

Session 18

The Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons

A. Introduction

1. We are currently living in the “set time” of Israel’s favour (Ps. 102:13). God is showing favour to Jerusalem by raising up unprecedented prayer for Israel to cover her in her coming time of distress and persecution.
2. It is also in light of the coming Jacob’s trouble that God is issuing His word for the “now” to the Gentile Church for this decade.
3. This word comes from Isaiah 42:23 — “*Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come?*” This is the Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons that the Gentile Church is required to take seriously and to pay attention to in the present moment.

B. What the Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons is About

1. The Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons is God’s serious and urgent call to His people to give ear, listen, and hear His heart of Israel.
 - a. A “summons” is a serious and urgent call that is issued from a king or lord to his subject, usually to appear before the presence of the king or lord.
 - b. This means that time needs to be intentionally given to respond to this summons and there is a necessity to draw near to God in order to hear.
 - c. “This” and “the time to come” in verse 23 refer to the subject matter of the surrounding verses (v21, 22, 24, 25). These verses are about Israel and God’s heart for her.
2. The triple emphasis of the Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons for His Gentile Church are:
 - a. To Know His narrative
 - i. As there will be alternative narratives present in the secular arena and some parts of the Body of Christ, God is calling the Gentile believers to know with clarity His narrative for Israel and the End Times.
 - ii. Gentile believers will also need to know our role in God’s Kingdom as it relates to Israel and how we are to stand with her. This will need to be in alignment with what Scripture says.
 - b. To Understand His heart and plan
 - i. God calls His people to develop understanding of His heart and plan for Israel, especially for the End of the Age. It is His word for the “now” to us to not be

ignorant of this mystery and what is going to unfold in the near future for Israel (Ezek. 39:23–29, Joel 3:1–3, Zech. 14, Rom. 9 – 11).

- ii. In the verses surrounding Isaiah 42:23, God is calling us to develop understanding of the following:
 - His heart concerning His narrative for Israel and for human history (v21);
 - What Israel will face and experience just before Jesus' Second Coming (v22);
 - The reality that it is God who orchestrates the End-Time drama and narrative, and His reasons for doing so (v24–25).
- c. To Partner God in a Three-Fold Call to Stand with Israel
 - i. The first aspect is standing with Israel in prayer. Developing understanding of God's heart for her helps to align us with God and keeps us from offence when we witness His End-Time plan unfolding. It is only when our hearts are free from offence and in alignment with Him that we can arise to pray in agreement with God for her.
 - ii. The second aspect is through demonstrating and revealing the mercy of the God of Israel, to Israel, as prophesied in Isaiah 19 (session 16).
 - iii. The third aspect is through preparing Israel for her call in the Millennial Kingdom by blessing her and being God's voices to speak to her.
 - God will refine Israel through further trial and suffering to produce gratitude and humility. This is to fashion her to arise as the "holy seed" (Isa. 6:13).
 - He is calling His Gentile believers to speak comfort to her and bring understanding of what He is doing.

C. The Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons Unto Becoming His Voice

1. The Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons is a call to a season of preparation to become the Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 40 voices. It begins with giving ear to God and hearing His heart for Israel.
2. Isaiah chapters 6 and 40 reveal God's heart for voices to arise to speak to the Jewish people. God is raising up voices to speak two things to Israel:
 - a. Comfort
 - i. Isaiah 40:1–2 is God's call to voices to speak comfort to Israel in the midst of her greatest trouble. These voices will bring comfort by showing the mercy of the God of Israel, to Israel.

- ii. The voices will prophetically proclaim the following to Israel during her greatest persecution:
 - The coming end of her warfare as a nation (Isa. 40:2);
 - Her destiny as God's beloved (Isa. 62:4–5);
 - God's ultimate plan for her to be His holy nation (Ex. 19:5–6).
 - iii. The Old Testament contains many passages of Scripture that prophesy about the fullness of Israel and her ultimate destiny in the Millennial Kingdom. These are Scriptures that the voices can use to speak comfort to the Jewish people and remind them of what their God has promised for them.
- b. God's Plan for Israel
- i. Speaking about God's plan for their nation to the Jewish people does not only refer to His ultimate destiny for them but also includes warning her of the severe judgement that is coming at the End of the Age.
 - ii. It also includes helping Israel make sense of why God is orchestrating such intensity by revealing His heart behind bringing her through the fire — to refine her to arise as the holy seed (Isa. 6:13).
 - iii. In Isaiah 6, God commissions Isaiah to speak about His plan for Israel to the Jewish people who were in rebellion against Him at that time. It is His specific plan to judge her for her rebellion but also use it to redeem her for His Kingdom's purposes.
3. This divine summons to a time of preparation to be His voice is a call to all Gentile believers and not just to those in the Middle East or full-time missionaries.
- a. While believers in the Middle East will be at the centre of the Isaiah 19 vortex, God is still calling His believers from nations around the world to give ear to this.
 - b. It is not just a call to full-time ministers or missionaries but to everyone in His Body.
 - c. The emphasis of this summons is to respond to His call and prepare ourselves so that when the moment arises, we can be commissioned as His vessels to speak.
 - d. As Israel will be the centre of world controversy (Zech. 12:2–3), God will be looking for His voices to speak all across nations to not just Jewish people, but also to the inhabitants of the earth.
4. Even though the fullness of the voices will be at the End of the Age, there is already a need to start preparing and speaking now as issues surrounding Israel become more intense.

D. The Preparation of the Isaiah 6 and 40 Voices

1. God will prepare those who respond to His summons as He did the prophet Isaiah.
2. Isaiah's encounter with the Lord in Isaiah 6 took place in 742 BC after King Uzziah died (Isa. 6:1). It was exactly 20 years before God's first judgement on the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC through the Assyrian invasion.
3. The Lord gave Isaiah this encounter with Himself to prepare him for his commission to speak of coming judgement to the nation of Israel.
 - a. Isaiah encountered Jesus as the beautiful, glorious, and majestic King. It was through this encounter that Isaiah was aligned, overwhelmed, refined, and empowered.
 - i. God brought a perspective alignment to Isaiah by giving him a glimpse of the King of kings (Isa. 6:1–4). Isaiah's confidence had likely been placed in an earthly king — Uzziah — and not in Israel's true King — Yahweh of Hosts. Through this encounter, God was aligning Isaiah to Himself and His plan for Israel.
 - ii. Similarly, God will bring an alignment of His Isaiah 6 and 40 voices to Himself as King and to His End-Time narrative for Israel. This requires His voices to hold fast to the true Biblical narrative and reject every other secular or false narrative, especially about Israel.
 - iii. Through this encounter, Isaiah was also refined and cleansed to be a vessel through which God could speak (Isa. 6:5–6). His encounter with the holy God left him "undone" and with a stark realisation of his own sinfulness before God and his unworthiness to be a voice.
 - iv. Similarly, God will purify, refine, and cleanse His voices to become worthy vessels to speak on behalf of Him. This is a process of being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, purified by fire, and washed by His Word.
 - v. Lastly, God "overwhelmed" and "overpowered" Isaiah in order to empower him to speak forth His heart to Israel. This encounter removed the fear of man from Isaiah and anointed him to speak boldly and steadfastly until his martyrdom 50 years later.
 - vi. Similarly, God will do the same for the Isaiah 6 and 40 voices. He will remove every ounce of self-preservation and fear of man from the hearts of His voices and anoint them to speak with courage and boldness, but with a heart of tenderness and love towards the Jewish people.
 - b. It was after Isaiah was overwhelmed and refined that he was commissioned to speak a specific message from God concerning Israel, to Israel (Isa. 6:11–13).

- i. The message Isaiah had for Israel was how God would redeem nations through Israel. However, she had to first go through multiple rounds of judgement because of her rebellion against God until she arose as the “holy seed”.
 - ii. The nature of this message was double-edged. It would either cause its hearers to be empowered as they saw God’s wisdom and hand, or it would cause hearts to be hardened as they resist God’s End-Time plan.
 - iii. Isaiah’s message is a major part of what the Isaiah 6 and 40 voices will speak forth to Israel and nations in our current time. Thus, the Lord will release greater understanding of His heart, plan, and zeal for Israel to His voices as He prepares them.
4. As we respond to this Isaiah 42:23 Divine Summons, we can expect encounters with God as He takes us through a preparation process unto being commissioned to be His voice.

E. Conclusion

1. God’s word for the “now” to His people is from Isaiah 42:23 — to give ear and hear His heart for Israel, in preparation for the time of increasing intensity and warfare surrounding her.
2. The Lord will lead and guide those who respond through a process of preparation to arise as His voices to speak comfort and bring understanding to Israel and the nations.