

Isaiah 42:5-17 Sing a New Song

Every year, especially around Christmas, we have something “new,” “innovative,” something that get us excited. For me when I was a kid, it was the matchbox car set that did the loop. These days it is the new iPhone or the new app that gets everyone excited. This week in Target, I was amazed at all the “NEW” things on the market. Well, today, we have a new that tops them all. It is a different kind of new! And It towers over all the new toys and all the new cars and all the new innovations of the 20th century. For it is not an invention of man, but of God. Look at vv. 8-9: **“I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”** And because of these things Isaiah says in v. 10: **“Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth.”**

What is new about this song? In other words, Why does Isaiah begin to speak of a “new” song? I want the specifics. Think back to our illustration of new toys or inventions. What makes a new toy so exciting? It is the new feature, the new wheels on the matchbox car, the new orange tracks that fit together to make a loop to loop. It is the new “faster than lightning” processor on the new computer. It’s the awesome camera in the iPhone. It is the special features of the GPS or integrated hands-free system in your new car. Well, I want us to be clear about what we are singing. For it is the contents that cause us to give praise to the glory of God from our hearts. As I’ve studied this week, the common theme of this new song is God’s complete victory over ALL his enemies. With this in mind, I’ve narrowed this new song down to 3 truths.

1. A song of victory for Israel. The original context of this song is victory for Israel. This is what we see in Isaiah. Look at v. 13: **“The Lord goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes.”** Throughout the book of Isaiah God speaks of how He will overcome the enemies of Israel. And the first thing that should come to mind is the destruction of the Assyrian army back in cp. 37. The angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 soldiers. And they are never a threat to Jerusalem again. What a victory! And I am sure they sang their songs of victory! Do you remember what happened with Israel at the Red Sea? God destroyed the army of the Egyptians by a miraculous victory as the waters of the Sea covered them up. And what happened next? Exod. 15:1-3: **“Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name.”** We see this over and over again in the OT. (Examples: Deborah and Barak when God gave them victory over the Canaanite King, Jabin Judges 5; David when God gave him victory over Saul and his enemies, 2 Sam. 22.)

Nothing is different in Isaiah. Over and over God will deliver, even from captivity. And the people sing of these victories, giving glory to God. And really, EVERY victory gives occasion for a new song. But look at v. 9: **“Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.”** And then he says in v. 10, Sing a new song. So, what is new about this song in Is. 42? Have you ever thought about that? Now, this song IS a song of victory. AND, God is the victor. Verse 8: **“I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other . . .”** We must remember this is prophecy. Israel is

commanded to sing a NEW song about something God will do to bring victory to Israel. So what is it?

If you've been listening over the last year you know the answer. Isaiah is looking forward to the age of the Messiah. In cps. 40-55 Isaiah speaks of a particular "servant" who will usher in this victory for Israel. This is what is new. Look with me to Luke 2:25-32. "**Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel . . .**" Stop there a moment. What is he waiting for? What is the context of our passage? Is. 40:1 "**Comfort, comfort my people says your God . . .**" This is CONSOLATION! Let's continue: "**and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."**"

And then we see another lady, an eighty-four year old widow who spent her days worshipping, fasting, and praying, waiting also for the consolation of Israel. Look at v. 38: "**And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.**" It is very interesting, Isaiah refers to "God" the redeemer of Israel 14 times (all of these after cp. 40). Yet, here, this lady links redemption with the Messiah. How can this be? For we know that God will not give his glory to another! He will not give his glory to ANY created being (what do the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons do with this one?). This is the "NEW" of Israel's song, the person and work of the Messiah. And the victory that He will bring is not merely a physical battle that brings victory, but instead a lasting, permanent victory: It is the victory over sin and death. It is the victory of Satan. It is victory over ALL the enemies of God. And it is Israel's victory. Jesus was a Jewish man. He was dedicated in the temple. He grew up observing the law of God, reading and obeying the OT Scriptures. "**And He came to his own, but his own did not receive him**" (John 1:11).

This was the same in Isaiah's day. But, some did receive him. "**And he gave to them the right to become the children of God**" (John 1:12). Today, as a whole, the nation of Israel rejects their Messiah. But, some follow him. And He has given them victory! I do not know what God will do in the future with physical Israel. But, the principle is the same. Those who sing the new song do so because of the Messiah. And Ultimately, the victory of Israel is the victory of the world, and the victory of the entire universe. (Appeal to physical Israel!) Let's move on.

2. A song of victory for the Gentiles. Really, this is the first thing I notice in these verses about this new song. In fact, this is another major theme in Isaiah. God will not only save Israel, but ALL the nations of the world will worship the God of Israel. They ALSO will have victory. And it is interesting, as we read, we will see great judgment coming to the nations. But, at the same time, we see his salvation going to the ends of the earth. Look in vv. 10-12: "**Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the**"

villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.” Look at vv. 14-17. God is about to do something “new.” **“For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These things I do, and I do not forsake them. They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, ‘You are our gods.’”** Look over at cp. 43:6-9: **“I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made. Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true”**

Now, let’s stop. Let me ask, *“When will this prophecy happen? When will salvation come to the nations?”* When will this great victory take place? You know the answer. As we’ve just seen, it will come during the age of the Messiah, the “SERVANT” of whom Isaiah prophesies. As we’ve already seen with Simeon who says He will be a **“light to all nations”** (Luke 2). Do you remember what Jesus did RIGHT at the BEGINNING of his public ministry? Mathew tells us that he **“went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light . . .”** (Matt. 4:13-17). This was NEW! (Yes, some went to the nations in the OT like Jonah, but with the Messiah, this would be the norm.)

Brothers and sisters, today our song is NEW because we are the recipients of this victory! How many of us are natural Jews? Listen to the most beautiful words from Eph. 2:12-19: **“Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God”**

Today, our songs reflect this truth! We also are the offspring of Abraham (by faith), the many nations promised as a possession of the Son of God!

3. A song of victory for all of creation. Finally, this song is new because it sings of victory for the ENTIRE COSMOS, all of creation. Look at 43:18: **“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.”** Here, in the 2nd half of Isaiah, Isaiah begins to speak of the ultimate consummation of all things. And this goes WAY beyond a simple upgrade. In 65:17, He is very clear about what is new: **“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”** What happened at the Fall of Adam? In Rom. 8:20-22 the Apostle Paul tells us, **“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”**

This is very interesting! **“Until now!”** Paul is saying, *“Something new has come. There has been a change.”* There is a new hope (vv. 24-25). It is the hope of the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth. So what is this change? You know the answer. It is the person and work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ! He has come. He is God in the flesh! And he laid down his life as a substitute sacrifice for sinners. But, even more relevant to our passage, He rose again! He conquered death! He is alive! Already, for those who believe in Him, they are given the Spirit, the same Spirit by which he rose from the dead. And He has ushered in something NEW.

Do you remember the Chronicles of Narnia? There is a scene when the kids are running from what they think is the White Witch. And they hide under a snow-covered cave. And suddenly, someone appears giving gifts and announcing winter will soon end. Why? Because Aslan had come! Brothers and sisters, Isaiah was asking Judah and Jerusalem to sing a new song by faith as they looked forward to the Messiah and the new age, and then to the new heavens and the new earth. Could there be anything more glorious than this? This is none other than the gospel of Christ and its effects on Israel, the nations, and the entire cosmos! This is why we celebrate! Already, He has come and finished his work on this earth. And all of creation waits for his 2nd coming! And, already, **“If any man be in Christ he is a new creation”** (2 Cor. 5:17). Let me end with a few comments in conclusion.

Truth: At the end of the day, the newness is Christ, his person, his work. God will not give his glory to another. Yet, when we come to the NT (foretold in the OT), all glory is now given to Christ. How can this be? Unless, He is God in the flesh! This is why we do not worship ourselves or the things of this earth. Our works to save ourselves do not bring glory to God. We worship Christ!

Application: This is why we sing! And because we sing a “new” song, our songs are different than those of all other religions. They have no substance! There is nothing new in them. Therefore, we will continue to sing of this Messiah. Let me ask, *“If you look at your singing over time, how is it in your heart?”* You may miss a day or a month or a season. But over time, if your heart looks unto Christ, you will understand this newness; and your singing will reflect the glory of Christ! If you have never trusted Christ do so now! Do so today! Do not let your head hit your pillow to sleep without looking to Him!

Application: Until He comes our scope is the world. Even in the Lord's Supper, we remember, "TIL HE COMES" which implies that we continue his mission to the ends of the earth. Not all of us will go. In fact, just a few will go; but, we all play our part. We are either goers or senders. For our task is the same: to make disciples of the nations, to make sure that the "sons of Abraham" sin this song with us for all eternity.

Let me finish with a couple verses from the book of Revelation. Rev. 5:9-10: **"And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."** And finally Rev. 21:1-2: **"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."**