

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY
Part XXXVIII: God's Depression-Averting Deliverance By Relying On His Past Deliverances
(Isaiah 51:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. There are times when God's promises to us, as marvelous as they may seem to be to our minds, are nevertheless difficult to trust due to the depth of discouragement or defeat we may then be experiencing.
- B. God appealed to the significant recollections of His past deliverances in Israel's **history** to spur her faith into action in a treatise to encourage Israel in her difficult Babylonian Captivity:

II. God's Depression-Averting Deliverance By Relying On His Past Deliverances, Isaiah 51:1-23.

- A. To encourage the Hebrew captives in the coming Babylonian Captivity, God through His prophet, Isaiah urged Israel to focus on her divine origin as a nation as **evidence** that God could be **BELIEVED** to **restore** them **again** to the Promised Land, Isaiah 51:1-3:
 - 1. By the words, "rock" and the "hole," Isaiah referred to Abraham and Sarah out of whom God produced the Hebrew people by way of **divine miracle**, Isaiah 51:1-2b; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, fn. to Isaiah 51:1-3.
 - 2. As Abraham and Sarah had unsuccessfully exhausted all self-help efforts to rectify their childlessness (in their trying to produce an heir in Sarah's giving her mistress, Hagar to Abraham to bear Ishmael), so God was again prepared to help Israel out of her Babylonian Captivity when all hope in human effort seemed futile, Isaiah 51:1-2b with Genesis 16:1-16.
 - 3. Even though Abraham was just **one** man, God made a **nation** from him in a miraculous way, Isa. 51:2c.
 - 4. Based on this **precedent**, God urged the remnant in Babylon to take heart as God Who had previously formed Israel from Abraham and Sarah when they were helpless to produce a child together would yet cause even the desert of the Promised Land to bloom, Isaiah 51:3.
- B. Hence, the Lord focused on His great ability to fulfill this promise of national restoration, Isaiah 51:4-10:
 - 1. God promised to restore equity and righteousness in judgment not only for Israel, but for the distant Gentile lands like the world's islands, Isaiah 51:4-5.
 - 2. He promised His salvation would outlast the universe's dramatic conclusion, Isa. 51:6; 2 Peter 3:10-13.
 - 3. God likened the Babylonian overlords of His captive people to grass that perishes before His great, divine power, Isaiah 51:7-8, 12.
 - 4. Reminded of God's great saving power, Isaiah addressed God to arouse His powers used in delivering Israel from Egypt (in mythical reference to the slaying of the sea dragon, Rahab), Isaiah 51:9-10:
 - a. In ancient Sumerian, Indian, Anatolian, Mesopotamian, Grecian and Canaanite lore about the origin of the universe, a sea monster that represses creation is slain by a hero god so as to release forces for life, forces controlled by the hero god, cf. Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, p. 6.
 - b. The books of Job and Isaiah refer to this mythical monster as Rahab or Leviathan, Ibid., p. 10-11.
 - c. As such, **without condoning paganistic views of origins**, Isaiah 51:9 *poetically* alludes to this sea monster to show God had conquered Egypt ("Rahab") in delivering His people through destroying Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea and forming Israel as a nation! (Bible Know. Com., O.T., p. 1105)
 - d. Hence, Isaiah urged God to rouse those same divine powers used to part the Red Sea and save Israel in destroying her Egyptian overlords in order to save Israel from Babylon, Isaiah 51:10 with 51:9.
- C. God continued through Isaiah to describe His promises of fully restoring the captive Hebrew people to the Promised Land from their future Babylonian Captivity, Isaiah 51:11-23:
 - 1. God promised renewal for His people as they returned along the way from Babylon to Israel, 51:11-16.
 - 2. He promised Babylon would end up in the dust where Jerusalem would be restored, Isaiah 51:17-23.

Lesson: God encouraged His **FUTURE** downtrodden, captive people in Babylon by **REMINDING** them of His **SIGNIFICANT PRECEDENTS** of delivering them in their **DISTANT PAST**!

Application: (1) If struggling with fears and doubts about God's faithfulness to us due to intense trials we might face, **GOD** would have us review how He has **HELPED** us in the **PAST** as the **BASIS** of what He will **DO** for us in the **PRESENT** and **FUTURE**! (2) We can use such a testimony to encourage other believers who are struggling with doubts and fears due to great trials of the faith that they face!