

Salvation Brought and Bought

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 59:16-21

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Look with me, if you will, in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 59. We are going to be considering together verses 16 down to verse 21 and, as I announced, I would like to speak with you about a salvation that God himself has brought to this world and has paid for in full, brought and bought through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah 59 and verse 16:

And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.¹

So here in a nutshell we have what I liken to a golden nugget of the gospel story that is foretold here through Isaiah's pen. But let's remember. Isaiah wasn't the author. The Spirit of God is the author of this Word that we are considering. So if we wonder what the Spirit of God would have taught the Lord's own in the Old Testament concerning God or concerning Christ or salvation or judgment, I believe here we have a portion of Scripture that should ever cause us to see that there has only been one way of salvation revealed in them as well in us.

¹ Isaiah 59:16-21.

There are preachers today that like to divide between what the Old Testament believer knew and understood and what those since the New Testament would have understood. But if you will look with me in 1 Peter chapter one I can truly call Isaiah my brother. And I don't believe that I glory some day there is going to be one section for the Old Testament believers and then over here another section for those who are since the cross. There are some men that preach that way. They preach as if the Jews were somehow God's favored sons and, alas, he had to kind of set aside his plan for them for a while, but they say Christ is coming again and then he is going to pick it up again with them as if there is two separate people. There are not. There never has been.

True. He did work through that nation to bring his Son into this world, but there have never been two true people of God. There has only been one, Jew and Gentile. And this is what they would have understood, 1 Peter chapter one. Notice in verse 10:

“Of which salvation...”²

So that right there is a declaration. There is only one salvation. It is in the singular.

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.”³

Now that doesn't mean that there wasn't any grace in the Old Testament, but specifically here who prophesied of *the* grace... Remember what John wrote in John one that the law came by Moses, grace and truth by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the full manifestation of all that the law foretold. There is not a divide between the law and what Christ did. He came and accomplished the law. In him is grace because he finished the work and it is through him that God shows grace to sinners. So he... they prophesied of the one grace that should come unto you.

That means when I go back and read Isaiah like I am right now with you and you looking at it, you ought to see that he spoke of Christ. He was their message. It is not different. And verse 11 clarifies that.

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.”⁴

I was raised being taught and believing that somehow those before the cross simply had the Spirit of Christ on them. That is how I was always taught. They say he couldn't have been in them because he had not yet come. Well, that is crazy. The Scriptures clearly declare here in the Word—and underscore that little preposition.

“...the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand...”⁵

² 1 Peter 1:10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 1 Peter 1:11.

And notice the one message.

“...the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”⁶

So when I come back here to Isaiah 59 with you and talk to you about Isaiah’s message, it is the same as Peter’s. It is the same as Paul declared. It is the same as John the Baptist declared.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”⁷

So what was revealed here in Isaiah 59 and really throughout the whole book of Isaiah... when I read Isaiah it is like reading Paul. There is no conflict between Isaiah and Paul. It is the same message, the same Lord, the same salvation. Well, what was revealed in Isaiah and through Isaiah is about how—and that is really what this message is about—how God has brought salvation to sinners and purchased it in, by and through the Lord Jesus Christ alone here in a very precise, concise and simple declaration. I like that.

When I was going through school and I don’t mind telling you, you know, when that big old Penrod book they gave me was that thick, I was wanting a summary of it. I was asking around in my classmates, had they read it. Give me the summary, because when we get into class you know, just what is the concise thing that this thing is teaching?

And then when I got into high school I found that little Cliff’s Notes. I am so thankful. I have never met that guy, but if I met him I would give him a big hug. You know, he saved the day many a day in English class, because it was Cliff’s Notes. And, of course, today, kids have the internet so you can go out there and just check it out. You know, give me a review.

Sometimes you learn more just through the reviews than you do actually reading though the whole thing. I don’t mean to put down reading, but in reading the Scripture we have a chapter such as this, a concise, precise and simple declaration about the unfolding of the story of redemption and the outworking in time according to God’s eternal purpose of how he would save sinners.

I know there are those today and I would have to tell you. For a while I kind of fell into this trap. When I first began to study and read about God’s sovereignty and all things being purposed from eternity I fell into that trap of thinking that, well, since it was purposed from eternity it was done from eternity. It is what some theologians call today eternal justification. But I have to tell you that as I have studied the Scriptures I have come to see just how wrong that particular interpretation of Scripture is.

Do I believe as the Scriptures teach that God has purposed all things from eternity and

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ John 1:29.

that nothing takes place but what he has ordained? Absolutely. Absolutely. But, dear friends, it wasn't done in eternity. What he purposed needed to be accomplished. It is true. He gave a people unto his Son, but the covenant of which he speaks here in Isaiah 59 and verse 21:

“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD...”⁸

That covenant of grace that is eternal is founded upon the condition that Christ would come and actually work it out. If you ask me wherein is my hope, yes, I am thankful to know and believe that God purposed it from eternity. But you know when the Lord opened the eyes of this sinner and caused me to see my need where he caused me to look? It is the same place that he caused Isaiah to look in Isaiah chapter six, to the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the cross, because you can have a message that declares that God is eternal and that he has purposed it from eternity and that he has chosen sinners I Chris from eternity, but, dear friends, the rest and peace that comes in this matter of salvation comes as the Spirit opens your eyes and causes you to see that one hanging on the tree who paid the debt, who actually worked out that righteousness. And if your eyes are not there, I have to tell you the Spirit has not directed your thoughts. If you are looking even to your own profession...

So many people when you ask them, “When do you believe the Lord saved you?” They go back to when they were six years old, five years old when they walked an aisle, when they said a prayer, when they raised the hand, when they did what someone asked them to do. That is not salvation. If you were to ask me, this poor sinner standing before you when do I believe that God saved me? I would tell you without a hesitation or a blink of an eye it was when Christ paid the debt there at Calvary, because that is when he declared:

“It is finished.”⁹

And that this when salvation was bought. So it is all about this salvation that was brought and bought.

I want to show you just two or three verses, because I made some pretty strong statements. But I believe every one of these is supported with Scripture.

Look in Isaiah chapter 14. The connection between a sovereign God—and he is—who has purposed all things that take place—and he does. There is not one mistake, there is not one thing that happens in this world, not one speck of dust that rises from our shoes as we walk but what God ordains the rising of it and the falling of it. But what I want you to see is that what he has purposed, there is that working out in time and that is what salvation is. It is God doing the delivering. It is God doing the saving. And it happened in the context of time. There was a time, as Paul preached:

⁸ Isaiah 59:21.

⁹ John 19:30.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law.”¹⁰

Here in Isaiah chapter 14 and... well, I am not sure I have got the right verse. Verse 24 is what I am looking for. I had 23 in my notes, but verse 24.

Notice:

“The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.”¹¹

Do you see that connection? Yes, Christ is that Lamb from eternity that God purposed to send into this world. And those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life have been written from eternity. But notice:

“...as I have thought, so shall it come to pass.”¹²

There is that outworking of what he has taught, what he has purposed. His thoughts are eternal, but the outworking of them in time is not. It is for eternity, but he brings to pass everything that he has purposed. That this why I have often told you. You might wonder about tomorrow and we all do. Let’s be honest. I have got a tight stomach about situations that you are going to be facing this week or wondering how they are going to turn out and we all do. A person is a liar that tries to put on a face like, oh, well, I don’t worry about those kind of things, because God is sovereign.

I would like to get in there and take a picture of your thoughts just for a second and find out. But if we wonder even about something in the past and if you look back hard enough and long enough some of us don't even have to look that hard that long, we see a broken road. We see a trail that if ... if we were to kind of examine it on the microscope of life you would say that was a bumpy road. That has a lot of twists and turns to it. That has a lot of valleys. That has a lot of rocks, lots of sorrow and trouble.

Well, again, if you just dwell on that part of it, you will be carried into despair. But what we learn is every bit of that the Lord ordained. I know that for sure. And you can rest in that. There is no sense in just sitting and dwelling. What if? Or how... what if I had of done something different? See, that is... we get into that spin cycle and the ultimate answer, according to Scripture is what God thought and what he purposed, that is exactly what came to pass. And so I can rest in that. I may not know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow and I know that what he has brought to pass is exactly what he determined, not one detail more or less, you see?

Over here in Isaiah chapter 37 and verse 26... and the reason I am bringing this up is the language of Isaiah 59. Even though God had purposed this from eternity, yet it is

¹⁰ Galatians 4:4-5.

¹¹ Isaiah 14:24.

¹² Ibid.

described in human language. And if we don't understand this foundation, we are going to miss what this is saying about how God works.

Isaiah 37 and verse 26. The Lord said:

“Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.”¹³

So whether it is for the salvation of sinners or whether it is for the condemnation of sinners, it is the Lord that has purposed it. He is God.

One other verse over here in Acts chapter four and verse 28. The connection between God's eternal purpose and what he has actually accomplished in time. See, the way that the Lord has enabled me to see it by his grace and declare it is this. God purposed it from eternity. Christ accomplished it in time there at the cross and the Spirit reveals it when it pleases God. So that is the connection between God purposing, Christ having finished it and the Spirit revealing it.

You are not saved when the Spirit reveals Christ. But what the Spirit reveals is that you were saved when Christ paid the debt. If you want to say, you can say, “Well, it was a salvation to me because my eyes were opened.” Ok, but that is I your experience. But as far as the actual salvation is concerned, it was done when it was done. It was done when Christ finished the work. Otherwise, why would he say it was finished?

So here in Acts chapter four and verse 27 and 28:

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”¹⁴

So imagine that tumult, all that was going around and happening around the crucifixion of Christ. Well, look at verse 28.

“For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”¹⁵

God wasn't simply saying, “Oh, well, it doesn't matter what they do because I have already ordained it. That is how some people reason in their minds. They think well, whatever will be will be. It doesn't matter.”

Well, it matters to God in that everything we see taking place, good and bad, is from his hand. He has ordained it. he himself said that in Isaiah 45.

¹³ Isaiah 37:26.

¹⁴ Acts 4:27.

¹⁵ Acts 4:28.

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”¹⁶

I know it shocks some people when I tell them the devil is God’s devil and he gives him whatever liberty he determines and he restrains him in whatever area he restrains him, but he is God’s devil to do with as he will, just as any sinner is God’s to do with what he will. And if a person has a problem with that, he has a problem with God. It is just that simple.

So come back here to Isaiah 59. Let’s take a look at this, considering this salvation that God purposed and in time brought and bought.

Well, the first thing in verse 16 that is clear is the need for God bringing salvation to sinners, the need. You know, this would be otherwise like setting a bunch of blind people off on a scavenger hunt without any direction. No knowledge of where to go, where to turn, where to find it. Can you imagine? It would be a mockery. You know, what do you do with a blind person? You take them and lead them. You bring them to where they need to be.

And in this matter of salvation, herein is where I see the goodness and grace of God I that he is not a God who has remained removed. He did not say at the fall of Adam, “Oh, well, you blew it so you are on you own.” No. Right from the fall he gave instruction as to how he would save fallen sinners there in the garden, Genesis three and verse 15. But where in 21 he would bring forth the seed of a woman and to depict what he would do through that seed he took the skin of animals, innocent animals and slew them. Imagine Adam and Eve watching life blood flowing out of an innocent victim for the first time because of their sin, because of their fall. God spared them, but slew the victim. That is a simple declaration of how God has purposed to save sinners from the beginning.

And verse 16 here we see this need. It says:

“And he saw that there was no man.”¹⁷

He foresaw. Now this wasn’t something that happened in time. He foresaw from eternity that there was no man. God ordained the fall, but he foresaw that of men among men there would not be one that could do his work, that there was no man. Here is where, again, we see Isaiah and Paul in agreement, because Paul wrote in Romans three:

“There is none righteous, no, not one.”¹⁸

So Isaiah is declaring the same thing. And he saw that there was no man. Even among those that he had chosen from eternity... See, to me this is, again, an argument against the

¹⁶ Isaiah 45:7.

¹⁷ Isaiah 59:16.

¹⁸ Romans 3:10.

fact that sinners were justified from eternity. Well, there was no man among those that could intercede and it says in the 2 part of verse 16, “and wondered.”

Now this is where the Scripture uses human language. So it is like you tell your children a story. You bring it down to their level. You use language that they can identify with, because the word here in verse 16, wonder, means to be appalled or stunned.

Now we know that God does not react. We know that there is nothing in man that causes God distress. So just understand, though, that for us we can understand what it is to be shocked. We can understand what it is to be stunned at something. So God has purposed by his Spirit to take language that we are used to hearing and apply it to himself.

It is like when the Scriptures speak of the arm of God or the eyes of God or his hand. We know he is a spirit. But it is there to help us identify with his attributes. That is really what it is about. And so here it is using human language. He wondered that there was no intercessor. And that word intercessor in verse 16 means one sent to entreat another in the face of hostility, in other words, an ambassador, somebody that can stand in the breach. And the reason it is written this way is for us to see that if salvation could have come in any way by our obedience to the law, then it wouldn't have been necessary for Christ to come. But the reality is there was none who could qualify and be that intercessor as we see here that would satisfy God's holiness and justice. And so he, it says, therefore, verse 16:

“...therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.”¹⁹

You know, the truth is, dear friends, that had God not seen our need, had God not purposed to bring salvation to the sinner there would be none that would be saved. There would be none.

Look at Isaiah chapter one. Hold your hand here, because in Isaiah chapter one we have to remember how this all started. Notice how the Lord used Isaiah to describe the wretchedness of the people of Israel which, when I read it, I have to say described my own wretchedness. Notice in verse six, Isaiah one:

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.²⁰

What a picture. It is overrun. But look at verse nine.

¹⁹ Isaiah 59:16.

²⁰ Isaiah 1:6-8.

“Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”²¹

How great is our need? So that is what we see here in Isaiah 59 and verse 16, the need. It took God intervening. It took God coming and arming himself. And that is what verses 16 through 21 are all about, the way that God has brought and bought salvation.

Now notice the language again, verse 16, the second part.

“...therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.”²²

You can see how foolish it is to ask people to raise their arm, raise their hand as if that is going to accomplish salvation. Dear friends, salvation is not in you raising your arm, in you raising your hand. I remember back before the Lord ever taught me the gospel buying into his simple plan of salvation they called it. And salvation was described as a bridge that there it is. The opportunity is yours. You can cross it or not, but God has built a bridge.

I am thankful that salvation isn't even a bridge. You know? Take a blind man put him out here on Baird Road and tell him without any knowledge to find Shreveport Barksdale bridge and walk across it. He couldn't. He would be lost, too far removed. And that is just a simple example. No, salvation is the arm of the Lord bringing that salvation. And, again, human language. The arm of the Lord here is metaphoric of his strength and his ability alone.

You see verse 16? His arm brought salvation. Every word is important. His arm, his power, his glory alone. And I believe what the Scriptures here in Isaiah's writing is forward looking to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, his coming. If you look in 1 Corinthians chapter one and verse 24, 1 Corinthians one and verse 24, again, the unity of Scripture that we see between what Paul writes here by the Spirit and Isaiah wrote. The arm speaking of God's power in bringing salvation. And verse 24 it says:

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”²³

It took both. It took Christ coming and in all of the strength that lay in him to work this salvation out. It took that power, his arm, but it also took the wisdom of God. You can understand a little bit about the wisdom of God in Christ in working out this salvation. He had to satisfy God's law and justice as a man. He didn't just pass his hand over ... wave it over our sin and say, “Ok, hocus, pocus be gone.” He didn't stand there like some men do and make a sign of a cross and say, ok, be forgiven.”

²¹ Isaiah 1:9.

²² Isaiah 59:16.

²³ 1 Corinthians 1:24.

No, in God's wisdom he came and he had to satisfy every aspect of the law, not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of it. Most of us pretend to be law keepers. You know, we know what to say. Oh, yeah, I love my neighbors. Sure you do. When was the last time you talked to him. When was the last time when they were ill you really sat next to him and cared for them like you do your own children or your own loved ones and kin? You know, just that one commandment alone we fail daily to love our neighbor as ourself. Do you really want your salvation to depend upon how you have obeyed that law? You know, it was given that every mouth might be stopped. And every person found guilty before God. That is our place, but Christ the wisdom of God. In him is that perfect wisdom whereby he not only satisfied the precept of the law, not only its letter, but in its spirit, but he also paid the penalty, laid down his life, paid the debt. That is all summed up over here in Isaiah 59 when it speaks of his arm brought salvation. He came to accomplish it and fulfill it.

And then coming back here to Isaiah 59 look at that second part I verse 16.

“...and his righteousness, it sustained him.”²⁴

You see, that is what it took, the righteousness of another, because there was none in us so it took the righteousness of another.

Do you realize in all of Scripture you will never find the term Christ's righteousness? I know we speak of it, but it is always God's righteousness. And here it is set forth that way. His arm brought salvation unto him. God's arm brought salvation unto him. God's righteousness, it sustained him, it sustained this one that he sent to accomplish it, that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we see described here what it took to accomplish this salvation. It took one sent of God, it took one like God himself. That is what Emmanuel means, God with us. And it took him obeying the precepts of that law. That is what some of the old writers called the active obedience that Christ worked out. He had to obey the law in every jot and tittle. When I read for you in Luke two even as a child it says he was submissive unto his parents and he grew in wisdom and stature before the Lord. He had to work out this righteousness as a man. And then, of course, his passive obedience. That word passive means his submission unto death. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Had Christ come and simply obeyed the law and then ascended back into heaven there would be no salvation. All it would have proved was that he is God and he is right and he is righteous. But it took him paying the penalty of the law.

And, dear friends, as a man, verse 16, this is why I say it wasn't just done in eternity. This was worked out in the body, because it says there his righteousness, it sustained him. That word means that by consciousness in his coming even as a child he was conscious of the reason he was here. It wasn't for himself. That is why when his parents scolded him for staying in Jerusalem as we read in Luke two. You can imagine them scolding him like

²⁴ Isaiah 59:16.

you would. We have been looking for you for three days. Don't you know we have been worried?

And he said, "Don't you know that I must be about my father's business?" All the sudden there is woe. This is not our kid. In reality none of our children are ours. They are on loan. But this was particularly God's Son. And even as a child of 12 years old he was brought to remind them and it says Mary pondered these things in her heart, that the day would come when he would be for the standing or falling of many in Israel, just like he is today.

You know, everybody likes to think they love Christ until you start declaring him for who he is and all of the sudden you see people scatter, like whoa. If that is the Christ you believe in, that is not my Christ. And they get scattering like ants.

But do you know what? That is the fall of many in Israel. But for the standing, those sinners... and I trust I am speaking to you, to see that he is that one righteousness which God has accepted and sent and approved and by his life, not just by his death, but by his life and death, he has come and exercised righteousness. He has earned it. He has established it and God is satisfied with it to the degree that he has put it to the account, once for all, of everyone for whom Christ died. I love to hear that message again and again. I need it.

But this language here in verse 16. His righteousness it sustained him. You know, it is derived from speaking about someone that is engaged in a righteous cause. We see somebody every once in a while stands up for something and they make that their cause. And you think, wow, that takes a lot of dedication. All that pales in comparison to the work that the Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill and accomplished, a righteous, the truly righteous cause, a cause of redemption, the cause in which the Redeemer was sustained from the womb all the way to the cross, to the grave, to the resurrection, to ascension and even now seated in the heavens. That cause has never changed. There is a man seated in glory, purposed from eternity whose one cause... and when you stop and think about it, that is where I bow in admiration was to identify with sinners and make them his own and redeem them that he might throughout eternity share his glory with them and them with him. That is a message that I can never ever declare clear enough and plain enough, but that is what we see here.

And that is really what we see described in Isaiah 42. And we are going to have to stop here and I will come back to this, but Isaiah 42. Again, here is a commentary of Scripture on Scripture. We don't have to go to men's commentaries to understand what it means here in Isaiah 59:16 that God's arm brought salvation unto him. And his righteousness, it sustained him. Look how it is put, Isaiah 42.

"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."²⁵

²⁵ Isaiah 42:1.

Oro to the nations. He is going to work out this salvation.

“He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.”²⁶

This is not a political campaign. We have just been through one, you know? Lots of campaigning and yacking and talking and promising and, you know, that is men.

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.²⁷

You know, when he talks about a bruised reed that he shall not break, that is that blind Bartimaeus that was caused to cry out to him and say, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me.” This is that adulterous woman that they drug there before him to condemn and as he stooped and wrote in the sand, one by one, they all went their way and then he looked up and said, “Where are these thine accusers?” And she said, “They are gone.” And he said, “Well, neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.” That is the bruised reed. That is the smoking flax that he shall not quench. But rather:

“...he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”²⁸

In other words his end, his view, that righteousness that sustained him was that cross which was to bear on their behalf. And it says—I love this verse four.

“He shall not fail nor be discouraged.”²⁹

See, Isaiah was still forward looking.

“...till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”³⁰

The isles means simply the nations. This wasn't just for the Jew, but it was for all those throughout the world that God sent his Son to accomplish this salvation on their behalf.

²⁶ Isaiah 42:2.

²⁷ Isaiah 42:2-3.

²⁸ Isaiah 42:3.

²⁹ Isaiah 42:4.

³⁰ Ibid.