



Isaiah 40-41

Tape #7260
Isaiah 40-41
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now to the prophecy of Isaiah, beginning with chapter forty? They say that repetition is the key to learning. So, we will tell you once more that the book of Isaiah is often called the miniature Bible. Sixty six chapters equating to the sixty six books in the Bible. Isaiah is divided into two definite sections. Thirty nine chapters with the old twenty seven, and the new. Even as the Bible is divided into two distinct sections. Thirty nine chapters in the old testament, twenty seven in the new. So you have these parallels between Isaiah, and the whole Bible.

Now as you enter into this second section, which would be chapter forty, it is like entering into the new testament. It is a whole new tone. There's a whole new excitement, as we contemplate now, more fully, and completely, the promised Messiah, and the glorious age, and kingdom that He will set up! The first part of Isaiah would be as man relating to God through the law. Now we begin to relate to God through His grace towards us in Christ Jesus. So the second section of Isaiah begins with the words...

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God (40:1).

So the prophet is commanded to comfort the people. Now he has been going through some heavy prophesies. There are difficult days that are facing these people. They are going to be carried away to Babylon. They are going to be experiencing a period of captivity, and they are going to be judged for their iniquity, and their turning their backs on God. But now the, the word of the Lord is, "Comfort. There's a new day. Your sins have been taken care of."

So speak comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned (40:2):

The pardon of the iniquity through the work of Jesus Christ, who made provisions whereby God can forgive you your sins. What a comforting thought to know that every sin, every wrong thing that I have done, is totally, and completely forgiven. Atoned for by Jesus Christ, pardoned because of His shed blood. What words of comfort! My sin, oh the bliss of this wonderful thought! My sins, not in part, but the whole were nailed to the cross, and I bear them no more! It is well! It is well with my soul! Oh what comfort, to know that there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus! That I can relate now to God, in full confidence, through the work of Jesus Christ. Oh the glorious comfort in our hearts! So, "Speak comfortably", the Lord said.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, "Now the God of all comfort you, with the comfort wherewith we were comforted, when we were in our afflictions". Paul said, "I know what it is to be comforted of God, and now may God comfort you with that same comfort that I experienced when I was going through the trials." Then Paul brought up something quite interesting. He said, "If I was afflicted, it was really for your sake, that I might experience the comfort of God in my affliction, so that I would be able to comfort you then, in your affliction."

You know there are a lot of things that we go through in life, and we come out the other side, we say, "Now why did I have to go through that?" We can't, at the moment, see any good, practical purpose of our having to go through that particular trial, or experience. But while we were going through, we did experience the grace of God, and the comfort of God in our hearts, and God brought us through. Then, later on, we come across someone who's going through a similar experience, and we're able to say, "You know what? I went through that. This is the scripture that God gave to me, and this is the way God worked in my life, and this is what the Lord wrought in my life through this." You're able then to comfort with the comfort wherewith you were comforted. You realize, "Oh Lord, I had to go through that whole mess so I could deal with this guy?" So be it. "Her iniquity is pardoned."

for she hath received of the Lord's hand ample for all of her sins (40:2).

Now in the Old Testament, if you were brought to the judge, and you had stolen an ox from your

neighbor, you would have to recompense double for what you had taken. So here is the idea, you have paid the recompense, you've done the double, you, you've paid.

So now we get the prophecy of John the Baptist. How do we know that this is the prophecy of John the Baptist, because Matthew gives to us a commentary on this particular verse. He tells us that Isaiah was speaking of the ministry of John the Baptist. You know the new testament makes one of the finest commentaries you can get on the old testament. So...

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight [the desert] in the desert a highway for our God. For every valley shall be exalted, [or filled] and every mountain and hill will be made low: the crooked will be made straight, and the rough places plain (40:3-4).

Now it was the custom in the Orient, that when a king was to visit the province, that they would go out, and they would work on the highways, repairing them. They would remove all of the debris, they would straighten the, the paths, they would fill in the gullies, they would level out as much as possible, the raised places. They, they tried to, to prepare the path for the king. "The king is going to come, make a straight path. Fill in the valleys, bring down the hills!" Thus, the King, Christ Jesus, John was heralding His coming. "He is the voice of that one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His way!"

For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it (40:5).

The glory of the Lord was revealed in Christ Jesus. John said, "In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, without Him, was not anything made, that was made. The word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!"

So this whole prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. John proclaiming the coming of the Lord. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed." Jesus said to Philip, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father". The glory of the Lord! "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, which we have touched. For the word was manifest, and we beheld Him.", John said.

Then also in Hebrews, that wonderful verse that, "God who in various times, and in different ways spoke to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken to us by His own dear Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, who is the effulgence", or the outshining, "of His glory." His expressed image, Christ the expressed image of the Father.

The glory of the Lord revealed to man, in Christ Jesus, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it (40:5).

Now, several times we have this kind of phrase in Isaiah, and in the other prophets. It's sort of saying, "Look this is going to be, because the mouth of the Lord has spoken!" I mean, when God speaks, you just, in fact, a lot of this is in past tense, because God spoke it, it's as good as already done! Even though it isn't done yet, it's as good as already done, because God spoke it! As Paul was dealing with this particular grammatical problem, as he was talking about God speaking of the son of Abraham, before he was ever born. As though he already existed! A real grammatical problem! He spoke about Isaac in a past tense, before Isaac was ever born. Paul dealing with this grammatical problem said, "For God is able to speak of things as though they existed, even before they exist, because He knows they're going to exist." So God says, "I have spoken". Good, that means it's done!

The voice said, Cry. And Isaiah responded, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all of the beauty, goodliness [Is really handsomeness, or beauty] thereof is as the flower of the field: [The beauty like the flower of the field.] The grass withers, the flower fades: because the spirit of the Lord blows upon it: surely the people are grass. And the grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of God shall stand for ever (40:6-8).

So you have that which is transient, that which is passing, and that which is permanent. What is transient? Our life, here on this earth. "All flesh is like grass, the grass withers", gets wrinkled! "The flower fades, the beauty goes." I, I feel so sorry for those, those people who, their, their big thing in life is being beautiful. I feel sorry for them. There's an old Swedish proverb, "Good looks don't last, good cooking does." I think they were trying to encourage the boys to find a good cook, rather than a beautiful woman!

The flower fades. Life is passing. We're here just for a short appointed time. The strongest, the most powerful, the grass withers.

It's sort of shocking to see some of those fellows that were my heroes when I was growing up. When I was a Freshman, those guys that were the Seniors, the big guys on the football team. I've met some of them lately. It was sort of a shock. Sort of bent over, and weak and crippled, and man, they used to be awesome terrors, you know! But the grass withers, the flower fades.

But there is something that lasts. It is so important that we put our investment in things that last, that we put our values in the things that last. How sad it is for those who have laid up only on this earth, and for this earth, and have nothing for the eternal! The word of God lasts. Put your confidence and your trust in God's word, not in the flesh. If you put your trust in the flesh, you're gonna be disappointed. All flesh is like grass, it will fade. Put your trust in the word of God, it will last, and endure for ever.

O Zion, [Jerusalem] that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into a high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God (40:9)!

So, let the cry go out of Jerusalem, crying unto the people, "Behold your God!" You remember John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Then the promise...

Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, his arm will rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him (40:10).

So the hand of the Lord. The strong hand, the arm of the Lord, He's going to come. He's going to establish His kingdom. He's going to rule. His reward is with Him, and when Christ does come, when we meet Him, we are to be rewarded for those things that we have done while in these bodies. "Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven", Jesus said.

"His reward is with Him." He does speak of the rewards that we will have in heaven. He warns us of the works that we do that we be careful of the motivation, that we not just be doing them to be seen of men, for He said, "Then you'll have your reward. You have the praise and the applause of man. But do your works in such a way that your Father is glorified, and your Father which sees in secret, will reward you openly."

The Lord is coming. He's coming with a strong hand. He's going to rule the world. In the first coming He came in weakness, as the suffering Servant to die. He submitted Himself unto death. When the Lord comes again, it's going to be with great glory. "Then shall they see the sign of the Son of man coming with clouds, and great glory." With power, with authority, and He's going to rule, "His reward is with Him."

And he shall feed his flock like a shepherd (40:11):

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, I give my life for the sheep. He will now feed His flock like a shepherd.

he will gather the lambs with his arm, [That is the little young, newborn lambs, He will carry them in His arms.] and he will carry them in his bosom, and he will gently lead those that are with young (40:11).

Those ewes that are about ready to give birth, He will be gentle and all with them. Oh the beauty of the Lord. I love these pictures! I love the picturesque speech as he describes our relationship to the Lord. We are the sheep of His pasture. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want", He shall feed His flock, gather the lambs in His arms, carry them in His bosom, gently lead those that are with young. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Now he describes God, "Behold your God", he describes Him. Describes Him in awesome terms. The greatness of God.

Children are always asking the question, "How big is God daddy? Is He as big as a telephone pole?" They're awfully big to little kids! The question so often, "How big is God?" He's so big that your mind can't comprehend it. So vast that you can't grasp Him with your thoughts. Your brain isn't sufficient to grasp the concept of God.

For he measures the waters [That is, all of the waters of the oceans and the seas, He measures them,] in the hollow of his hand (40:12),

Think of the Pacific, and the Atlantic and all, there it is right in the hollow of His hand! "How big is God?" "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers", pretty awesome! Our earth is just one little speck of dust down here in a corner of the Milky Way Galaxy, revolving around a star, a medium sized star,

that we call the sun. The earth is twenty five thousand miles in circumference, eight thousand miles in diameter. The sun is one million, two hundred thousand times larger than the earth. You could take one million, two hundred thousand of our Earths, and put them inside of the sun! It is eight hundred and sixty five thousand miles in diameter. Which means, if you would hollow out the sun, leaving a crust a hundred thousand miles thick, you could put the earth in the center of the sun, and the moon could rotate around it, and have a hundred thousand miles to spare!

Now our earth is spinning on its orbit at a thousand miles an hour. It is moving in its orbit, it's spinning on its axis, it's moving in its orbit around the sun, which we complete once every three hundred sixty five and a quarter days. But the sun is also moving in its own orbit, in this Milky Way Galaxy. So actually you're moving in several directions. You say you've been nowhere? Actually, you've been several thousands of miles since the service started tonight! This whole universe moving in beautiful order.

But the, the, the interesting thing to me is what we have learned about the stars, the moon, about gravity. We have been able to put some pretty good payloads out into space, by accelerating to twenty five thousand miles an hour, we can get them established in an orbit where they are sort of in a free-falling condition. They are constantly falling, being pulled by gravity, but they find then their own orbit around the earth. All of these satellites that we have orbiting around the earth! It takes the initial thrust. They have to get going so fast and get out to a certain place, and then they just start falling, and they continue to fall, as they are pulled by the gravity. We understand what keeps them, the movement of the earth in its orbit around the sun, as it is being pulled by the gravity, and sort of constantly being pulled in this, in this orbit. But you have to have an initial thrust to get the thing going in its orbit.

Now you've seen the thrust of the rockets that put these little satellites into orbit. It's awesome when those things fire! Fire shoots out and all, and you see the thing shake on the launch pad, and then break loose with an explosive bolt, and begin its wobble. Then as it begins to you know, the power surging, begins to just straighten out. You see that thing going out, and it's an awesome sight! Tremendous power! You hear the roar! You feel the shake of the ground! Awesome power! We just put a five ton payload into orbit!

Well, imagine the awesome power that put this earth into orbit! But then, how much more power it took to put the sun into orbit. A million, two hundred thousand times larger than the earth! But, as I said, the sun is just one of the medium sized stars. There's Betelgeuse out there in the constellation Orion. Now Betelgeuse is a hefty sized star! Much, much, much bigger than the sun! In fact, if you would hollow out Betelgeuse, you could put the sun in the center, and let the earth rotate around it, and still have room inside! Pretty hefty star! Now imagine the thrust that it took to get Betelgeuse into orbit!

"He measures the waters in the hollow of His hand", and then...

he metes out or measures out the heaven with the span (40:12),

That is to say, the universe as far as its size, is measured by God with his span. So the span is the distance between your thumb and little finger, and thus, God, when He measures the universe says, "Well its this wide". Now as I said, God is so big, your mind can't conceive it. You can't, you can't imagine it.

he comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure (40:12),

They say that the earth is what? Six thousand billion tons, or something like that? Measures the dust of the earth.

weighs the mountains and the hills in scales, and balances. [The question,] Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him (40:12-13).

Now I've tried to teach God a few things now and then. I've tried to instruct God about my problems. I said, "Now Lord this is what's happening. This is what I want you to do." I've been His counselor, and I've been His instructor. But I found out that He doesn't need my instruction. He doesn't usually listen to my counsel. Ha, ha! That's good for me! There are a lot of things that I counseled Him, that later on, I found out, were not too wise. I'm glad that He ignored it!

Jesus said that, "Your Father knows what you have need of, before you ever ask Him." I'm glad that I serve a God like that. I'm glad that my God isn't so limited, impotent, and weak that I have to instruct Him.

I have tremendous difficulty with these people who, who talk about you know, directing God. Commanding God. Who say that, you know, "If you pray, you can have anything you want". "Power of

faith, and the creative, you can create your own realities through this word of faith!" To tell you the truth, I don't want to create my own reality, I want Him to create my reality! Because I could make such a royal mess of things so quick! Because of my limited understanding! I don't know what's best for me! I know what I think is best for me, but many times, it turns out it's not best for me! I've found it's much wiser, and better, to commit my ways to One who does know best, and say, "Lord your will be done." In fact, I've come to the point now where I say, "But if you're open for suggestions...", ha, ha! "But you do what you know is best Lord."

With whom took he counsel, or who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment, taught him knowledge, showed him the way of understanding (40:14)?

God is omnipotent, God is omniscient. He knows all things. He didn't have to receive counsel, or instruction. He didn't have to be taught the way of righteousness and justice. He didn't need anyone to show Him. Jesus, it says of Jesus, "He didn't need that any man should testify to Him of man, He knew man, He knew what was in man."

Now here is, to me, the height of brazen kind of foolishness, when a person challenges the justice of God. You've heard them, I've heard them so many times. "How can God you know, do this, or that, and the other?" The idea is that, "God isn't fair!" Here is mortal man challenging the justice of God! But yet, the prophet said, "Who has taught Him the path of judgment?" Who am I to say that God isn't fair? Who am I to say that God is wrong in, in the way that He has disposed of, of the cases that come before Him in judgment? Who am I to challenge the justice of God?

Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, they are counted as the small dust in the balance: behold, he takes up the isles [Or the coast land] as a very little thing (40:15).

So the nations are nothing before God. They're like a drop in a bucket, or like the dust in the balances.

Now the Jewish merchants sought to impress the people with their total honesty in their dealing with them, and thus, as they would have their little balanced scales, and they would measure the merchandise, they would always be careful to blow the dust out of the scales first, lest you'd be buying dust from him. So getting ready to measure you know, your oranges that he's selling you, he blows and the dust goes flying. Thus, the nations are like the dust in the balances before God. He goes on to say...

In all of the forests of Lebanon [Those huge forests] there isn't enough wood that is sufficient enough to burn on an altar for him, and if you took all of the beasts, they wouldn't be sufficient for a burnt offering (40:16).

To a God that is this great, and awesome, you could ignite the whole forests, and use all of the beasts as sacrifices, it would be insufficient!

For all of the nations before him are as nothing; in fact they are counted to him less than nothing (40:17).

So God, powerful, ruler, sovereign over the universe! We're so prone to get worried and think that things are out of control. We get concerned about the nations, concerned about the power of the nations, but what are they before God? He's going to accomplish His purposes. No nation can stand against Him! But here then, is where the real paradox comes, because he says...

To whom then will you liken God? and what likeness will you compare to him (40:18)?

In other words, here were the people making these little gods, carving out these little stones, "Here's my god", set him on the table, put chains on him and all. "Here's god", represents God. "Represents God, who measures the oceans in the hollow of His hand? Who metes out the heavens with a span, and you, you say this is a representation of God? This funny looking little thing, with a big, fat stomach?" "Who will you liken God to?"

That is why God strictly forbid them to make any image, or likeness, or try to make any likeness of God! That's why it was forbidden! Because He is so vast, that there is nothing that we could make that would be at all a likeness of Him. So vast that our minds cannot even comprehend Him! He defies being likened to anything that we might carve with our hands! But he says...

The workman melts a graven image, the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and he casts silver chains to hang on it. He that is so impoverished that he has no offering to give chooses a tree; [In other words, I

don't have enough money to have a little golden idol, and so I, I just get a tree, I get a cedar tree or something that won't rot, hopefully.] *and he seeks a cunning workman to carve for him a little carved image, that it can stand there and represent God (40:19).*

Now it isn't, now isn't it interesting that all over the world, in the pagan cultures, they have tried to make the likenesses of their god, out of stone, or out of wood. You can go to the different tribes and cultural groups, and you see their gods. I think that it is quite laughable that when Jacob finally left his uncle Laban with his two wives, the daughters of Laban, and their servants, and their goods, that they sort of snuck away when Laban was gone. When Laban heard that Jacob had taken off, he went pursuing after him.

Now one of Jacob's wives, Rachel, she ripped off some of the gods of her dad, these little idols that he had. So when Laban caught up with Jacob, he really rebuked him for leaving. But he said, "The worst thing is you stole my gods!" That, I find very amusing, when a man has a god that can be stolen. But, many do! Maybe some of you do. Maybe your god won't be in the parking lot when you go out there tonight. Be careful!

"Have you not known, haven't you heard, haven't they told you from the beginning, have you not understood what has been said?

It is God who sits on the circle of the earth, the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers; he stretches out the heavens like a curtain, he spreads them out as a tent to dwell in (40:22).

Here are men making these little images in wood and all, and they're saying, "That's God!" He said, "No! No! Haven't you heard? Don't you know? Don't you understand? God is so vast, He stretched out the heavens like a curtain! We're like grasshoppers before Him!

He can bring the great men of the earth to nothing; he makes the judges of the earth nothing. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind will take them away as stubble (40:23-24).

Man, great, powerful, they're gone! Hitler, Mussolini, all of their bragging, all of their boasting! But the grass withers, the flower fades. Here he said, "They're blown away in a whirlwind!"

To whom then will you liken God, ["What will you liken Him?"] to whom will he be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, behold who has created all of these things (40:25),

"Look up at the sky, who created it all?" Now here's where the whole fallacy of evolution comes in. The denial of the creator. Paul the apostle said, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools because they worshiped and served the creature, rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever more." It's foolish to worship creation! You should worship the Creator! So, "Look up, lift up your eyes on high, behold who created all of these things?"

that brings forth the hosts of stars by their number (40:26):

The number, my we have no idea how many stars there are out there in the universe! We know that there is estimated to be over a billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy. But we also estimate that there's more than a billion galaxies out there in space! "Who brings them all by number." Then, even more...

he calls them all by names [He knows the name of every star!] by the greatness of his might, for he is strong in power; not one faileth (40:26).

So, "What are you gonna a God like that to? What kind of an image can you make that could represent Him?"

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord (40:27),

"What do you think that you can hide yourself from God? What makes you think that God doesn't know what's going on in your life? Who are you to think that you can actually hide from Him?"

my judgment is passed over from my God (40:27)?

"God, you know, I slipped one over on Him, He didn't see it! He didn't know!" There's a lot of people think they're getting by with their evil. They actually think that they're getting by with what they're doing! God is very patient and God is very longsuffering, and many times people misinterpret that patience, as blindness. "God doesn't see, got by with it." Or ignorance. "God doesn't know what I did! I'm getting by with my evil. I'm prospering, I'm getting by!" "My judgment is passed over by God." "He didn't see it, I put

one over on Him.” No way! No way!

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth, [Now He’s a Creator of the universe, “Look up, see...”, but He’s also the Creator of the ends of the earth.] he doesn’t faint, he is not weary, there is no searching of his understanding. [There’s no way that you can comprehend, the greatness, the vastness, the awesomeness of God!] He gives power to those who are fainting, to those that have no might he increases strength (40:28-29).

This vast, awesome God who created the universe is interested in you! As weak, and frail as I am, God is interested in me, and God loves me! That’s the thing that I find difficult to comprehend! The wonder of it all, to think that God loves me! This awesome God who calls the stars by the name, who stretched out the heavens like a curtain, who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand! Who metes out the universe with His span! He loves me! When I am weak, He strengthens me. He gives me might and power!

Now even the youths shall faint and be weary, the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (40:30-31).

So the glorious promises to those that just wait upon God. Waiting upon Him, my strength will be renewed.

Chapter 41

The command of chapter forty one is...

Keep silence before me, O islands; let the people renew their strength: let them come near; let them speak: and let them come near to judgment (41:1).

Now the Lord has, has declared the awesomeness of His greatness and all. Now He’s challenging for the people of the world to come with their gods. “Let’s have a court trial, let’s, let’s come in judgment. Come near, let’s, let’s deal with these issues.” God, now declaring of what He has done, said...

Who raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him to his foot, gave him the nations before him, and made him rule over the kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven the stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who has wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he (41:2-4).

Who raised up this man from the east? The man from the east was Cyrus. Now, this is, this is a hundred and fifty years before Cyrus was born. God is talking about him as though it would already happen. Because God knew Cyrus was gonna come along. In fact, in a couple of chapters, the forty fifth chapter, He will name Cyrus. He said, “Then you might know that I’m God, and call you by your name. Even though you have not known me. Because you don’t even exist yet!” He won’t exist for a hundred and fifty years. A hundred and fifty years later, a young lady in Persia will have a little boy. They say, “Well, what shall we name the little kid?” “Well, why don’t we call him Cyrus.” “Cyrus, yeah, let’s call him Cyrus, okay.” God called him by his name, a hundred and fifty years earlier! So God said, “Who is it that raised up this man from the east? Gave the nations before him? Made him rule over the kings? He gave them as dust to his sword, and driven the stubble with his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; and by the way, he had not gone with his feet.” “Who has wrought this? Done this? I am the one who did it! I’m the first, and with the last; I am He.”

Now the coasts of the Mediterranean saw it (41:5),

It was interesting that there was a power of the east under the Persian, under Cyrus who conquered the Medes, and then he began to move towards the west, and Egypt, and Lydia, and one of the other nations. I forget which it was right now. They confederated together to meet Cyrus, and were defeated by him. But, the interesting thing when Cyrus defeated them, then they decided to change their gods. “It must be because he has more powerful gods!” We’ll get that in a minute. They call it a craftsman. “So let’s make gods like his!” You know, “Because they’re more powerful than our gods, because he wiped us out!” You know. Ha, ha! But the Lord said, “I’m the one that did it!”

Now this confederacy of, of Egypt, and Lydia, and all...

they helped each other, their neighbors in trying to stand against Cyrus, they were encouraging them, Be of good courage. ["Come on, we can do it!"] and all.] So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smoothed with a hammer encouraged him that smote with the anvil, and they said, It is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved (41:6-7).

So they made these gods. "These gods will help us! Let's make gods like theirs, and they'll help us!" They said, the interesting thing, they made the gods, and then they had to fasten them with nails, lest they fall over. How foolish, man who makes a god that has to be held up with nails, lest he fall!

But thou, Israel, you are my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen (41:8),

So the relationship, a servant, but chosen of God. That's where we are tonight. Servants who have been chosen by God, for this glorious relationship that we have with Him. God chose you to have this special relationship with Him! He says...

the seed of Abraham my friend (41:8).

Now isn't that a neat thing for God to call a man, "Hey he's my friend!" I love that! Jesus said, "I no longer call you servants, but I call you friends." I love that! Friend of God!

Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and I said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; ["O Jacob, my servant, I've chosen you, I'll not cast you away, fear thou not."] for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness (41:9-10).

Now I want you to hear this as God is just speaking it to you tonight. No matter what the situation, or the difficulty that you might be facing, God has chosen you to be His servant. God has called you as His! God is saying to you, as you're looking at the prospects of this next week, as you're looking at the situation that you're gonna be facing, the difficulties that lie in front of you. The Lord is saying, "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yea, I will help you, yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." If God be for us, who can be against us? "Fear not!", God said, "I am with you."

Behold, all they that were incensed against you will be ashamed and confounded: [God will take your part, God will defend you.] they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with you shall perish. [Oh the blessing of being a servant of God, how blessed when God takes my part, when God defends me!] You will seek after those, [That is, those that were your enemies, those that were incensed, you will seek after them.] you'll not even be able to find them, even those that were contending with you: [Fighting with you.] they that war against you shall be as nothing, [They will be less than nothing.] a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee (41:11-13).

I love that! God said, "I will hold your right hand!"

As my children were growing up and we would come walking down the street, come to the street corner, I would always say to them, "Let daddy take your hand. I'll hold your hand while we cross the street." I always held their hand to cross the street. I never said to them, "Hold daddy's hand." I always said, "Let daddy hold your hand." Because if sudden danger should arise, I wanted to be holding their hand, rather than them holding my hand. Because in danger, and if I had to pull suddenly upon them, their hand could slip. They were weak. I wanted to make sure that I could pull them out of danger, because of my strength.

God doesn't say to you, "Hold my hand now, we're gonna go through some tough times here." He says, "I will hold your hand, we're going through some rough waters." Oh how comforting it is, to have God holding my right hand. "I, the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand." Saying unto you, "Don't be afraid, I will help you." Oh man I love that! "Don't be afraid, I will help you!" What more do you need?

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, ye men of Israel; I will help you, ["Don't be afraid, I will help you!"] saith the Lord, the redeemer, [Here we have it now, the Goel, the Kinsman Redeemer.] the Holy One of Israel (41:14).

The introduction of Jesus here, who is the Kinsman Redeemer. We'll get into that. He uses this seven times, and we'll get the, we'll go into it more fully, when we get into the fifty ninth chapter, and we have a better opportunity to deal with it.

Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument [“Here’s what I’m gonna do, I’m going to make you subdue the enemies, I’ll make you like a new sharp threshing instrument.”] having teeth: and you will thresh the mountains of grain or corn, you’ll beat them small, and you will make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, [That is, your enemies] the whirlwind will scatter them: and you will rejoice in the Lord, and you will glory in the Holy One of Israel. [“I’m gonna work in your behalf, that you might glory in the Lord, and rejoice in Him!”] When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is failing for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the acacia tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; and I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, the box tree together: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel created it (41:15-19).

God said, “I’m gonna be with you. When you’re going through difficult places, you think you’re gonna perish, I will provide, I will be there. I will provide for you. Your life seems like it’s just drying up, you’re gonna die for thirst. You cry unto me, I will be there. I will open up rivers, fountains in the valleys. Pools of water in the wilderness. Dry, and in the dry land, springs of water, artesian wells.” God is, is just, take this in a spiritual sense, He’s just saying, “I will be to you everything. I will provide for you all that you need. I’ll take care of you. Then, I will make you fruitful there in, in that barren area of your life, you’ll become fruitful.”

There in the wilderness, all of the trees to be planted, and the whole idea is found, or, the purpose of it is found in verse twenty, “That you may see”, the hand of God at work, “that you may know, and that you might consider, and that you might understand that the hand of the Lord has done this.”

God wants you to recognize His work in your life. God works in our lives, that we might see, and know, and consider, “Wow it was God who did that! It was God at work! Look what the Lord has done!”, and, and He wants you to recognize His hand. So many times we call on the Lord in our hour of need, and desperation, and, and we say, “Oh God!”, you know. “Help! If you’ll just get me out of this Lord, I’ll, I’ll do anything!”, and all. Then God comes through, and we say, “Boy I was so lucky! You can’t believe how lucky I am!”, you know. Ha, ha!

Like the little kid sliding down the barn roof, falling, tumbling, saying, “God help me!”, and about that time, his pants got caught on a nail. He came to a ripping halt! He said, “Never mind Lord, a nail caught me.” So typical! We call on the Lord for help, and then, because God works in natural ways so many times to give us help, we say, “Well never mind Lord, my friends came through. Never mind Lord, it’s, it’s okay now, it all worked out.” Well who worked it out that you might know, that you might see, that you might consider it’s the Lord that was watching you. It was the Lord that took care of you!

Now, we’re in court, God has brought these other gods in, and He’s gonna, He’s, He’s, all the, the prosecuting attorney, and the judge, but with Him, it’s alright. He says...

Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth some strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and show us what is going to happen: let them show us from the former times things that will take place in the future, what they will be, that we might consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things that are going to come (41:21-22).

Now here’s the challenge of God to these other false gods. “You say you’re gods, alright fine. Prove it. Tell us something that’s going to happen. Tell us what will be the outcome of this event here. Tell us what’s gonna take place in the future. Prove that you are gods! Give us some evidence.”

This whole area of prophecy is one of the strongest apologetics for the proof that the Bible is the word of God, the inspired word of God. Because He told us in advance, of things that would take place. As Jesus said, “And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it does happen, you might believe.” So, God is challenging now, and for the next few chapters, He’s going to be challenging the false gods to, “Go ahead and prophecy something, tell us something! Amaze us! Astound us! Do something!” Ha, ha! That’s basically what He said. “Declare to us things that are going to come.”

Shew us the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods: yea, do something,

either good, or bad, that we might be dismayed (41:23),

Ha, ha! “Do something that will just dismay us! Anything! There you are just sitting there, you little gods, now do something, say something! Do anything, that we might be dismayed, and we say, ‘Wow! Did you see that? Did you hear that?’” So God is challenging all, “Bring these little gods, set them out here now! Okay now say something, do something. Tell us something that’s gonna happen!” And yet people worshiped them! Yet people pray to them, yet people give to them. Yet, people sacrifice for them. So God says, “Okay let’s, let’s sit in court, let’s see you do something! Do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed!”

and behold it together. [But then God says,] Look, you are nothing, you are the work of nothing: and it’s an abomination for any man to choose you (41:23-24).

Those that choose to serve these gods, you become an abomination, serving false gods is an abominable thing. Because you’re nothing, you’re the work of nothing. Now the Lord again speaking of Cyrus said...

I have raised up one from the north, he shall come: from the rising of the sun [That is, the east] and he shall call upon my name: he will come upon the princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treads the clay. [As the, he’ll, he’ll tread down the nations like a potter in mixing the clay, would put it on the ground, and step on it and all to work it, and to knead the clay.] Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? [“Where is the god that has told you in advance things that were gonna happen?”] and beforehand, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that shows you anything, none that declares, there’s none that hears your words. [“These gods can’t hear you, they can’t speak to you, they can’t tell you what’s gonna happen!”] The first shall say to Zion, Behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. For [behold, 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. [So God is saying, “Look there’s not one that could answer!”] Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion (41:25-29).

The false gods that men hold onto. Jeremiah was called of God to prophesy to the nation, and God said, “Go out and tell the people that they’ve committed two evils. The first is, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, And they have carved out cisterns, that can hold no water, because they’re broken cisterns.”

Every man has a god. Every man has an object of master passion, that he worships in his life. With some, it is pleasure, the Old Testament god of Molech. With some, it is power, the Old Testament god of Mammon. With some, it is intellect, the Old Testament god of Baal. With some, it is sex, the Old Testament god, goddess, Ashtoreth. But every man has that master passion that governs and controls his life, his god.

When a person forsakes the true, and the living God, then that doesn’t mean that you don’t have a God. That means that you have some other god, some other idol to which you bow, that governs your life. If you will carefully examine your life, and look at that which is all-absorbing for you, that which really is your impulse, and impetuous to get out of bed, that which keeps you going, that’s your god.

But as the Lord said concerning these other gods, “They are broken cisterns, they can’t hold water. They are nothing, they are less than nothing, and it’s an abomination for those who serve them.”

David points out a rather awesome truth. He said, “The gods of the heathen are many. They carve these idols out, and they carve eyes in the idols, but they can’t see. They carve ears on them, but they can’t hear. They carve feet on them, but they can’t walk, and mouths they have, but they can’t speak.”

So he talks about man making his gods, and he makes his gods like himself. I carve ears on my god, because I have ears. I carve eyes, because I have eyes, and so, a man makes a god like himself. But he makes his god less than himself. Because the psalmist said, “Though they have feet, they can’t walk, though they have ears, they can’t hear.” This is pretty much what God was saying. “Say something! Do something!”, you know. But they can’t speak, they can’t hear!

A man who worships insensate gods, a man who worships the intellect, or pleasure, lives for pleasure, the man who lives for power, and money, and possessions, the man who is controlled by these things, becomes like his god. If your god is false, you are becoming false. Because a man becomes like his god. They that have made them, have become like the gods they have made. That’s the clincher! You are becoming like your god. If your god is a god that you have made, you’ve made him less than yourself, and

thus, you're on your way down. It's an abomination to you, because you're becoming like your god, which is nothing, and you're being destroyed. You're on the way down!

But if you are worshiping the true, and the living God, then you're on the way up! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, it doesn't yet appear what we are going to be, but we know when He appears, we're going to be like Him." A man becomes like his god! We, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory, to glory into the same image, by His Spirit that's working in us." I'm becoming like my God. I'm glad that I serve the true and the living God! The God who is able from the beginning, to tell things that are going to happen. The God who has proved Himself over, and over again.

We'll be getting into some fascinating proofs, as we go into the next few chapters, and God again challenges the false gods. Said, "Okay, you, you know, you guys haven't been able to tell, now I'm going to tell you some things!" He starts naming guys a hundred and fifty years before they're born, and talking and giving details about what they're gonna be doing, and how they're gonna do it and all. So a hundred and fifty years later, here it happens, you think, "Wow! He knew what He was talking about!"

Now those people who don't believe the Bible is God's word, have a great problem with Isaiah, because of these predictions. Because if it is not God's word, then it's impossible to talk about a man, name him before he's ever born, hundred and fifty years. So they say there was another man who wrote this portion of Isaiah, and he put Isaiah's name to it. But actually, he wrote it after the events took place.

I was talking with one such man this past week, on a radio talk show that I was called to be on. A professor of Bible at U.S.C. He said, "Every scholar knows there were two Isaiahs! Because," he said, "the Bible, we're just, was only written by men who expressed their ideas of God, not inspired at all! Thus, the Bible has nothing in it of a predictive nature. There is no prophecy in the Bible." I said, "Well what about Isaiah, a hundred and fifty years before Cyrus was born, called him by name!" "Every scholar knows there were two Isaiah!", you know. I said, "Well it's interesting that Jesus didn't know it. Because Jesus quotes from both sections of Isaiah, and attributes them both to Isaiah." He said, "Well Jesus didn't know!" I said, "Are you telling me that you know more than Jesus?" He said, "Of course!" I hung up, end of conversation! I mean, I, I don't have anything to say to somebody who thinks he knows more than Jesus, about the word of God! What can you tell a person like that? All you can do is just pray for the poor soul. You caught it!

But we've got some exciting lessons as this, this latter portion of Isaiah is just so rich, and so blessed. We've got so many great, great studies ahead of us, as we finish Isaiah.

Father, we thank You now for the work of Your Holy Spirit, and Your love in our lives. And Father, we're so thankful for Your help. We thank You Lord that we can wait upon You tonight, that our strength will be renewed, that we might be able to mount up with wings as eagles, that we can run and not be weary, that we can walk, and not faint. That, the Lord, the Creator of the heavens, and the earth, who stretched out the heavens like a curtain, who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, has said to us, Fear not, for I am with You, be not dismayed, for I am Your God, I will help You, I will strengthen You, I will hold You by the right hand of my power. Thank You Lord, for Your help for us who are weak. Thank You for Your presence, thank You for Your love! Thank You for Your goodness, Your eternal goodness! And, thank You Lord, for Your word. Your sure word, You said it, and You have done it! We thank you, in Jesus' name!