

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LXIX: God's Supremacy Over All Idols And Idolaters (Isaiah 44:6-23)

I. Introduction

- A. Idolatry was a main cause for God's sending Israel into captivity in Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:14-21), and once in Babylon, Israel was exposed to many pagan idols (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Isaiah 44:9-20), so the Lord wanted Israel to learn about His infinite superiority to idols once she arrived in captivity in Babylon.
- B. Isaiah 44:6-23 provides God's teaching to captive Israel on this truth, and since even we believers today struggle with idols of various kinds (1 John 5:21), we view Isaiah 44:6-23 for our insight and edification:

II. God's Supremacy Over All Idols And Idolaters, Isaiah 44:6-23.

- A. In establishing His supremacy over idols, the Lord emphasized His uniqueness as the true God, Isaiah 44:6-8:
 - 1. God called Himself Israel's King and Redeemer, what no idol could be, for He was Israel's Creator (Gen. 1-2) and Deliverer from idolatrous Egypt in conquering all of its idols, Exodus 12:12; Isaiah 44:6a.
 - 2. The Lord called Himself the First and the Last, namely, the "Eternal One" (B. K. C., O. T., p. 1098), that beside Him there was no God [as all idols come from resources in creation that God made], Isaiah 44:6b.
 - 3. God's prophecies of Israel's future blessings, unique among all deities, should cause Israel not to dread her future as she abode in Babylonian Captivity held there by a humanly seeming unconquerable nation (Isa. 44:7-8a), for she had witnessed God's fulfillment of His past prophecies (Isaiah 44:8b), and there was no God but the true God Who could prophecy like this -- God knew of no such other deity! (Isaiah 44:8c)
- B. God also stated how unprofitable idols were for those involved in idolatry, Isaiah 44:9: idolatry does nothing profitable for its practitioners, but only exposes them as being spiritually blind and ignorant, what can only bring them shame in the end. (Ibid.)
- C. The Lord then explained how idolatry is futile, noting idol makers were weak, spiritually blind men, 44:10-20:
 - 1. Idol makers either fashion or cast idols in an occupation that profits nothing, for all such craftsmen will eventually be ashamed and terrified when their false gods are proved not to be able to aid them, 44:10-11.
 - 2. After forming an idol, the craftsman becomes hungry and his strength fails if he drinks no water, so if the maker of the idol is himself weak, his idol is no mighty provider of livelihood for anyone, Isaiah 44:12!
 - 3. The Lord then showed the futility of the idol making process: the idol craftsman takes great care in how he forms the idol, and he even carefully selects what wood he chooses for carving the idol, or he even nurtures a certain tree to grow just right so he can use it to make an idol, only then to cut the tree down and take part of the wood to use in the fire to warm himself or to bake his bread and use the other part of the wood to form an idol to which he then bows down to petition to deliver him as his god, Isaiah 44:13-17!
 - 4. However, the craftsman is blind to this illogical move in his darkness, not thinking about how futile it is for him to burn half of the wood in the fire for his livelihood needs and to bow down and worship the other half of the same block of wood! (Isaiah 44:18-20)
- D. Finally, the Lord contrasted the futile lives of idolaters with the lives of His believing people, Isaiah 44:21-23:
 - 1. Opposite the idolaters who had no hope in their futile, man-made idols, Israel was to recall that God had formed her as her true Creator, that she was His servant, that she would not be forgotten by the Lord in contrast to all hapless idols that cannot function like the Lord, Isaiah 44:21.
 - 2. In addition, Israel's true God had blotted out her transgressions like a cloud and her sins like a mist, what no idol could do, so He urged her to return to Him as He had redeemed her, Isaiah 44:22.
 - 3. In great contrast to the hopelessness, insecurity and lack of confident joy in the Gentiles world of pagan idols, Israel was to sing and shout with God's whole creative order [in the Messianic Kingdom], for God would have redeemed her and would be glorified in her, Isaiah 44:23. "In contrast with the other nations' spiritual darkness, Israel will live in the light of God's glory," Ibid., p. 1099.

Lesson: *Idolatry in every way is an illogical exercise in futility in sharp contrast to the logically consistent, fulfilling worship of the only true God Who alone is Eternal God, Creator, Sovereign Prophet and Fulfiller of future events, the gracious Redeemer and Savior of His people from their sin.*

Application: *May we keep ourselves from idolatry, from whatever replaces the ONLY true God relative to gaining fulfillment, for idolatry is an exercise in futility in sharp contrast to our All-Sufficient Lord, 1 John 5:21!*