

October 11: Isaiah 41:1-10

Gather: Bible

Introduction:

Throughout the next three weeks we will be taking a look at Isaiah 41.

Watch: The Bible Project's Overview: Isaiah 40-66

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=TzdEPuqgQg&feature=emb_logo

Resources to help you: The following resources are not meant to be taken as fact, but to help you think through what might be being said and to understand the context of Isaiah 41.

- <https://bible-studys.org/Bible%20Books/Isaiah/Isaiah%20Chapter%2041.html>
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/isaiah/41.html>

Read **Isaiah 41:1-10**

What do you think is happening in this passage?

Verse 1. "Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment."

The nations beyond the sea are called to be silent in this passage. Why do you think the nations are being told to be silent?

Imagine you and a sibling have gotten into an argument. You are both pleading your cause to your parents, only you are both talking at the same time. What does your parent do? Usually, they tell you to be quiet and talk one at a time. When multiple voices are talking at once, none of them are being heard. The nations are asked to be silent so the Lord may speak and be listened to.

Are there times when you have talked over other people then realized no one is listening to anyone else? How about when you are talking to God? Do you take the time to listen and not just talk?

Verse 2. "Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service?"

He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow."

Take a minute and picture these things happening. The Lord has called his people to his service. He gives over nations and kings to his people. Enemies rise up and as the sword is swung, they disappear into dust. And with the firing of his bow, they are picked up like discarded seed pods and blown away.

How powerful, how mighty is a God who can do such a thing? These things cannot be done by human power, but by God alone. Is there a time in your life when God has done something you know can only be him? When it could not have been done by any power of man?

Verse 3-4. "He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before. Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—I am he."

How long has the Lord been around? And how long will be around for? Eternity. God does not sit idly in heaven, but has been calling forth the people right from the start. He won't stop this mission. God never changes and never surrenders.

What hope or comfort does this fact give you?

Verse 5-7: "The islands have seen it and fear; the ends of the earth tremble. They approach and come forward; they help each other and say to their companions, "Be strong!" The metalworker encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer spurs on the one who strikes the anvil. One says of the welding, "It is good." The other nails down the idol so it will not topple."

The people see God's power. They know what he can do. And what do they do?

They band together against God. They remain rebellious and attempt to strengthen their own gods. What do you think is the result? Is it effective? Why/why not?

Many times humans have resisted following God even when they see his power firsthand. Why do you think we are so reluctant to follow the one true God? Why do we put idols before him?

What idols do you have in your life? (TV, games, people, money, etc.) Why is it so hard to follow God first above those things?

Verse 8-10: ""But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

God chose his people and did not abandon them, even when he had every right to. They rejected him, turned from him, worshipped other gods. Yet the Lord fights for them, protects them, helps them. Why?

What does this tell you about God?

What comfort or hope can we gain from this?

God continues to fight for us, even when we don't deserve it. He wants his people to love him and be with him, even when they mess up. It is hard not to have other gods before him. What are some ways we can put God first?

- Set time aside to be with him.
- Regularly pray and read our Bibles so we can get to know him better.
- Live how he would live, follow Jesus' example.
- Fill in some specific ways you plan to help yourself put God first:

Memory Verse: Isaiah 41:9-10 "I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Prayer: Listening Prayer. Sometimes it is easier to do a listening prayer with another person or two. Sometimes it's easier alone. Choose whether you want to do this alone or with someone then follow the steps below for one type of listening prayer:

- Pray for guidance and choose to let God's voice be heard over your own.
- Wait in silence for God to speak.
 - Think about any themes, things that become clear, etc. that come to mind.
- Write down any Scriptures, pictures, songs, etc. that are given to you.
- If you are doing it with someone else: share how God spoke to you.
- Pray for help to follow God's will.

Remember 2 things:

1. Listening takes practice!
2. Sometimes you won't know what God is saying or perhaps He is just present with you and not telling you anything in particular at the moment. Enjoy God's presence and just spend that time with him!

Challenge: Set aside a minimum of 10 minutes each day this week to practice listening to God.

Bonus Challenge: Add an extra five minutes every day!