

THE MIGHTY GOD OF JACOB

BIBLE TEXT : Isaiah 41:1-18; 42:1-8; 43:1,2.

LESSON 366 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 43:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 41:1-18

¹ Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew *their* strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

² Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over kings? he gave *them* as the dust to his sword, *and* as driven stubble to his bow.

³ He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet.

⁴ Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he.

⁵ The isles saw *it*, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.

⁶ They helped every one his neighbour; and *every one* said to his brother, Be of good courage.

⁷ So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, *and* he that smootheth *with* the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It *is* ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.

⁸ But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

⁹ *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou *art* my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

¹⁰ Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Chosen by God

The Lord knows when to send encouragement to His people. Through the Prophet Isaiah, He reminded them of the watchful care and help He has promised. Although these words may be addressed to Israel, the descendants of Abraham, we, too, who are saved are included in these promises. Those who are saved can be called spiritual Israel. Just as God called the Children of Israel to be His chosen people, so God has called each one of us to be a follower of Him.

Think what a privilege — to be chosen of God! Most people like to be selected by their friends to fill a special place. Children like to be chosen, when playing games. But to be chosen of God is even more wonderful. Just think, the God of Heaven and earth has looked down, and among all the other people, has called you. The Lord calls each one some time or other, and whosoever answers that call is chosen of God.

A Servant

The Lord said, "Thou . . . art my servant." That is the place God calls each one of us to fill. A servant is one who is hired to work for another. God wants us to work for Him. We may not be paid in money, but God gives us many blessings and promises. We are also assured of rewards if we are faithful. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (I Corinthians 3:8).

Some people do not want to fill a servant's place. They would rather be the boss. But the Word of God teaches that we are saved to serve. If one does not want to serve God, then he cannot be one of the Lord's followers. Are you willing to be God's servant — to work for Him and to do what He tells you to do?

It is a marvellous privilege to be a servant of God. The Psalmist said: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). James and Paul each called himself a servant of Jesus Christ (James 1:1; Romans 1:1). God's people were told what God requires of them: "To fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Help and Strength

God has given many promises to those who serve Him. He has said, "Fear thou not . . . be not dismayed . . . I will strengthen thee . . . I will help thee . . . I will uphold thee." Where else could one find such a promise?

In I John 4:18 we read, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Perfect love is God's love. When we have God's love in our heart, we trust God instead of fearing the things, which might happen. But God's people do not deliberately do things that are dangerous, nor do they boast that they are not afraid.

Daniel did not boast that he was not afraid of the lions nor did he walk into their den to "show off." Daniel prayed, and when he was thrown by sinful men into the den of lions, God shut the lion's mouths so that they did not hurt him (Daniel 6:22). When Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Melita, he did not purposely let

uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

¹¹ Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

¹² Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

¹³ For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

¹⁴ Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

¹⁶ Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, *and* shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁷ *When* the poor and needy seek water, and *there is* none, *and* their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

¹⁸ I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Isaiah 42:1-8

¹ 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

the poisonous snake bite him. As he was gathering wood for the fire, the viper fastened itself onto Paul's hand. No doubt, Paul prayed. Instead of having great fear in his heart, Paul knew that God would take care of him. When the people saw the snake "hang on his hand" they expected the worst. When Paul neither fell down dead suddenly nor even suffered a swollen hand, they knew it was a miracle. God protected Paul so that he "felt no harm" (Acts 28:5). Paul served and trusted God. It was Paul who said: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Many people have been helped and strengthened by the Lord. They have these testimonies: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13); "Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield" (Psalm 33:20); "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6); and "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Harvest

Working for the Lord is likened to harvesting. We can gather sheaves to lay at the Master's feet. We can glean the golden grain as we win souls for Him. In a grain-field, each stalk must be cut, and many are bundled together to make a sheaf. In order to get the grain from the sheaf, it must in some way be threshed or separated from the straw. God said that He would make His people "a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth." Not rusty! Not nicked! Not dull!

Even a new, shiny, sharp tool does not do much good standing in the corner of the barn, or lying at the edge of the field. It must be used. So we must work for the Lord, and be willing to be used in His service. We can pray for others. We can give our testimony. We can tell others of Jesus. We can invite them to Sunday School and to the meetings. We can sing for the Lord. There are many things that we can do in service to God and to man. Are you working in God's harvest field, or standing in the corner like an unused tool?

A Light

Jesus came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus came to be a light unto the world (John 12:46). The people of the world were blind to the things of God. They sat in spiritual darkness. When Jesus came he brought spiritual light. He was that Light. He set people free from the prison of sin. Jesus did the work that was planned for Him to do. He lived here upon earth to teach, to help, to heal, and to be an example. He did not fail. He gave His life and shed His Blood that those who would believe Him and serve Him could have eternal life. Jesus came first to His own people, the Jews, but they did not receive Him. He then opened the door wide to all other nations.

God's Promise

The Lord not only created and formed man but He also made a way to redeem man. Those who are saved are redeemed, and recovered from captivity and delivered from sin. Jesus paid the ransom and bought us with His Blood, which He shed when He died for us. God's people are precious in His sight. No wonder He watches over them. God said, "Thou art mine."

God has never promised an easy life for His people but He does let them know that there will be trials and tests. Through them all He will be with His people. These are His words: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; . . . when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." Does this mean that God's people cannot drown or can never be

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.

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.

Isaiah 43:1

¹ But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

Isaiah 43:2

² When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

burned? No. not necessarily. This could mean "water of affliction" (Isaiah 30:20) and "the fiery trial" (I Peter 4:12). There may be times when it seems that everything is against you, and there are troubles all about you. You may feel as if you are surrounded with water or that you are in the heat of a furnace. But the Lord has promised to be with you.

Through Waters

Some of God's people have really gone through water and gone through fire, but the Lord has protected them. Paul was shipwrecked in a storm. God spared his life, and the lives of all the people with him. Some swam to shore and some drifted in on boards (Acts 27:43, 44). When Jonah was trying to run away from God, he was cast into the sea, but God had prepared a great fish to swallow him (Jonah 1:15, 17). When Jonah remembered the Lord and prayed, God caused the fish to deliver Jonah to dry land (Jonah 2:10).

Through Fire

Three Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were thrown into a fiery furnace because they would not worship an image of gold. The king asked, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" They answered that their God was able to deliver them, but that even if He did not deliver them at this time they would obey God and not worship an idol. The heat from the furnace, seven times hotter than usual, killed the men who were commanded to throw in the three Hebrews. But the three were not burned, "nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, or the smell of fire had passed on them" (Daniel 3:27). The Lord was with them, and delivered them.

The Psalmist spoke of God's help to the Children of Israel: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm 66:12). No wonder the people were encouraged to bless the Lord and praise His name! What a mighty and faithful God the Children of Israel had! He whom we serve is the same mighty and faithful God! He is worthy of our praise.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between being "called" of God and "chosen"?
2. Who was Israel?
3. How can we be spiritual Israel?
4. Tell of a time when God helped you.
5. What is a servant?
6. What is a harvest field?
7. What can a child do in God's harvest field?
8. Who are the Gentiles?
9. Why do they need a "light"?
10. Who can claim God's promises?