast within His grip. The phrase also suggests the servant will serve under the Lord's authority. Why? Because he is the Lord's **elect** or choice. "This is my chosen one" (CSB; similarly, ESV, NIV). This servant was not self-appointed or the selection of the populace; he was God's choice.

Moreover, he brings pleasure to the Lord. He is one **in whom my soul delighteth**. *My soul* is a Hebraism denoting the first-person singular, the pronoun *I*. *Delighteth* means "to be pleased with, favorable, acceptable, satisfying." "I delight in him" (CSB).

This servant also would be anointed with the Spirit of God. **I have put my spirit upon him.** This statement reminds us of other occasions in the Old Testament wherein the Spirit of the Lord came upon rulers and prophets, thus, a sign of the Lord's empowerment, endorsement, and presence. Doing divine work requires a divine presence.

These attributes would equip the servant for the missional purpose being assigned to him. **He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.** We tend to think of the word *judgment* in terms of a verdict, deciding a case in a court of law. While the word can apply to either a favorable or unfavorable verdict, we usually think of judgment as declaring guilt. That may be one result of his work, but his mission is greater than that and certainly more compassionate and merciful.

The same Hebrew word rendered *judgment* also is used in the Old Testament to denote *justice* (CSB, ESV, NIV), meaning that which is right, fitting, or even a privilege. We also can correctly understand justice to signify the right rule of the Lord on earth just as it is in heaven. Isaiah may be using the word to refer to God's revealed truth, which is expressed in the law.

To us, the word *Gentiles* may suggest the heathen, ungodly non-Hebrews. But it can also denote the national entities beyond

Israel. Hence, the CSB and NIV say, “he will bring justice to the nations.” Trent Butler noted that “In our text, the term apparently encompasses a broad meaning of the natural world order and right expected by the nations of the earth now restored by the gracious and merciful judgment of God on the basis of his law or teaching.”² The Lord has always had a global mission in mind for His people (Gen. 12:3; Matt. 28:19). This servant would make known the truth, grace, and mercy of God toward all nations or peoples of the earth.

The servant shall not cry out, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. The three verbs accompanied by the negative particle *not* are indicative of his style and personality. The servant was *not* out to startle his listeners with a raised voice that called attention to himself. His objective was *not* to win arguments or shout down those who differed from him, a tactic that some of us fall into all too readily. He would allow the truth of his message backed by the power of God’s Spirit do its work.

The gentleness of his demeanor would be evident in the way he responded to others as expressed in the metaphorical language in verse 3. **A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoldering flax** (“wick,” CSB, ESV, NIV) **shall he not quench.** The weak, the useless, the bruised, or those who are nearly burned out will not be dismissed or ignored by him. Motyer comments, “The negative statements imply their positive equivalence: he can mend the broken reed, fan into flame the smoldering wick. The former has been internally damaged, the latter lacks the external nourishment of oil. The Servant is competent to cure and supply.”³

Furthermore, **he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.** *Judgment* can once again be understood as *justice*. *Truth* in this verse may mean faithfulness, surety, or reliability. Thus, the servant manifests the justice of the Lord faithfully, with certainty. “He will faithfully bring forth justice” (ESV). He was a servant who came to serve, not to dominate. He had been given divine authority, but he used it to build up rather than tear down. His power was displayed through lovingkindness, faithfully declaring the truth of the Lord.

NOTES

As for himself, he would carry out his assignment without **fail**, neither would he **be discouraged**. This does not mean he would not face opposition or that his opponents would not try to defeat or discourage him. Nevertheless, he would endure **till he have set judgment in the earth**, “until he has established justice on earth” (CSB; similarly, ESV, NIV). What has been the privilege of the few (Israel) will be available to all the nations and peoples of all the earth. That was the goal of his service. It would come to pass.

And the isles shall wait for his law. The statement reinforces the idea of the previous line. *Isles* denotes a coast, shore, or region. We might think of it as being like our expression of something happening from “coast to coast,” “shore to shore,” or “from here to the corners of the earth.” *Law* can refer to God’s truth—His divine instructions. The word for *wait* includes the idea of waiting with expectation, not just passively or inactively. With that in mind, the NIV renders the word for wait as “hope.” Thus, “In his teaching the islands will put their hope.” All nations, peoples, and regions can stake their future on the mission of justice, mercy, grace, and hope to which this servant is committed.

Review the description of the servant given in these verses. Does it sound like anyone you know or have heard about?

What are a few lasting lessons that come from Isaiah 42:1-4?

- God has a chosen One through whom He reveals His glorious message of truth, justice, and hope.
- The Lord is God of all peoples and all nations.
- The Lord’s purpose will be accomplished without fail.
- The servant of God brings glory to God’s name.

Isaiah 42:5-8

What credentials does the Lord present that give Him the right to call out and send His servant on mission? In addition to calling out His servant, what other assurances does the Lord give to him? What imagery does the Lord use to describe the life-changing nature of the servant’s work? What will the Lord not share with any others?

What do these verses affirm about the relationship of the servant to the Lord?

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.**

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

God brings glory to His great name through the work of His servant.

Having introduced His chosen servant, the Lord speaks directly to him about his mission, which was a sort of commissioning event. **Thus saith God the Lord.** The Lord affirms His right, authority, and power to issue this call and make this assignment. He does so in language that points to His work as Creator. He identifies Himself as **he that created the heavens, and stretched them out.** *Heavens* refers to the visible universe, the sky, the atmosphere. *Stretched them out* reminds us of the expansiveness of the sky. Who can comprehend its vastness or see its end?

That is not all. He is the one **that spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it.** All earthly creation, the life produced on it, and its orderly continuance is a display of His power and might. Moreover, His creative activity includes human life. He **giveth breath unto the people upon it.** All human life is dependent on him. And not just biologically. He also gives **spirit to them that walk therein.** *Spirit* refers to the vitality of life, to that which makes us rational, functioning human beings who can live in the world with the intellect, emotion, and motivation necessary for existence. It is by His wonderful work that we can biologically breathe and functionally live on this earth. Can one have any more right, power, or authority to act than by these claims the Lord has made? Hardly!

NOTES

I the Lord have called thee (the servant) **in righteousness.** *Called* can denote being commissioned or chosen. *I the Lord* is an emphatic that once more affirms that the servant is on mission from the Lord God. *Righteousness* always refers to that which is right. God's righteousness is that which is right according to God's standard of rightness. The CSB rendering is, "for a righteous purpose."

Not only is the call from the Lord, but the "keeping" is as well. **I the Lord ... will hold thine hand**, thus guide him, **and will keep thee**, meaning the Lord will watch over him, guard him, or keep him close. Next, the Lord enlarges on His purpose, the assignment of the servant. **I the Lord ... give thee for a covenant of the people.** A *covenant* is an established alliance between two parties; it is a promise or pledge to provide benefits. Some covenants are between equals; in others, one party is superior to the other. Obviously, the covenant spoken of here is an example of one from the greater to the lesser, from the Lord to the people. Note that the covenant is not just expressed in and through the servant; the servant is the covenant. He is the promise of what the Lord will bring to pass, which will be discussed more in verses 7-9.

Moreover, he is **a light of the Gentiles.** *Light* in this verse may be a metaphor for divine truth. A *light* enlightens, reveals, and illuminates. Light overwhelms darkness. Such is what is accomplished by the truth of God. The truth is not dispensed just to a limited few—it is available for all peoples.

Verse 7 gives further insight into the work being assigned to the servant, to what he will fulfill as the promise of God. He shall **open blind eyes, bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.** Motyer connects the concepts of covenant and *light* in verse 6 to the work in verse 7. "Within the all-embracing concept of *covenant* there is light of truth, the healing of personal disabilities (exemplified in opening blind eyes), the end of restrictions imposed by others (bringing out *captives*) and the transformation of circumstances (*darkness*)."⁴ Indeed, the servant is being sent on a life-changing mission. He would be promise, light, great physician, deliverer, and savior.

The credibility of these words rests on the credibility of the speaker. If any doubt remains, despite what has already been stated, the Lord affirms again His credentials for speaking so. **I am the Lord: that is my name. LORD** is the word *Yahweh*, the proper covenant name of God that distinguishes Him from all the gods of the nations. *Yahweh* may be a derivative of the Hebrew word for “to be.” Thus, His name declares He is self-existent and eternal, whereas the gods of the nations are self-absorbed, lifeless, and contrived. *Name* denotes His total being and personality, that which makes Him unique. There is no one like Him.

My glory will I not give to another, He declared. *Glory* denotes the manifestation of the presence of God with brilliance and power, affirming His majesty and worthiness to be worshiped. No one else can make that claim. In that sense, He is a jealous God who will not share glory with others **neither** (His) **praise to graven images**. *Praise* is the adoration He is due, His renown, fame, and acclaim. There is no way the glory of the living God can be shared with lifeless images.

Does the servant who has a unique relationship to the Lord and through whom the Lord works and manifests His glory sound like anyone you know or have heard about?

What are a few lasting lessons that come from Isaiah 42:5-8?

- The Lord God is Creator; thus, He has all power and authority.
- His servant manifests God’s power, promise, and purpose.
- The work of this servant of the Lord is unmatched and life-changing.
- Only the Lord God is worthy of all glory and praise.

Isaiah 42:9-12

Where does the activity of the Lord fit into human history? What assurance concerning His promises for the future comes from acknowledging what He has done in the past? What does the prophet enjoin the peoples of every tribe, nation, and region to do?

NOTES

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

¹⁰ **Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.**

¹¹ **Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.**

¹² **Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.**

God's name deserves glory from all people. Verse 9 may be a continuance of the words spoken by the Lord Himself or the speaker could be the prophet. The speaker declares that the people stand at a decisive point in history. **Behold, the former things are come to pass.** Historically, *former things* may specify the events in Israel's history that have transpired just as they had been declared to them—like invasion by their enemies and exile to a foreign land. **New things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.** The certainty of the predictions of the past gives assurance to the unfolding events of the future, which will be accomplished because of the work of the servant, outlined in verses 1-4. *New* in this sense is to be understood as qualitatively new, more than chronologically new. Such is the same way the word is used in the New Testament to describe those in Christ who are made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Verses 10-12 appear to be the words of the prophet. They are his call to his audience to worship the marvelous Lord God who promises hope, victory, restoration, and transformation. The opening acclamation resembles those found in Psalms 96, 98, and 149. **Sing unto the LORD a new song.** *New things* deserve a *new song* of praise. A song of **praise from the end of the earth**, sung by **ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.** The imagery is like that in the last line of verse 4, where *isles* denoted the coastlands and all those who live there.

Others are urged to join in the singing, the shouting out of praises. **Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice**, including **the villages that Kedar doth inhabit**. *Kedar* was a descendant of Ishmael. In this verse, Kedar would refer to a region inhabited by his descendants, a nomadic tribe occupying a region south of Palestine and east of Egypt. Also, **let the inhabitants of the rock sing**. Other translations render *rock* as a formal name, *Sela*, which could refer to a lofty fortress, a mountainous area, a rocky region, or a town. Whether the coastal population, inhabitants of the wilderness or desert cities, nomadic tribes, or the people of the mountains, all are enjoined to rejoice at the coming salvation through the Lord's servant. The God of all creation is worthy of praise by all creation from every region of the world, from all peoples, no matter their background. **Let them give glory unto the LORD and declare his praise.**

Does the call for universal praise remind you of someone else whose name will be lifted up above all names and result in "glory to God the Father" (Phil. 2:11)?

What are a few lasting lessons that come from Isaiah 42:9-12?

- The God who has been faithful in the past is poised to do a new thing among us morning by morning (Lam. 3:22-23) and into eternity (Rev. 21:1,5).
- The Lord is worthy of praise by all inhabitants around the world.
- We are invited to join in giving glory to His name.

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LIVE IT OUT

There is only one God, and only His name deserves glory. The fullest revelation of God came through Jesus of Nazareth—the God-man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, who suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. Yet on the third day He arose in victory.

You have likely been able to answer the question posed at the end of each sub-section. *Does the description of the servant remind you of someone you know or have heard about?* Jesus, the Christ, is the ultimate fulfillment of every aspect of the servant described in the verses for this session and in each of the Servant Songs. Consider these truths about Him:

Through Him, God brought justice to the earth. By His work, He brought glory to God. Read John 17:1-5, but note especially this affirmation of Jesus: “I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (v. 4).

Through Him, God, the sovereign Creator, brings all who believe into a covenant relationship. Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Thus, Peter proclaimed, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Through Him we come to know the Father, benefit from His love and grace, and receive the hope of eternal salvation, all of which gives us reason to sing glory to the Lord’s great name. Paul, citing an ancient hymn, declared, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every other name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Have you heard about this Jesus? Do you know Him?

What is your personal testimony of coming into a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, His Servant Son?

If you agree that God is worthy of all glory and praise from all peoples, how are you joining your voice, literally and figuratively, with them, to give Him what He deserves?

To who or what in our world do people attempt to give glory to rather than God? Why do you think this occurs?

How does the claim that God alone deserves glory cut against the natural thinking of fallen humanity, and what is the solution to this dilemma?

What practices and people have most helped you see the glory of God and respond with love and worship?

1. Jerry W. Lee, "Isaiah: God Is My Salvation," Adult January Bible Study (Nashville: Convention Press, 1991), 86.
2. Trent C. Butler, *Isaiah*, in Layman's Bible Book Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 94.
3. J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, USA, 1999), 293.
4. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 322.