

Jean Ross: Good morning, friends. We'd like to welcome you to, "Sabbath School Study Hour," coming to you here from the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sacramento, California. We'd like to welcome our many online members who are tuning in and those who are watching, wherever you might be, whether you're in North America, or maybe you're watching us on the Internet outside of North America. Perhaps you're participating in this service several weeks later, and you're doing the lesson, we'd like to welcome all of you. Our lesson today is lesson number nine in the series of studies dealing with the book of Isaiah, and today is particular important. It's called "To Serve and to Save." That is the title of our lesson. Now, if you don't have a copy of the Sabbath School lesson, we want to encourage you to go online, and you can download a copy of the lesson. You can visit a local Seventh-day Adventist Church. You can ask for a copy of the quarterly, the lesson guide, and you're able to study along with us. Well, before we get to our study, we always like to begin by lifting our voices in song, and so for those of you at home, you're welcome to join us. We're going to be singing that well-known hymn "Amazing Grace." It's hymn number 108 in the hymn book, and I think we're going to be doing three of the verses.

♪♪♪

♪ Amazing grace, how sweet the sound ♪

♪ that saved a wretch like me ♪

♪ I once was lost, but now am found ♪

♪ was blind, but now I see ♪

♪ The Lord has promised good to me ♪

♪ His word my hope secures ♪

♪ He will my shield and portion be ♪

♪ as long as life endures ♪

♪ When we've been there 10,000 years ♪

♪ bright shining as the sun ♪

♪ we've no less days to sing God's praise ♪

♪ than when we first begun ♪♪

Jean: Let us bow in prayer. Dear Father, once again, we are so grateful that we're able to gather in Your presence and invite Your Spirit to come and teach us as we open up Your Word. And so, Father, we invite You to draw close to us. Give us understanding. It's such an important lesson, such an important book that we are studying. So we ask Your special blessing, Lord. Be with those who are listening or watching wherever they might be, and we ask this in Jesus's name, amen.

Our lesson today is going to be brought to us by Pastor Doug.

Doug Batchelor: Good morning. We are continuing in our study on the book of Isaiah. We want to welcome everybody. And today we're going to be dealing with lesson number nine, and the title of that lesson is "To Serve and to Save." And we have a memory verse, and the memory verse is from Isaiah chapter 41. I'm sorry. Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1, and if you have that, you're welcome to say it with me. For those that are here and those that

are home, "Behold, My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights. I put My Spirit upon Him. He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."

Now, our assignment today is to be studying a number of, just, magnificent chapters from the book of Isaiah, and that would be Isaiah chapter 41, all of chapter 41, Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1 through 7, Isaiah chapter 44, verse 26 through 45, and Isaiah chapter 45-- through Isaiah chapter 45, verse 6, and Isaiah 45, 1 through 12. And I know the writers of the lesson had a real challenge because they've got the 66 chapters in Isaiah to study in 13 weeks, and they tried to find out the best way to break it up so that there were common themes in the different sections that were being studied.

So there's a lot that's being said in Isaiah chapter 41. Matter of fact, if you have your Bibles, you may want to just join me and go to Isaiah 41. We're going to read some sections there, and I don't know if we'll get the whole chapter done-- that talks about the servant.

Now, I should tell you probably right at the outset that there's two things that are being spoken of in this theme. One is that God is going to work through a human instrumentality as a servant, to be a type of Christ, and you'll find out later in the study that it's talking about a Persian king named Cyrus. And then it's also a type of God's people. Jacob is the servant of God. And then you're also going to be hearing about Christ, who is the ultimate servant. And so, you know, one of the wonderful things about prophecy is there are different depths that you look at. There's, like, layers to it.

Now, let me see if I can give you an example of what I'm talking about before I even go to Isaiah 41. If you have your Bibles, if you turn real quick to Isaiah chapter 14, I think it's important to understand just, kind of, this principle about why these prophets seem to bounce around a little bit. If you go to Isaiah chapter 14, and you'll see in the beginning of Isaiah chapter 14, he has this prophecy. You can go to, oh, let's say, verse 4, Isaiah 14:4, "that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon--" now, who is the proverb against? King of Babylon, okay?

But then you get down to chapter 12, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, the son of the morning. How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations. For you've said in your heart, 'I will ascend into heaven.'" Now, who's this prophecy talking about? The devil. Well, you just said he's talking about the King of Babylon.

Let me give you another example. If you go to Revelation chapter 12-- you don't have to go there right away-- and it says that, "The dragon stood before the woman to devour the man child as soon as it was born." Now, who is the dragon in Bible prophecy? It's the devil. But what kingdom did the devil use to try to kill Jesus as a baby? Rome.

All right, so, you see, it's talking about the spiritual power behind this government, but God often-- He can operate through governments, and the devil can operate through governments. If you go to Ezekiel, in Ezekiel chapter 28--you can go there real quick, and you'll see it starts out--go to verse 11. Ezekiel 28, verse 11, "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre--" okay, who is this oracle prophecy directed to? King of Tyre. That was up north. It was the Phoenician kingdom.

But you get down to verse 14, "You were the anointed cherub who covers." And it says in verse 13, "You were in Eden in the garden of God." The king of Tyre was not there. "Every precious stone was your covering." Says, "It was prepared for you in the day you were created." The king of Tyre was not created. He's a human. He was born.

So who is this prophecy talking about? It's talking about Lucifer, who is the power that was manipulating the king of Tyre to persecute God's people. And so the prophets often talk about earthly powers, but then you can see they're being transported behind the veil to see what is the spiritual power that is behind these political powers.

Now, surprisingly, when we study Isaiah today, we're going to see that the spiritual power behind an earthly political power, a pagan political power, it's not always the devil. It's going to actually be the Lord who is working behind a pagan political power to accomplish His purposes. Okay, with that lengthy introduction, I hope that

made sense that sometimes these prophets, you say, "Seems like he's bouncing around. He's often going from the physical, and then he's transported back to the spiritual, behind the scenes.

All right, let's go back to Isaiah chapter 41, and we're just going to read a few verses here. "Keep silence--" this is verse 1, Isaiah 41:1, "Keep silence before Me, O ye coastlands, and let the people renew their strength. Let them come near, then let them speak. Let them come near together for judgment. Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to His feet? Who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Who gave them as the dust to his sword, a driven stubble to his bow?" He's talking about this power.

Now here we believe-- he spends several chapters, and he's talking about the Persian king who will overthrow their enemies. He comes from the east. He conquers Babylon that has oppressed and destroyed Jerusalem, and this Persian king is Cyrus. He is a type of Christ-- Christ, who is the King who comes from the east. And so it leads up and, you know, later it'll mention him by name as you get closer. It says that, verse 3, "Who pursued them, and passed safely by the way that he had not gone with his feet? Who has performed it and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? 'I am the Lord. I am the first, and I am the last.'"

Do you find a place in Revelation where you find that term? It's when Jesus is called, "from everlasting to everlasting, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last." That means as far as back as you can go in the back of history and as far forward as you can ever go in the forward that you never reach the end of God. He is eternal from everlasting to everlasting. He says, "I am He." Verse 5, "The coastlands saw it and feared. The ends of the earth were afraid. They drew near, and they came. Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, 'Be of good courage.' So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil, saying, 'Is it ready for the soldering.' Then he fastened it with pegs, that it might not totter."

He's talking about the nations that turn to their idols. "But you, Israel--" contrasted to these pagan nations-- "you are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen--" now why does God call Jacob, Israel, the servant of God? You're going to find that a lot of things that-- a lot of titles that God has for His people, Israel, are also titles for Christ Himself. Israel is called a servant. When Moses came to the Pharaoh-- and if you look in Exodus chapter 7, verse 16, He says, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

Why does God save us? So that we could go on an all-expenses-paid vacation? Why does He save us? We are ultimately saved to serve. It says in Exodus 19:6, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Is a priest a person who just relaxes, or is a priest busy in making atonement? He's a mediator. He's bringing people to God. And we're to be a nation of people, kings and priests, that are bringing people to God, that are defending others.

You look again in Isaiah 44:1, "Hear now, Jacob, My servant, Israel, whom I have chosen." Was Jacob brought out of Egypt? Do you remember reading in Matthew where Jesus-- did He spent some time in Egypt? And God has this prophecy that says, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." Not only is that true that Jesus was called out of Egypt, Jacob was called out of Egypt. And you read Isaiah 41, verse 8, "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of My friend Abraham."

Now, Jesus reminds us, if you look in Matthew chapter 23, verse 11, "He who is greatest among you will be your servant." You look in Matthew 20, verse 27, "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many."

So in the same way He saved Israel, Jacob, to serve--and Jesus is an example of one who is among us to serve-- why are Christians saved? To serve. Does that diminish our happiness, or does the real happiness come from service?

You know, I remember reading this report a few years ago that, after Hurricane Katrina, a number of Christian churches basically sent missionary teams to go help rebuild different communities and facilities and infrastructure, and it was amazing how many of the families and the contractors that had donated this time, they said, "This was the best vacation of our life. We took our families to serve."

You know, I found that out in my own life. Karen and I, we've traveled many times, many parts of the world to do different, you know, mission projects, evangelistic programs, camp meetings, whatever, and sometimes we go to exotic countries, and it's great. We find, whenever we go somewhere to do some mission work, we have our best vacation. We went to Roatan years ago to-- we did both an evangelistic meeting, and we helped Maranatha in building some Sabbath School rooms, but we got in some spare time diving and spending some time for the people. That was a great trip.

And then we said, "We're going to take a pure vacation, no preaching, no responsibilities." You know, I won't tell you who said it, but I've heard, "Doug, every time you go somewhere, you always have to preach." It'd be nice if we just went on a vacation with no responsibilities. So we did that. Went to Hawaii--rained every day we were there. Matter of fact, it was historic rain. It rained every day in Hawaii for 40 days, including every day we were there. We went to the beach in the rain anyway, but we thought, "How much more fun we have when we take the family, and we go do a mission project.

And so, you know, Jesus said, "It's more blessed to give than receive," and if we look upon service as a blessing, that's where you find your greatest happiness. "He who seeks to save his life will lose it." It'll rain every day of your vacation. "But he who forsakes his life--" you give your life to Christ-- "that's when you find it." That's when you get the greatest blessing. So we, like Israel, like Christ, our purpose in life is to be His servants.

I remember--and this is a great message for churches, you know? A lot of people that come to church, come, they sit, they try to just soak it up. They may bring their offering, and then they leave, and you don't hear from them again for another week. They say, "Well, I kind of put in my time. I gave my offering." But they're not really involved in service. And, you know, God has really called us to serve. You've heard the statistics before that 80% of the work in any church is done by 20% of the people. You know, that's true. Eighty percent is usually done by twenty percent. Do you know, 80% of the giving is usually done by 20% of the people.

Are you aware that 20% of the carpet in your house gets 80% of the traffic? And I take that a different direction. It's called the 80-20 rule. It's true in many areas of life. You ever notice that? Your carpet, most of your carpets really good because you don't walk on it, but you have trails. Twenty percent of it, you'll wear out. Well, that's kind of the way it is in life. It seems like there's always 20% of the people doing 80% of the work.

I heard a story one time, years ago, this man was waiting for a stagecoach to take him from one city to another in the West, and he went to the office where they were selling the tickets, and it said, "First class, \$1, second-class ticket 50 cents, third class ticket, 25 cents. And he looked out the door, and he saw the stagecoach was just arriving, and all three groups, first class, second class, third class, climbed out of the same cabin and had the same seats. He thought, "Well, I'm dumb, but I'm not stupid. I'm going to get a third-class ticket." He thought he was pretty smart and he saved a lot of money.

So he got on board, and he's riding along, and he's looking at this fellow. He's got a first-class ticket, and he's thinking, "Hah, he's not very bright." He said, "He paid a dollar. I paid 25 cents. We're getting to the same place. We're riding in the same coach. I don't know how they can do that"-- until they came to the first steep hill, and they stagecoach driver, he said, "Okay, second-class passengers, get out and walk. First-class passengers, remain seated. Third-class passengers, get out and push."

Problem in most churches is we're full of first-class passengers, hah-ha. We need more third-class passengers that are willing to get out and push, amen? You know, Paul, in Romans chapter 1, he refers to himself as the servant of Jesus Christ. Matter of fact, in several of his letters, he refers to himself as a servant. Matter of fact, in some of your versions, it'll actually say, "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ."

Now, in the Bible, you know, now we think of people as employees. You've got the boss, and then you've got the employee, but in Bible times, those who served were not employees. It was a whole different mind-set. You didn't punch hours and have all these rights and all these safety measures, and, you know, it wasn't all for your convenience. You really were at the beck and call of your master 24 hours a day. And so, when we talk about serving the Lord, you don't punch a clock.

Sometimes as I'm traveling between one speaking engagement and another speaking engagement, I might be tired, and I'll get on the plane, and I'll think, "Well, I hope nobody sits in this seat next to me so that I can have a little more room to spread out and maybe do some writing or reading," and then someone will sit down next to me, and I'll hear a little voice say, "Doug, maybe you should witness to him. Strike up a conversation." And I'll think, "But Lord, I'm off duty." I'm going from--I'm a pastor, and I'm going from one speaking occasion to another speaking occasion, and when I get there, then I'll be back on duty. And God says, "You're never off duty. You're My servant. And, you know, you're to serve Me whenever an opportunity presents itself."

So--and that's the way it should be with a Christian. We don't say when we leave church, "Okay, I'm off the clock now," right? Matter of fact, that's when you really on the clock. I remember seeing this church that you drove onto the church premises, and it said-- it had a sign. It said, "Enter to learn," and then, as you left, it said, "Leave to serve." I know another church that, as people drove out-- we might do this. It's a good idea. As they left the parking lot, there's a bit sign that said, "You are now entering the mission field." And it kind of reminded everybody that your work really begins. You're here to kind of worship and learn, and then you leave, and you are in the mission field. You know, sometimes, even in the church you're in the mission field, right? But I think that just helps keep it in our minds that we are called to serve. It's not just about saving ourselves.

So, Isaiah often identifies God's people as his servants. Now go to chapter 42. I'm going to read the first six verses here. I think our lesson is telling us first seven verses. "Behold, My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights." Now, how many of you, in your Bibles, when you read verse 1, of Isaiah 42, the word "Servant" is capitalized? And it says, "My Elect One." It says, "Elect One" is capitalized. Why is that? Who is that Servant? That means it's a proper name. This is a special one. This is a prophecy about Jesus.

So you notice, chapter 41, it says, "Isaac, Jacob, My servant," and talks about Abraham His servant. Here it says, "Behold, My Servant," it's talking about the Messiah. "I put My Spirit upon Him, and He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, or raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." Matthew actually refers to this passage in one of his prophecies, saying that, you know, He would not make a stir. Jesus often, healed a person, and then, He wouldn't say anything about it.

Look in Matthew chapter 12, verse 14, and just-- so you can see that, if you have any doubts about who this is, the apostles tell us who this is. Matthew 12, verse 14, "Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known--" how often did Jesus heal somebody and say, "Now, don't tell anybody"? Like that man who was born blind-- not the man who was born blind. That's the sermon later today. The man who was full of leprosy. Jesus healed him, and He said, "Now, don't say anything."

So often, Jesus would heal a person, even some of the blind people, and He'd say, "Don't say anything." Why did He do that? Well, one, the--too much notoriety was going to hinder His work, and the other was just the meekness of Christ. Going on here, it says here in Matthew chapter 12, "He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He has sent forth justice to victory, and in His name the Gentiles will trust.'"

This is a very vivid prophecy. What does it mean when it says there in Isaiah chapter 42, "A bruised reed he will break"? And a little piece of grass, it might be bent a little bit, but He won't snap it off. He didn't want to do anything to discourage anybody. He was tenderhearted. "Smoking flax He will not quench." You know, as they sometimes carried fire from place to place, they did not have matches in Bible times, and they would get a piece of smoking flax, and they would keep it smoldering to get to the next place where they'd start a fire. Because I don't know if you've ever tried to start a fire, rubbing wood together, you know, you hear Boy Scouts can do that. It is really hard. You work up a sweat, and they didn't always have a steel and a flint, and it wasn't always easy, and they would try to keep some smoking flax going.

So the idea of "smoking flax He would not quench," it means He will not discourage the flame of hope in any heart. He will not take a little bruised reed and bend it. He cares about the poor and the weak. He cared about the

sinner and those who were discouraged. "He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail or be discouraged--" even though He encountered so much opposition-- "till He has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands--" meaning the Gentiles-- "will wait for His law."

So this is one of the prophecies that the Messiah-- His ministry was not just for the Jews, but it was principally that He was going to then take the message-- the Jews were to be a nation of kings and priests. Kings and priests for who? They were going to be a nation of priests to present the Word to the Gentiles, the whole world, in other words. And so this is just one of those vivid prophecies. "And the coastlands shall wait for His law. Thus says God--" I'm in Isaiah 42, verse 5-- "the Lord, who created the heavens and who stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: 'I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and I will hold Your hand. I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out from the prison, and those who sit in darkness from the prison house.'"

Now does that sound familiar? If you look in Isaiah chapter 61, when Jesus began His ministry, He quoted from a very similar passage. I forgot I put it in my notes here. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those who were bound."

What was the first sermon that Jesus preached when He stood up in Nazareth, in His hometown church? Isaiah 61, which is repeating the message from Isaiah 42. Tells about the ministry of the Lord to proclaim justice, to set the oppressed free, to liberate those who were in prison. All right, well, there's still a lot to cover here. And it says that, "My Spirit will be upon Him."

I want you to notice that. "Behold, My Servant whom I uphold. I put My Spirit upon Him." What does the word "Christ" mean? When I was first going to church and I heard them refer to Jesus Christ, it's like, "I'm Douglas Batchelor." I thought his last name was "Christ." I had no idea what that meant. I had heard it all my life, but I just assumed it was His name and that His father was "Joseph Christ," and His mother was "Mary Christ," and He was "Jesus Christ." The word "Christ," of course, is a title, and it means "Anointed." You know when they christen a ship? "Christos," it means "to anoint" something. When you christen a baby, they put a little water on the baby's forehead. When they splash a bottle of champagne or something on a ship, they christen the ship. It means "to anoint."

So it's simply the Greek word for "the anointed." "Messiah," is the Hebrew word. And so, when it says, "Jesus anointed," anointed with what? Martinelli's? Champagne? Water? Or the Holy Spirit? It's talking about Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit, and when was He anointed with the Holy Spirit? Let me read to you here in Acts chapter 10, verse 37, "that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth--" now, there, that would be the closer to His name, "Jesus of Nazareth." "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power--" at His baptism, the Spirit came down-- "who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

So when we pray for the Holy Spirit, what are you praying for? A good feeling or power to go about doing good and healing those who are oppressed by the devil? Shouldn't our ministry be the same as Christ's?

Why does God give us the Holy Spirit? "That you might be My witnesses." Isn't that what Jesus said? And so it's not just that we might say, "I've got the power of the Spirit, and I can now, you know, do miracles." It's really to preach the Gospel, to be witnesses for Christ.

All right, if we go to the next section here, it says, the "Persian 'Messiah.'" And you look in Isaiah chapter 44, and we're going to start with verse 26. This is really fascinating. Here it's foretelling-- well, first of all, Isaiah talks about the Babylonian captivity, but if you go to Isaiah chapter 44, verse 26, "Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers, who says to Jerusalem, 'You will be inhabited,' and to the cities of Judah, 'You will be built'--" now, why would He be saying, "Jerusalem, you'll be inhabited"?

You know, when Isaiah prophesied that, Jerusalem was already inhabited. See, Isaiah was looking beyond to the time when Jerusalem is uninhabited because the Babylonians have destroyed the temple and carried them all away. And he, in advance--Isaiah is one of the most amazing prophets because he prophesies very specific events with such incredible precision, and this is an example of that. He foretold that Babylon would destroy them, destroy the temple. They'd be carried away, but He said, "Don't be discouraged when this happens." Says, "'You will be inhabited.' The city of Judah, 'You will be built. You will raise up her waste places--'" it's saying that they would all be wasted by the enemy-- "Who says to the deep, 'Be dry,' and to the rivers, 'And I will dry up your rivers,' who says to Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd.'"

Now, Isaiah is making this prophecy 150 years before King Cyrus-- now, when you say, "Cyrus," there was one really great Persian king. He was Cyrus II, technically. If I say, "Nebuchadnezzar," we all think about King Nebuchadnezzar, but did you know, Nebuchadnezzar is really Nebuchadnezzar II? Nebuchadnezzar the Great was really the second guy by that name. And so, Cyrus the Great, who had one of the most vast empires--and, you know, I really enjoyed Bible study when I got into these prophecies because I was good at history, and I do remember studying the Persian Empire, and I do remember studying the Babylonian Empire back in New York City public school. So when I read these things in the Bible, I said, "Yeah, I remember that."

So he was this Persian general who conquered Babylon. How did he conquer Babylon? Well, he was--his beginnings were a little bit vague in history. Some of the historians contradict each other, but Herodotus, the historian says that he was from the Median mother. The Medes and the Persians kind of joined together, and he created an alliance, and he conquered Nabonidus, who was the real king of Babylon at that time. He had put his son Belshazzar in charge of things down in Babylon while he was off in another kingdom. That's why we think Belshazzar was king of Babylon. He was actually the vice regent. He was king while his father was gone. Cyrus defeated Nabonidus, and then he made his way towards Babylon.

Well, Babylon was an extremely large city that Nebuchadnezzar had built. Several walls, inner walls, outer walls. One historian says the walls were 60 miles around, though some historians contest that. And that there were hundreds of feet high, and there were outer walls and inner walls, and they all agree with that. They had outer gates and inner gates, and the Euphrates River ran under the wall because it was a main water supply for the city, and they had the walls built down by-- the waters had flood stage, so you couldn't really get under the walls, and it irrigated the whole city, provided water for the Hanging Gardens of Babylon that Nebuchadnezzar had built for his wife because she was from the mountains, and Babylon was a great plain, and he said, "I don't want you to be homesick for the mountains, so I will build you a mountain." And he built these man-made mountains and took all these exotic plants and had clever engineers pumping water up to irrigate waterfalls, and Herodotus said it was one of the wonders of the ancient world. So Babylon still had that glory even after Nebuchadnezzar died during the time of Belshazzar.

So they had all the food in the city. They had the storage of food, plus they could grow food in the city, and so when Cyrus came with his very big army and laid siege to show they were not afraid-- and historians even support this. It's not only in the Bible. It's in history. Says that the king of Babylon had a great festival to show they were not afraid to mock the Persians outside the gate.

Well, Cyrus made like he was withdrawing, and he took his soldiers, and he went out of sight, and he did something he had done once before. He made these canals to divert the Euphrates River. Left the dams in place, dug canals so that, at the right moment, they would break the dams and all the water normally in the river would run out of the river, and the water level would drop precipitously, and then they could send some men under the walls to sneak in at night, open the gates, and let the army in, and they did that. The historians said that.

Now, the Euphrates River today is a shadow of what it used to be. In fact, something you might find interesting, I've seen several articles-- right now, today, you can read them--that says Euphrates River is running dry. It's been drying up for years. I've seen them talking about this for years because Turkey has got, like, 40 dams up river. They dammed the Euphrates. They're taking all the water before it ever gets to Iraq, and then they've had some droughts, and there are so many places you could walk across the Euphrates where, before, they used to fly ships up and down those waters. It was a mighty river back then.

But, so Cyrus, he was able to divert it into some dry channels. They all broke these dirt dams. The water all went running out. His soldiers, just like clockwork, they went under the walls. The soldiers who were supposed to be guarding the inner city, they had left the inner gates open because they thought, "Well, we'll see when they come. We'll lock inner gates." They were drunk from the festival. This is the great feast that Belshazzar-- you read about in Daniel chapter 5-- they open the gates, they came in. They stormed the city. Matter of fact, the city was already taken by the time Belshazzar heard in the banqueting hall that they had breached the walls. That's how quickly they took the city.

Now, when you read what happened in history, and then you look at this, and it says, "I will raise up her waste places. Who says to the deep, 'Be dry.' And I will dry up your rivers." That's what Cyrus did. "Who says of Cyrus--" called him by name. I mean, that's pretty amazing. There were no Jews named Cyrus. Calls him by name. Says, "'He is My shepherd. He will perform My pleasure,' saying to Jerusalem, 'You will be built.'" Cyrus was the Persian king who let them go from Babylon, back to Israel, who not only gave them permission to build, he supported them in the project, gave them funds to do it, and to the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'" He was the one who initiated all these things happening.

What an amazing prophecy, and some people say, "Well, yeah, that part of Isaiah was written afterward." And there's some people that argue that, "Everything from Isaiah chapter 39, on, was written by a different Isaiah because how could he possibly know all that with such detail?" No, the scholars look at it in the theme, the style of Isaiah. There's nothing in Hebrew literature that shows there are two Isaiahs. It was one book. In fact, if you go to the Dead Sea Scrolls, all of this is one book, and they know that it was written before the time of Christ. Then you go to chapter 45. Keep in mind, the chapters were not there. They were added later.

So it's still continuing with the theme of Cyrus. "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him--" Now, Cyrus, in a way, is a type of Christ, and you might be thinking, "How can a pagan king be a type of Jesus? Well, he was a great liberator. He freed them from their enemies. He made it possible for them to go to the Promised Land. And any leader who makes it possible for God's people to go to the Promised Land who frees them from slavery is in a way a type of Christ. "Thus says the Lord to His anointed to Cyrus whose right hand I have held." God says, I'm the one who's giving you victory over these other nations-- "to subdue nations before him, to loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors."

What did we learn? That, when the general of Cyrus went under the walls with his men, they had left the inner bronze gates open. God had arranged that. "So the gates will not be shut." This is exactly what happened. "I will go before you and make the crooked places straight." Have you ever had a difficult day where God all of a sudden straightened all the crooked places for you? You say, "Lord, everything fell into place today? So many things could've gone wrong, but you made the crooked places straight. You made my going easy." God removed the obstacles. "I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and I will cut the bars of iron." They also had bars of iron on the other gate. "I will give you the treasures of darkness--" all the treasures that Babylon had accumulated.

Now, Greece was the bronze kingdom. Rome was the iron kingdom. Persia was what metal? Silver. And what was Babylon? Why was Babylon called the "Golden Kingdom"? Because Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar was the wealthiest. They had great treasures. Keep in mind, Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Egypt. Do you know how much gold they found in the pyramids? They've had a fabulous amount of gold in the city, and so he says, "I'll give you the treasures of darkness--" meaning the treasures that had been accumulated by the Babylonians. And, by the way, I'm in Isaiah chapter 45, verse 3, "I'll give you the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places, that you might know that I, the Lord, am the One who has called you by name." God is saying, "Cyrus, I am God who's calling you by name."

Now, what do you think it did for Cyrus when, after he conquered Babylon, when Daniel, or one of the other Hebrews, came up to him and said, "You want to see something? Let us show you this ancient scroll." Here we got a scroll. It's 150 years old, and look what our prophet said about you. We'll translate it for you. "And I am the One who called you by name." Can you see why Cyrus would be friendly to the Jews?"

You know, it's interesting when you talk to-- you read what the historians say about Cyrus, and they try to figure out what his religion was. And they say, "You know, we really can't figure out his religion. It doesn't seem clear that he was polytheistic or, you know, one of the other Middle Eastern religions, and it could be that, when he saw

that, he started worshipping the God of Israel because he actually told the priests when they went back to rebuild the city, he said, "Build the temple for the Lord--" and he uses the word Jehovah, and he said, "And pray for the king."

And so, he had at least acknowledged the God of Israel. "That you might know that I am the Lord--" I'm, again, in Isaiah chapter 45, verse 3, "That you might know that I'm the Lord who called you by name. I am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and for Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name." God is emphasizing that. "I have named you, though you've not known Me. I am the Lord, and there's no other. There is no Gods beside Me." He's telling Cyrus, "There is no other God beside Me. I will gird you, though you've not known Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, there is no God besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other."

Was there a time during the Persian kingdom when the king of Persia made a decree that everyone should worship the God of Daniel? You remember when Daniel was brought out of the lion's den during the time of Darius? He's part of the Medo-Persian kingdom. He issued a decree that nobody should speak against the God of Daniel. And so God said, "Through your kingdom, My name is going to be known everywhere." Did that come true?

Can you think of-- now, there's other people who were foretold by prophets by name. Did the angel foretell the name of Jesus? Yeah, and some others. I forget--what? Ishmael. I think the angel maybe gave His name and some others, but wasn't there another king where God foretold his name, long before he was born? Yeah, you can read about when God foretold King Josiah. Go to this prophet. He's an unnamed prophet, 1 Kings 13, verse 2. An unknown prophet goes to the King of Israel, and he prophesies against this false altar to Baal, and he cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, 'O altar, altar. Thus says the Lord, "Behold, a child, Josiah by name, will be born to the house of David, and on you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones will be burned on you,"' meaning that that altar would be defiled.

Did that happen? It did, hundreds of years later. Josiah was born, and he went up, and he did the very thing that the prophet of Judah foretold, and so, every now and then God is going to really spell things out very definitively, and he says, not only am I telling you what's going to happen, I'm going to tell you the name of the person who's going to do it.

You know, Moses gave a prophecy. He said, "There will be a prophet--" and this is Deuteronomy chapter 18. He says, "There's a Prophet that God is going to raise up a Prophet to you, who is like me, and He's called the Prophet." And he prophesies about Jesus. And they always called Him, "Who is that Prophet that would come that would be like Moses," and ultimately, He's identified as Jesus.

Then, finally, the last section here, I talked a little bit about "Hope in Advance," that section already, and God told them, "Though you're carried away, I'm giving you promises in advance. The Babylonians will carry you away. Don't get discouraged. You will come back again. You know, there--how many of here remember there were some books that went out years ago in the Adventist Church about Dan. It was called "Dare to Dan," and I hope I'm saying the title right. And this guy would invite people to meetings, and he would explain prophecy to them, and it was just an incredible example.

And one of the things is that he foretells deliverance before it ever happens. You can read in Leviticus 26, for instance, Leviticus 26, verse 40, he says, "If My people are unfaithful and they're carried off by their enemies, if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers--" this is what Daniel did in chapter 9, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, then I'll remember my covenant with Jacob, my covenant with Isaac, my covenant with Abraham, and I'll remember their land," and he says, "I will bring them back."

So God, in advance, way back in the time of Moses, said, "If you're carried away by unfaithfulness, I will bring you back." What did Solomon say during his dedication prayer? "And if your people by unfaithfulness are carried off by their enemies, if they pray towards this place," Daniel literally prayed towards Jerusalem, said, "I will hear their prayer. I will bring them back again." God gives us hope in advance in his Word.

And then, finally, you read in Isaiah 49, about the feeling and suffering servant. He says, "Listen, O coastlands to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar. The Lord has called Me from the womb. From the matrix of my Mother He has made mention of My name. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of His hand, He has hidden Me, and He's made Me like a polished shaft. In His quiver He has hidden Me."

So He said, "You know, I even foretold-- Jeremiah says, God said, "I've called You from the womb." Jesus was foretold in advance. Moses was foretold, "O Israel, in whom I will be glorified," and you go down to verse 5, "And now says the Lord, Who formed Me in the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him, for I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength. Indeed He says, 'Is it too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel. I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles--" this is a prophecy of Jesus the Servant-- "that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Oh, wonderful prophecies in Isaiah that we can look back now and say, "How could they miss it because they were all so clear?"

Friends, I think we have run out of time for today's study. For those who are joining us late, I want to remind you that we have a free offer. It's called, "Christ's Human Nature." And you can get this simply by calling 866-788-3966. Ask for offer number 729, and you can also get it by texting "SH017" to 40544. This is for North America. God bless you. We'll study His Word together again next week.

announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Ashley: I grew up in Northern New Jersey, just about 35 minutes out of New York City, and I grew up in a famous family. And so, my father played for the New York Giants for nine years. That's how we ended up where we were. He also played for the San Francisco 49ers, and he was in the Pro Bowl. He won two Super Bowls. And I also had an older brother who played professional baseball, so I had a lot to live up to.

Everything we did was based around sports. That was my life, and I loved it, but inside I was--I struggled daily with insecurity, lacking confidence. You know, I would look at myself in the mirror and not-- and would not see good things about myself. I started to put all my energy into soccer, and I decided that I was going to go far with that.

So I ended up getting a scholarship to play in the University of Miami. I was being pulled in these, like, two directions of, you know, wanting to live this party lifestyle with my teammates, and I was so engulfed in soccer and school, but I also had this, like, strong yearning desire to serve God, and I was just struggling to figure out the balance and how to do that. I was in Sin City, in Miami, and I couldn't-- I felt like I was swimming upstream. And I just felt like I couldn't breathe. I had everything everyone would've wanted. I had everything. I had a scholarship to pay for school. I was playing a sport. I was the captain of my team. I was in Miami. I was--I had a great family. I had a lot of friends.

But where was God? It was--all of that is meaningless unless I had Him. And the lifeline that He gave me was this soft whisper in my ear, saying, "Go." I just remember, "Go." So I decided to go, and I spent two months in Kenya and two months in Uganda, and God was saving me by sending me there. It was God's prescription for my life, for my existence.

When I returned from Africa, I went back to school. I finished school, finished soccer. I went to the University of Tennessee to get my master's when I met my husband. Our motto in life was we wanted to live in reckless abandon for our Creator and whatever that was, whatever that looked like, and, you know, we've traveled, and we've done mission work, but we've mostly been in Tennessee, and when we spent the summer apart a year after that we were married, and it was the summer of 2015, when we came back together, he's like, "I have some things I want to share with you. I want you to listen to this." And we were on a 14-hour car ride, and he just started playing this "Prophecy Code" all the way back from 2005, and it was so clear, and I just was comprehending it so well.

You know, after a couple, like, three or four, I was like, "I need a break. My mind is going to, like, explode from all this, like, information overload," and everything that I thought I had known about the Bible and about Scripture is just completely different. I was in shock. Everything that I was hearing, it was like Scripture is proving Scripture is proving Scripture. My heart was, like, changing in that car ride because it's like learning more about God than I ever had before.

After that car ride and after listening to the whole, "Prophecy Code," my life was completely changed. He's become more real to us than He ever had been before, and that has pushed us to disciple and to minister to others and share with them what we know. My name is Ashley, and I want to thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Dan: One particular evening, we're searching through the channels and happened to find a program called, "Amazing Facts with Pastor Doug Batchelor." Some of the things that he was talking about were very interesting and intrigued me.

Female: As Dan began to continue to watch "Amazing Facts" with this Doug Batchelor, this caveman that had an incredible story, my world was beginning to change. It's been turned upside down. I was resistant. I think hit me was really the testimony of Pastor Doug. This was a real person with a real story that had had some things in his lifetime that maybe I didn't experience, but he was real. His journey was real. He was honest about wanting to share and giving that light to other people so they too could have more light.

That's when we got the cancer diagnosis, and nobody wants that "C" word, "cancer," and then to find out that it's aggressive, and sometimes people get to wait with prostate cancer, but we didn't have that opportunity. He's in surgery, and doctor comes out, and I knew something was wrong. Come find out that my husband has had a stroke. So we go about midnight and have an MRI, and they confirmed that it truly was a stroke, and he was going to be okay.

Dan: Within one year and a half, I had a major heart attack, cancer, aggressive cancer, and a stroke. I really was at the lowest point. I didn't know what I was going to do. We had rehabs scheduled after I was dismissed from the hospital.

Female: And I watched him walk out of a facility with a cane that, two weeks before, he couldn't even walk into.

Dan: God knew ahead of time that I was going to be going through all of this, and I truly believe that it was His hand that brought the Amazing Facts and the additional light that I was getting, that it helped take my mind off of the circumstances at the time and in a way that I don't think anything else could.

Female: It's so comforting to know that we have a Christ that loves us so much and will always hold us.

Dan: I cannot thank the people enough who support ministries like this. Because of them, I am one of those lives that have been changed. And I can only thank God for leading me through His providence to that program. My name is Dan. Thank you for changing my life.