

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LX: The True God's Provisions For Israel Versus The Gentiles' Loss Due To Their False Gods (Isaiah 41:1-29)

I. Introduction

- A. When Isaiah predicted Israel's return from Babylonian Captivity, God's people would have spent seventy years in captivity in part for the sin of having departed from the Lord for false Gentile idols, 2 Chronicles 36:14-21.
- B. Thus, as God planned to restore Israel to the Land after her captivity, it offered a great opportunity for Him to show His vast superiority to the Gentiles' false idols in blessing Israel in spite of her long captivity while judging the Gentiles in spite of their strength, what Isaiah 41:1-29 predicts. We study it for our edification:

II. The True God's Provisions For Israel Versus The Gentiles' Loss Due To Their False Gods, Isa. 41:1-29.

- A. The Lord confronted the Gentile nations in Isaiah 41:1-7, exposing their hapless fear and vulnerability to the relentless conquests of Persia's future king Cyrus in spite of the trust the Gentiles would put in their idols:
 - 1. God confronted the Gentile nations in judgment, challenging them to renew their strength if they thought they could handle the Lord's judgment, Isaiah 41:1.
 - 2. That judgment would involve the Lord's stirring up Cyrus king of Persia (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1094) to conquer the nations in judgment, fulfilling Isaiah's 150-year-old prophecy to do so, Isa. 41:2-4; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 968, "Intr. to the Book of Isaiah;" Z. P. E. B., v. One, p. 1054).
 - 3. Isaiah predicted that efforts by these nations to make alliances to stem Cyrus' conquests would fail much as they relied upon, created and set up weak, helpless idols in which they trusted for victory, Isa. 41:5-7.
- B. In sharp contrast to these Gentile nations, however, the Lord addressed Israel, claiming He would richly edify, restore and renew her, bringing her back from captivity with great (eventual) Messianic blessing, Isa. 41:8-20:
 - 1. The personal pronoun "you" in Isa. 41:8a is written in the emphatic position before the verb, so God strongly contrasts Israel with the hapless Gentiles facing judgment. The Lord claimed Israel His chosen, favored servant need not fear or be dismayed like the godless Gentiles, for God was her Lord, and He would greatly support her in bringing her out of captivity and blessing her, Isaiah 41:9-10.
 - 2. Indeed, Israel's Gentile foes would be ashamed, disgraced and utterly defeated (Isa. 41:11), becoming even as nothing (Isa. 41:12), for Israel's true God was with her to make her dominate the Gentiles, Isa. 41:13-16.
 - 3. Though Israel's poor and needy were helpless in themselves (Isa. 41:17), God would richly bless them and reverse their current oppressed state greatly to bless them to the glory of the Lord Himself, Isa. 41:18-20.
- C. Accordingly, God challenged the Gentile nations to prove whether their idol gods had any power as deities like He had, thus exposing the futility of these false gods in comparison to Israel's true God, Isaiah 41:21-29:
 - 1. Returning to address the Gentile nations under judgment, the Lord challenged them to set forth their arguments in favor of their false gods in whom they trusted in comparison to Him as true God, Isa. 41:21.
 - 2. Since God had just predicted the future of the nations and of Israel with Isaiah's prophecy, He challenged the Gentiles' false idols to match that predictive ability, which of course they could not do, Isa. 41:22-23a.
 - 3. God even asked these idols to accomplish anything, be it good or bad that could produce dismay or cause people to fear like the real God could do, Isaiah 41:23b.
 - 4. However, the idols were less than nothing, making those who relied on them detestable, Isaiah 41:24.
 - 5. God then referred to His prediction of bringing Cyrus king of Persia to conquer Gentile rulers (Isa. 41:25), noting that only the true God and no idol could predict this event 150 years in advance, Isaiah 41:26-28.
 - 6. Thus, all the Gentile idols were judged to be false, their deeds amounting to nothing, and the idol images but wind and desolation, Isaiah 41:29. The term "wind" pictures "emptiness of thought" and "desolation" the "uninhabitable condition of the earth" in "Genesis 1:2b," Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. III, p. 105. Thus, there is no meaning, no purpose to false gods and their graven images, the idols, Ibid.

Lesson: (1) *Only Scripture's God accurately predicts all future events, even those that currently seem impossible, equipping us to discern Him from all false gods and idols, Deut. 18:20-22.* (2) *He is to be trusted to be able and willing to help His people in their trials.* (3) *God's people must abandon all idols, and seek Him alone, 1 Jn. 5:21.*

Application: (1) *May we discern the predictions of the true God from all false imitators in that God's predictions alone are always completely fulfilled.* (2) *May we trust God to be able and willing to help us in our oppression, and* (3) *may we cleave to God versus idols for blessing.*