

Isaiah 41 - Idolatry on Trial

III. Prophecies of comfort (Is 40:1—66:24)

- (1) Promises of Israel's deliverance from Babylonian captivity because of God's attributes (Is 40:1—48:22)
 - (B) Deliverance based upon God's control over history (41:1-29)
 - (a) God predicts Cyrus (the near prophecy) (41:1-7)
 - (b) God predicts His servant Israel's ultimate victory (41:8-20)
 - (c) God predicts the future unlike idols (41:21-29)

Isaiah 41

(B) Deliverance based upon God's control over history (41:1-29)

(a) God predicts Cyrus (the near prophecy) (41:1-7)

1 "Listen to Me in silence, you coastlands, And let the peoples gain new strength; Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let's come together for judgment.

1 "Coastlands, listen to Me in silence, And let the peoples gain new strength; Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let us come together for judgment.

1 "Be silent before me, you coastlands, and let the people renew their strength! Let them come forward, then let them speak together— let's draw near for a ruling.

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 has stirred one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He turns nations over to him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, Like the wind-driven chaff with his bow.

2 "Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow.

2 Who has aroused victory from the east, and has summoned it to his service, and has handed over nations to him? Who brings down kings, and turns them into dust with his sword, into windblown stubble with his bow?

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 pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.

3 "He pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.

3 And who pursues them and moves on unscathed by a path that his feet don't know?

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

4 "Who has performed and accomplished *it*, Summoning the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

4 "Who has performed and accomplished *it*, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

4 Who has performed and carried this out, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—the first and will be with the last—I am the One!"

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.

- Note the series on "Jehovah God," a rebuttal for the Jehovah's Witnesses (Cf. Is 41:4; 44:6; 44:8; Rev 1:11,17; 22:13; (then) 2:8!)]

Cyrus the Great

- Victories and rapid growth ascribed to God (v1-4)
- Effect upon the nations (v5-7)
- Since he was raised by God, Israel should expect good, not evil (v8-20)
- Contemptuous challenge to the idols the nations are trusting (v21-24)

5 The coastlands have seen and are afraid; The ends of the earth tremble; They have approached and have come.

5 The coastlands have seen and are afraid; The ends of the earth tremble; They have drawn near and have come.

5 "The coastlands have looked and are afraid; the ends of the earth have drawn near together and come forward.

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

6 Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, "Be strong!"

6 Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, "Be strong!"

6 Each helps his neighbor, saying to each other, 'Be strong!'

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

7 So the craftsman encourages the smelter, *And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, "It is good"; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter.*

7 So the craftsman encourages the smelter, *And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, "It is good"; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter.*

7 The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, and the hammersmith encourages the one who strikes the anvil. He says about the welding, 'It's good!' and he reinforces it with nails so that it won't topple."

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 soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

(b) God predicts His servant Israel's ultimate victory (the distant prophecy)
(41:8-20)

8 "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of **Abraham My friend**,

8 "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend,

8 "But as for you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I've chosen, the offspring of my friend Abraham—

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

- "...Abraham My friend" - Is 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; James 2:23

9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth And called from its remotest parts, And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you.

9 you whom I encouraged from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corners, and told you, 'You're my servant, I've chosen you and haven't cast you aside.'

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.

- God has NOT cast off Israel (Rom 9-11)

10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand!'

10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

10 Don't be afraid, because I'm with you; don't be anxious, because I am your God. I keep on strengthening you; I'm truly helping you. I'm surely upholding you with my victorious right hand."

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 uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

- God's righteousness, not ours

The Defeat of the Nations

11 "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish.

11 "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish.

11 "Look! All who are enraged at you will be put to shame and disgraced; those who contend with you will all die.

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 "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent.

12 "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent.

12 Those who quarrel with you will be as nothing; those who fight you like nothing at all!"

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.

- Unconditional covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:3)

13 "For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'

13 "For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'

13 "For I am the LORD your God, who takes hold of your right hand, who says to you, 'Don't be afraid. I'll help you.'

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

Israel Victorious

14 "Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you people of Israel; I will help you," declares the LORD, "and your Redeemer is the **Holy One of Israel**.

14 "Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you," declares the LORD, "and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

14 Don't be afraid, you little worm Jacob, and you insects of Israel! I myself will help you,' declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

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.

- "...Holy One of Israel" - appears 7x in these chapters; the concept and doctrine of Redemption underlies the entire NT

The last phrase of v14 reveals an interesting secret. The word LORD refers to the Hebrew JHVH (YHWH), or God the Father. But the Hebrew word for "redeemer" is only used for the kinsman redeemer, the Son. And even though both Father and Son are in view, God had Isaiah write "*I myself will help you.*" It's one of the many hints in Scripture that Jesus was being literally accurate when He said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Not just one in purpose, or from one family, but literally one. As He told Philip, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

15 "Behold, I turned you into a new, sharp threshing sledge with double edges; You will thresh the mountains and pulverize *them*, And make the hills like chaff.

15 "Behold, I have made you a new, sharp threshing sledge with double edges; You will thresh the mountains and pulverize *them*, And will make the hills like chaff.

15 "See, I'm making you into a new, sharp, and multi-tooth threshing sledge. You'll thresh and crush the mountains, and make the hills like chaff.

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 "You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away, And the storm will scatter them; But you will rejoice in the LORD, You will boast in the Holy One of Israel.

16 "You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away, And the storm will scatter them; But you will rejoice in the LORD, You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.

16 You'll winnow them, and the wind will lift them up, and a tempest will blow them away. Then you'll rejoice in the LORD, and you'll make your boast in the Holy One of Israel."

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.

The Provision for the Remnant [Remnant of Israel: Past, Present, Future](#)

God will miraculously provide food and water when Tribulation Jews flee to the wilderness, just as He did in the wilderness of Sinai. These provisions will cause them to reconsider their relationship with God (Cf. Is 65:8-16).

17 "The poor and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongues are parched with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer them Myself; As the God of Israel I will not abandon them.

17 "The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them.

17 "As for the poor, the needy, those seeking water— when there is none and their tongues are parched from thirst— I, the LORD, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, won't abandon them.

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 on the bare heights, And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land fountains of water.

18 "I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water.

18 I'll open up rivers on the barren heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I'll turn the desert into a pool of water, and the parched land into springs of water.

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.

19 "I will put the **cedar** in the wilderness, The **acacia**, the **myrtle**, and the **olive** tree; I will place the juniper in the desert, Together with the elm tree and the cypress,

19 "I will put the cedar in the wilderness, The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree; I will place the juniper in the desert Together with the box tree and the cypress,

19 I'll put cedar trees in the wilderness, along with acacia, myrtle, and olive trees. I'll plant cypresses in the desert— box trees, and pine trees together—

19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

— "...cedar...acacia...myrtle...olive" - all trees indigenous to Judea; other trees show up after Babylonian captivity

— Thus, the use of these trees helps demonstrate the timing of the book being prior to the Babylonian captivity

20 So that they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

20 That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

20 all so that people may see and recognize, perceive, consider, and comprehend at the same time, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and that the Holy One of Israel has created it."

20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

Just as in the wilderness of Sinai God miraculously provided food and water for Israel, He will do so again in the Tribulation when the Jews flee to the wilderness. These miraculous provisions will cause them to reconsider their relationship to God. In another passage, Is 65:8-16, the prophet describes how on one hand God will supply for the Faithful Remnant, whereas He will withhold provisions from the apostates. This passage makes clear that while the apostates will be allowed to suffer and die, the Faithful Remnant will be divinely protected and provided with food and water. By this means the Faithful Remnant will be able to survive the persecutions and devastations of the Great Tribulation.

(c) God predicts the future unlike idols (41:21-29)

21 "Present your case," the LORD says. "Bring forward your evidence," The King of Jacob says.

21 "Present your case," the LORD says. "Bring forward your strong *arguments*," The King of Jacob says.

21 "Put forward your case!" says the LORD. "Submit your arguments!" says Jacob's King.

21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

22 Let them bring *them* forward and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former *events*, declare what they *were*, So that we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming;

22 Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former *events*, declare what they *were*, That we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming;

22 Let them approach and ask us, 'What will happen? As to the former things, what were they? Tell us, so that we may consider them and know. Or the latter things or the things to come— let us hear.

22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

- God challenges evil spirits! (v21-24)

— Prophets of God are 100% right 100% of the time. God describes things to come to prove that He is God.

23 Declare the things that are going to come afterward, So that we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may be afraid and fear together.

23 Declare the things that are going to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together.

23 Tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods! Yes, do something good or something bad, so we may hear and gaze at it together."

23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

24 Behold, you are less than nothing, And your work is less than nothing! He who chooses you is an abomination.

24 Behold, you are of no account, And your work amounts to nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.

24 "Look! You and your work are less than nothing; whoever finds you pleasing is disgusting."

24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

The Sentence

25 "I have put one from the north into motion, and he has come; From the rising of the sun he will call on My name; And he will come upon rulers as *upon* mortar, As the potter treads on clay."

25 "I have aroused one from the north, and he has come; From the rising of the sun he will call on My name; And he will come upon rulers as *upon* mortar, Even as the potter treads clay."

25 "You are stirring up one from the north, and they are coming from the rising of the sun; and he will be called by his name. Rulers will arrive like mud; just like a potter, he will trample the clay.

25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treadeth clay.

26 Who has declared *this* from the beginning, that we might know? Or from former times, that we may say, "*He is right!*"? There was no one at all who declared, There was no one at all who proclaimed, There was no one at all who heard your words.

26 Who has declared *this* from the beginning, that we might know? Or from former times, that we may say, "*He is right!*"? Surely there was no one who declared, Surely there was no one who proclaimed, Surely there was no one who heard your words.

26 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could ask, 'Is it right?' Indeed, no one told of this, no one made an announcement, and no one heard your words:

26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declarereth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.

27 "Previously *I said* to Zion, 'Behold, here they are.' And to Jerusalem, 'I will give a messenger of good news.'

27 "Formerly *I said* to Zion, 'Behold, here they are.' And to Jerusalem, 'I will give a messenger of good news.'

27 First, to Zion: "There is slumber." And to Jerusalem: "I'll send a messenger with good news."

27 The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

28 "But when I look, there is no one, And there is no counselor among them Who, if I ask, can give an answer.

28 "But when I look, there is no one, And there is no counselor among them Who, if I ask, can give an answer.

28 But when I look, there is no one— among them there's no one to give counsel, no one to give an answer when I ask them.

28 For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

29 "Behold, all of them are false; Their works are nothing, Their cast metal images are wind and emptiness.

29 "Behold, all of them are false; Their works are worthless, Their molten images are wind and emptiness.

29 See, none of them exist, and their deeds are nothing. Their metal images are only wind and confusion."

29 Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.