

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 43

Theme: God comforted His people in Babylon that He would save them though they deserved captivity.

Outline:

- 1-2 God Promised to Save His Chosen Nation
- 3-4 God Sacrificed Other Nations for Israel
- 5-7 God Would Recover Them from Scattering
- 8-13 Israel Was Witness Jehovah Bettered Idols
- 14-17 God Would Overthrow Babylon for Them
- 18-21 This New Salvation Would Exceed Former
- 22-28 Israel's Sins Deserved Captivity in Babylon

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah chapters 13-14, 39, 40, 41, 44-45; Jeremiah 25, 27, 50-51; Daniel 2, 5, 7.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 40 (Comfort given)* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2020/isaiah-chapter-40/>.
- B. *Exposition of Isaiah 41 (Cyrus declared)* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2020/isaiah-chapter-41/>.
- C. *I Gave Egypt for Thy Ransom* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2019/i-gave-egypt-for-thy-ransom/>.
- D. *Babylon: History-Prophecy* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2019/babylon-history-and-prophecies/>.
- E. *Glory of Fulfilled Prophecy* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2010/glory-of-fulfilled-prophecy/>.
- F. *Boasting of God – Isaiah* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2019/boasting-about-god-isaiah/>.
- G. *The Dominion of God* ... <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2007/dominion-of-god/>.

Introduction:

- A. This chapter, the fourth in the comfort section of this book, should cause love, faith, joy, repentance.
 - 1. **Comfort.** To strengthen (morally or spiritually); to encourage, hearten, inspire, incite. To minister delight or pleasure to; to gladden, cheer, please, entertain.
 - 2. Isaiah 40 had glorious views of God's sovereign power but details of John and Jesus (Is 42:3-11).
 - 3. Isaiah 41 had God mocking idolatrous nations about the rise of Cyrus to save and promote Israel.
 - 4. Isaiah 42 had glorious news of Messiah and His gospel for Gentiles and utter desolation for Jews.
 - 5. It is our duty in scripture to work hard for God's approval by applying the words to the right event.
 - 6. Though there are wonderful words in these chapters, we want the sense of them not just the sound.
 - 7. Therefore, it is key to carefully analyze the context and the content to apply it to the right event.
 - 8. The chapter divisions are not inspired, but God has providentially preserved them with some value.
 - 9. Keep in mind when reading that Isaiah moves all over the timeline e.g. Rome (Is 6:9-13), Assyria (Is 7:2), Messiah (Is 9:1-2,6-7), Assyria (Is 10:1-34), Messiah (Is 11:1-10), Babylon (Is 13-14).
 - 10. Recall what Isaiah has already foretold of Babylon's ruin (Isaiah 13-14; 21:1-12).
- B. This chapter follows the previous two with more details justifying comfort for Israel after chastening.
 - 1. After 39 chapters, many of which foretold terrible judgments, Isaiah began a section of comfort.
 - 2. From the first chapter to the historical section (36-39), Assyria and Babylon would ravage Judah.
 - 3. Assyria's war with Judah was repeated for being in Isaiah's time, but Babylon's war is also told.
 - 4. But notice the very last prophecy before chapter 40 – Babylon would take all captive (Is 39:6-7).
 - 5. The comfort here identifies God's power over idols to fulfill His covenant promises to the Jews.
 - 6. He called on Israel to be His witnesses to the world that He had foretold about Cyrus far in advance.

- C. This will sound too simple or even trivial, but the outline above breaking down the chapter helps much.
 1. There is much more than reading or even studying the words without seeing progression in lessons.
 2. Twenty-eight verses without division can result in confusion and/or contentment with sound bites.
 3. There are distinct sections and lessons in this chapter that greatly facilitate appreciating the verses.
 4. It runs from God's love for Israel to His ability over idols to defeat of Babylon to grieving for sins.
- D. We cannot exhaust every phrase or verse here more than other verses we covered in chapters 1-39.
 1. The great lesson and value are to encourage yourself in His promises to save and supply His people.
 2. The promises in this chapter about Jehovah include His incredible overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus.
 3. Israel – the church of God then – was to become witnesses for Jehovah and mourn for their sins.
- E. This chapter is the fourth of the second half of the book and in a nine-chapter section of God boasting.
 1. You have to enjoy these nine chapters if you truly love God and delight in Him and glorious power.
 2. This section of 216 verses are the largest section of the Bible where God boasts about Himself.
 3. The nine chapters use the first person singular *I* (96 times), *my* (42), *me* (33), *mine* (9), *myself* (4).
 4. It is how He reveals Himself, mocks false religion, rebukes doubters, to humble and comfort us.
 5. For those that fear, love, and delight in God, these chapters are some of the finest reading of Him.
 6. *Boasting of God – Isaiah ...* <https://letgodbetruer.com/sermons/index/year-2019/boasting-about-god-isaiah/>.
- F. This chapter begins with wonderful verses of God's love for His people leading to sacrifice of others.
 1. This doctrine declares God's sovereign authority and dominion over persons beyond most pulpits.
 2. For those who want their faith on what the Bibles teaches, here is another opportunity to separate.

***** *God Promised to Save His Chosen Nation – Verses 1-2* *****

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

- A. The previous chapter ended with the Jews under perpetual judgment for their blindness.
 1. They were worse than the Gentiles, for they had been given much greater privileges.
 2. When God warred against idolatry to convert Gentiles, He destroyed Israel by Rome.
 3. It is important for Bible students to recall how Isaiah's chapters are very different.
 4. Isaiah's chapters follow no timeline e.g. Rome (Is 6:9-13), Assyria (Is 7:2), Messiah (Is 9:1-2,6-7), Assyria (Is 10:1-34), Messiah (Is 11:1-10), Babylon (Is 13-14).
- B. Jehovah had created Jacob and formed Israel like all others but also with special intent.
- C. Creation of other men should cause their fear, for they are without excuse (Rom 1:20).
- D. In spite of the horrible prophecy of perpetual ruin, Isaiah's audience should not fear.
 1. Rome would destroy a future generation, but Isaiah's prophecy here is of Babylon.
 2. This prophet returned from Rome (far future) to captivity in Babylon (near future).
 3. God had redeemed His people from Egypt and other enemies and would from Babel.
 4. Redeem is an economic term that means God bought them back from others' claims.
- E. When God has created us ... then redeemed us ... then named us ... we should not fear.
 1. Creation and formation of men here is more than bare existence, but for His people.
 2. It is good to say we are twice His: He created us, and He saved us (I Cor 6:12-20).
 3. By those tremendous choices He made (more in 3-4), we are very clearly His people.
 4. When we are His, then we need not fear, for He will not forsake or destroy His own.

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

- A. These words are adapted in the popular song, *How Firm a Foundation* (1787; Rippon's).
 - 1. The song was written in the high English of the King James with singular pronouns.
 - 2. Others have come along, like the Trinity Hymnal, and changed them all to plural.
 - 3. For more about *thee* and *thou* ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/bible-topics/index/scripture/thee-and-thou/>.
- B. These are metaphorical terms of God saving Israel through her various trials in Babylon.
 - 1. Looking back to verse one, their confidence should be as God's own created people.
 - 2. Looking forward to the next verses, their trust should be in His discriminating love.
 - 3. Too much of either or both water and fire can be frightening and dangerous to men.
 - 4. Thus the lake of fire is a perfect description of eternal torment for reprobate persons.
- C. Efforts to be literal are unnecessary, though the three Hebrew men were saved from fire.
- D. No matter what difficulties you face, if you are God's by faith in Him, He will save you.

***** *God Sacrificed Other Nations for Israel – Verses 3-4* *****

3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

For I am the LORD thy God.

- A. The coordinating conjunction *for* explains why God would keep promises (Is 43:1-2).
- B. Jehovah God of Israel spoke in the first person – I AM THAT I AM of the burning bush.
- C. Isaiah the writer is quite irrelevant here – for the declaration is straight from the LORD.
- D. He declared He was the Jews' God; He repeated this personal commitment many times.
 - 1. The lesson or matter here is entirely personal; do not overlook the singular pronouns.
 - 2. It is incredibly personal – note *thy, Israel, thy, thy, thee, thou, thou, thee, thee, thy*.

The Holy One of Israel.

- A. He is no ordinary God. He is the holy God. Never forget that Jehovah is perfectly holy.
- B. Let no one question or criticize the lesson here, for God is holy and just in all His ways.
- C. Let no one think God may promise and not perform, for the holy God always performs.
- D. He declared He was Israel's own Holy God; He repeated this relationship many times.

Thy Saviour.

- A. For the third time in as many clauses or phrases, Jehovah repeated that He was Israel's.
- B. He was their God, but His relationship and role with and toward them was salvation.
- C. When you make calling and election sure, God is not just God, but Savior and Father.
- D. He had saved them in the past, which should give great hope; He would yet save them.

I gave Egypt for thy ransom.

- A. The LORD, still declaring in the first person, reminded Israel of what He did to Egypt.
- B. He called it a ransom – the price paid to free a person or thing held captive by another.
 - 1. This ransom is sacrificing others instead of Israel for their deliverance and escape.
 - 2. This concept of a *ransom* price is found elsewhere in the Bible (Prov 11:8; 21:18).
 - 3. God saving Israel out of Egypt uses *economic terms* (Exodus 15:13,16; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 32:6; II Sam 7:23; I Chron 17:21; Psalm 74:2; 77:15; 106:10; Isaiah 51:10; Micah 6:4; II Peter 2:1; etc.).
 - 4. *Ransom* is what God calls destroying nations to rescue Israel (Is 51:10; Jer 31:11).
 - 5. Egypt held Israel captive and would not let them go, so God ruined Egypt for escape.
 - 6. Egypt had not sent a ransom note, nor was it to their benefit, but it was yet a ransom.
 - 7. You can be paid for captives; Cyrus was not (Is 45:13); you can be killed, like Egypt.
 - 8. If God had destroyed greater nations than Israel to rescue in the past, He could again.
- C. He gave Egypt for them by Moses. He destroyed it and confiscated its wealth for Israel.
 - 1. God destroyed or killed crops, livestock, water supply, firstborn, army, Pharaoh, etc.
 - 2. Pharaoh's servants told him Egypt was destroyed after plague seven (hail and fire).
 - 3. Then they got locusts, darkness for three days, death of firstborn, and the Red Sea.
 - 4. Egypt gladly let them depart to go to Canaan and gave them Egypt's wealth to help.
- D. There may be a better, more recent event to apply this historical reminder to from God.
 - 1. We have Ethiopia and Seba connected to Egypt in context here we must deal with.
 - 2. We have a defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia recorded by Isaiah (Isaiah 20:1-6; 37:8-9).
 - 3. God thus defeated Egypt by Sargon, Sennacherib, or other leaders of the Assyrians.
 - 4. God later destroyed Egypt again by Nebuchadnezzar for wages (Ezekiel 29:19-20).
 - 5. God ruined three nations to keep Israel from trusting them and to divert their attacks.
- E. God could have delivered Israel from Egypt in any of the cases by more peaceful means.
 - 1. Under Moses, God could have softened Pharaoh's heart, but instead He hardened it!
 - 2. God can alter kings' hearts gently (Gen 20:6; Ex 34:24; Neh 2:1-6; Esther 2:7; 5:2).
 - 3. He could have softened kings' hearts, but He did not (Deut 2:30; Joshua 11:19-20).
- F. Isaiah's past tense does not exclude God giving these nations via Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).
 - 1. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. deliverance from Egypt in three tenses (Is 43:16-17).
 - 2. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. prophecy and fulfillment of Cyrus past (Isaiah 43:12).
 - 3. Therefore, the past tense reference here could easily be through Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).

Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

- A. Similarly, God also destroyed and killed Ethiopia and Seba to benefit His people Israel.
- B. Due to the tight connection of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, we assume two things here.
 - 1. The event God through Isaiah is considering must have included all three nations.
 - 2. We confirm what we know geographically; Ethiopia and Seba are south of Egypt.
 - 3. Therefore, we prefer the event more recent in time that connects Egypt and Ethiopia.
- C. While difficult to identify which events the LORD intended, there are several options:
 - 1. Ethiopia by Asa (II Chr 14:9-15), the Assyrians (Is 20:1-6), or Cyrus later (Is 45:14).
 - 2. Seba was sacrificed with Ethiopia, with Egypt (Is 20:1-6), or Cyrus later (Is 45:14).

3. Compare – God gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as wages for work (Ezek 29:19-20).
- D. Isaiah's past tense does not exclude God giving these nations via Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).
 1. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. deliverance from Egypt in three tenses (Is 43:16-17).
 2. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. prophecy and fulfillment of Cyrus past (Isaiah 43:12).
 3. Therefore, the past tense reference here could easily be through Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).
- E. For more about this text ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2019/i-gave-egypt-for-thy-ransom/>.

4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Since thou wast precious in my sight.

- A. Having concluded past events for the comfort of Israel, God moved to future promises.
 1. Past and perfect verb tenses of the first three clauses before the future tie all together.
 2. Since explains the action of 43:3, the love of 43:4, and then the future action of 43:4.
- B. Israel was precious to God, not by any goodness in them, but rather by His own promise.
 1. Scripture tells how God chose Israel for Himself (De 7:6-10; 14:2; 32:10; Ps 135:4).
 2. There was nothing precious in Israel but His choice of them – their beauty (Ps 45:11).
- C. Consider Ezekiel 16 as one example of Israel's depraved condition and then character.

Thou hast been honourable.

- A. Israel was not honorable actively by their goodness, but He chose rather to honor them.
 1. They were in Babylon as the context here for their heinous and extended wickedness.
 2. The record we can read of them in the wilderness and then in Canaan is quite wicked.
 3. The prophets made comparisons that other nations were better (Is 5:1-7; Jer 2:9-13).
- B. God chose to honor them, like the vessels of honor identified by Paul (Rom 9:21-24).
- C. The difference between Jacob and Esau were by His choice (Mal 1:1-5; Rom 9:11-16).
- D. Since Israel was the apple of His eye by choice, He would deliver them accordingly.

And I have loved thee.

- A. Thus, by God's choice, He chose Israel as the precious object of His honor and love.
 1. Love is a choice in all creatures, but it is surely a choice for a Holy God to love men.
 2. The basis for His promised protection (Is 43:1-2) was by preferential love (43:3-4).
- B. God's love for Israel was a choice He made and acted upon (Deut 7:7-8; Jer 31:3-4).
- C. God's love for His people is incredibly important, and He proved it by killing others.
 1. The statement of love here is between past and future examples of destroying others.
 2. As with Jacob and Esau, we should see the enormous difference in His treatment.

Therefore will I give men for thee.

- A. What is *therefore* there for? What conclusion? He would prove love by killing others.
 1. His love for Israel was exclusive, discriminating. He would destroy her competitors.
 2. Here is future tense – the opposite of that in verse 3 – past of Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba.

3. The lesson not to miss is that God's love for His people is measured by killing others.
- B. God destroyed Babylon and other nations by giving them to Cyrus (Is 14:1-3; 41:2,25; 45:1,3,14; Jer 27:5-7; 50:3,35,37; 51:11,20-24,53; Dan 5:24-30; 7:5; 8:3-4; Ezra 1:2).
- C. This is love well beyond just words, mercy, or gifts. It wrecks any competing objects.
 1. Illustrative stories might be used here, but they break down quickly as inadequate.
 2. A perfect suitor loving an ugly duckling is nice, but can he kill other girls for her?
 3. A faithful and loyal guy not talking to other girls is nice, but killing them is higher.
 4. Though Egypt and Babylon were far superior to Israel, God ruined them for Israel.
- D. The Holy Spirit chose the personal word *men*, not some vague, weak noun like nations.
- E. Isaiah's future tense does not exclude God giving these nations via Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).
 1. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. deliverance from Egypt in three tenses (Is 43:16-17).
 2. Prophetic verb tenses vary e.g. prophecy and fulfillment of Cyrus past (Isaiah 43:12).
 3. Therefore, the past tense reference here could easily be through Cyrus (Is 45:13-14).

And people for thy life.

- A. The *therefore* also connects. What conclusion? He would prove love by killing others.
- B. God killed people by this prophecy ... for one famous example – Belshazzar (Dan 5:30).
- C. God blessed the Medes and Persians to take Babylon in one night free Israel by Cyrus.
- D. This is the measure of God's love for His people – He sacrifices others for their good.
- E. The Holy Spirit chose the personal word *people*, not a vague, weak noun like nations.
- F. For more about this text ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2019/i-gave-egypt-for-thy-ransom/>.

***** *God Would Recover Them from Scattering – Verses 5-7* *****

5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

- A. Again, the great God Jehovah, Creator of heaven and earth, told His people not to fear.
 1. He had created them for Himself, and He was their God and would not desert them.
 2. Furthermore, He had sacrificed others for them in the past and would do so yet again.
 3. God will never forsake His people in any real sense, though we may hurt fellowship.
 4. The Israel God forsook were not His people, for not all Israel was Israel (Rom 9:6).
- B. God promised to regather them from the nations where He had scattered them already.
 1. Prophecy uses verb tenses in a variety of ways, and you must not let them distract.
 2. The situation here is many of Judah in Babylon and other tribes scattered all over.
 3. The people had repented, even if only by Daniel's prayer, but God regathered them.
 4. However, the people taken into captivity were of a better sort of Jews (Jer 24:1-10).

6 *I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*

- A. God promised to order the north ... the direction on the compass for nations of the north.
 - 1. He promised to order the south ... the direction on the compass for the nations there.
 - 2. God's sovereign government of the world includes His special care of His people.
- B. Never fear the political winds of mere nations; He can order any nation to do His will.
- C. Never fear the political winds of mere nations; His people are more important than any.

7 *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

- A. God has a people called by His name. The Jews were well known as Jehovah's people.
- B. Creation only goes so far – there is a creation for God's glory by His special formation.
 - 1. God had made a huge difference among the earth's peoples for Abraham's children.
 - 2. If you are one of God's elect, then God created you for more than all other persons.
 - 3. Furthermore, He created us a second time by regeneration for Himself (Eph 2:10).
- C. Are you a Christian? Taking the name of His Son? Be sure to live worthy of the name.

***** *Israel Was Witness Jehovah Bettered Idols – Verses 8-13* *****

8 *Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*

- A. This next section moves to His call for the idolatrous Gentiles to witness His prophecy.
 - 1. There is a drastic difference from His promises in 43:8 to this call to His enemies.
 - 2. The following verse identifies His enemies – the nations of earth not His own people.
 - 3. Remember God's call for a debate in chapter 41 about this event – Cyrus the Persian.
- B. Idolaters in God's view are like their idols – body parts without function (Ps 115:1-8).
 - 1. God will raise mockery of idolaters to a higher level in the next chapter (Is 44:9-20).
 - 2. His creation of all things declares His glory; their hearts are darkened (Ro 1:18-25).
- C. Here is God's call – much like Isaiah 41:1-4 – for Gentiles to consider their insanity.

9 *Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.*

- A. Here is God's call – much like Isaiah 41:1-4 – for Gentiles to consider their insanity.
 - 1. Isaiah had identified the man from the east that would reign over the earth (Is 41:2).
 - 2. He will shortly state this prophecy again – the overthrow of great Babylon (Is 43:14).

- B. God's challenge – who among the idolatrous nations has ever or can forecast the future?
 1. Showing former things means taking former reality and forecast forward from it.
 2. Former things strictly taken – merely history – is no proof of divinity (Is 41:21-23).
 3. God asked, Who can take the former facts – Babylon's power – and foretell Cyrus?
- C. God's assessment – witnessing fulfilled prophecy is sufficient evidence of a true God.
 1. If the idolaters can forecast the future, they can justify their idol and religion as true.
 2. If the idolaters cannot do it, then they must hear Jehovah's witnesses and admit truth.
- D. Never forget our religion can challenge all religions and ruin them by fulfilled prophecy.
- E. Idolatry or any false religion for that fact has no witnesses that can prove its truthfulness.

10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

- A. Israel were witnesses for the truth of Jehovah against the total lack of them for idolatry.
 1. God chose Israel as a nation to be His servant, but He did not ask them without proof.
 2. He had provided this great prophecy about Cyrus to prove His deity for their faith.
 3. Never forget the importance of fulfilled prophecy to prove our God and the Bible.
- B. There is only one God – the LORD God Jehovah of the Bible – there is no other god.
- C. This is the precise verse by which and from which the JW's take their ridiculous name.
 1. Jehovah's Witnesses are blinded followers of Charles Russell and Judge Rutherford.
 2. Charles Russell was an 18-year-old salesman totally enticed by Adventist leftovers.
 3. They do not have a clue about Jehovah, for they deny His stated plurality (Gen 1:26).
 4. They have no clue about this text – for their many prophecies have failed horribly.
 5. They have no clue about this text – for it declares them very wrong (Deut 18:20-22).
 6. They have no clue about Jesus – for He is Jehovah God in the flesh (John 1:1,14,18).
 7. They have no clue about Jesus – for the text denies a God formed after this (Jn 1:1).
- D. About fulfilled prophecy ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2010/glory-of-fulfilled-prophecy/>.
- E. The Bible is supernatural ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2001/why-i-believe-the-bible/>.

11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

- A. God's special name – I AM THAT I AM – is His unique memorial forever (Ex 3:15).
- B. He is the only Savior – in this context the only true God to deliver Israel from Babylon.
- C. There is no other Being in heaven or in earth to be trusted for such great things as this.

12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.

- A. God proved Himself – I declared the future and have brought to pass the details I gave.

1. Do not let the verb tenses confuse you and steal from the glory of God's proof here.
2. The prophet sees rescue from Babylon as completed with prophecies going before.
- B. God foretold it when they did not worship idols, thus it did not happen by any but me.
- C. As a result of this great prophecy manifestly made a proper test – ye are my witnesses.
 1. The object of fulfilled prophecy like this is to know that Israel's God was truly God.
 2. The idolatrous nations had no witnesses to prove their gods, but Israel did for theirs.
- D. What a privilege to be witnesses for the God of the Bible and the Bible of the only God.
 1. Are you willing to pray to this God anywhere, to defend God, to mock other gods?
 2. Are you willing like Daniel to keep proper worship of God no matter consequences?
- E. Apologetics is the science defending the existence of God and truthfulness of the Bible.

13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

- A. Having just declared Himself God, Jehovah declared Himself such from the beginning.
 1. Eternity may be defined as before the foundation of the world or before the day was.
 2. There was no day or night until God created in the very beginning of His six days.
 3. Before there was time, recorded by days and nights, I was God before the first one.
- B. Not only is Jehovah God of Israel eternal, He is also omnipotent and sovereign in power.
 1. There is no deity or person, no nation or government, that can save from His power.
 2. When God purposes to do a thing – like exalt Cyrus – no being at all can stop Him.
 3. The word *let* here, as in many places in the Bible, means to hinder, restrict, or stop.

***** *God Would Overthrow Babylon for Them – Verses 14-17* *****

14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

- A. Here is the earth-shaking prophecy about Cyrus, though also given earlier (Is 41:1-20).
- B. Notice names and titles – (1) Jehovah and (2) redeemer and (3) the Holy One of Israel.
 1. Jehovah – I AM THAT I AM – the unique name of Israel's God for His memorial.
 2. Redeemer – to buy back from others' claims – to deliver out of the hands of Babylon.
 3. Holy One of Israel – the only holy God and Israel's God – for their unique comfort.
- C. Because God was all these things to Israel, He had sent His man Cyrus to beat Babylon.
 1. The rich nobles and princes of that city were brought to destruction in one night.
 2. The people of that region for millennia were brought down by Medes and Persians.
 3. Their planned escape by ships could not occur due to Cyrus drying up the Euphrates.
 4. Happily situated on the huge river, used for commerce, they cried in helpless despair.

15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

- A. The glorious God of Israel adds another title and name for Himself for Israel's comfort.
 - 1. Jehovah was creator of Israel in more than one sense but mainly as before (Is 43:1).
 - 2. He was their King, which distinguished them from nations with mere men as kings.
- B. These special chapters in Isaiah (40-48) exalt God as their Deliverer for greater faith.

16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

- A. God did not do this literally for Israel when they came out of Babylon on dry ground.
- B. But He did do this literally – sea and mighty waters – when they came up out of Egypt.
- C. If God did it to save them from Egypt, they should believe He could save from Babylon.
- D. The following context indicates this was an historical event that would be superceded.

17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

- A. God made a way in the Red Sea to escape, but He also brought Egypt's power into it.
- B. The mighty person of Pharaoh and power of his army was extinguished in the Red Sea.
 - 1. The whole army – they shall lie down together and not rise – drowned in the depths.
 - 2. That feared army of Egypt's might with many chariots were made extinct by God.
 - 3. The flaming light and mighty strength of Egypt was quenched like mere candle flax.
- C. If you are troubled by the present and future tense for past events, start Isaiah over again.
 - 1. When God, as He did in the past, sets a way of escape, He can also destroy enemies.
 - 2. We make this all Egypt, overriding the verb tenses, by the context and the next verse.
 - 3. Rather than deliver and destroy in water, He would do so in the desert (Isaiah 43:19).

***** *This New Salvation Would Exceed Former – Verses 18-21* *****

18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

- A. God told Israel they could now forget the great deliverance from Egypt's great power.
- B. Because of the great deliverance from Babylon, the former and old events would pale.
- C. These people were far removed from Egypt; they needed a new miracle with Babylon.

19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

- A. God loves His overthrow of great Babylon in one night by His servant Cyrus the Great.

1. It was the transcendent rescue of His church, as He stated it (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8).
 2. Furthermore, and it must be remembered, it led to arrival of Messiah (Dan 9:24-27).
- B. His people could know in advance, for He had told them, and it would now spring forth.
- C. He saved Israel out of Egypt via the Red Sea; He saved from Babylon through the desert.
1. He had made a way in the wilderness before for His church from Egypt to Canaan.
 2. He did it again by His providential supply to make it safely from Babylon to Judah.

20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

- A. All adversaries, literal beasts of which there were many or not, would obey God's order.
1. Doleful creatures that inhabited waste areas like Arabia Deserta would avoid them.
 2. Whether these beasts indicate Gentile adversaries or not is not clearly indicated.
- B. It was a terrible 900 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem, but God would provide for them.
1. He had made a way in the wilderness before for His church from Egypt to Canaan.
 2. He did it again by His providential supply to make it safely from Babylon to Judah.
 3. They were His church, His people, His chose. Never forget it. He will not forget us.

21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

- A. He had formed these Jews – these good figs – for Him own glory (Jer 24:1-10; Is 43:7).
- B. When they laid the foundation for the second temple, they had great joy (Ezra 3:10-11).
- C. Do you know how important it is to praise and thank God for all He has done for us.
1. He was very specific and very severe in His demand for gladness (Deut 28:47-48).
 2. We are not our own. He made us for Himself and His pleasure (Pr 16:4; Rev 4:11).
 3. He delivers us from our troubles for a reason – His praise (Ps 50:14-15; 22:23; etc.).

***** *Israel's Sins Deserved Captivity in Babylon – Verses 22-28* *****

22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

- A. The prophet Isaiah took a turn here in his sermon to point out the Jews' lack of religion.
1. Think about it! In spite of deliverance from Egypt and God choosing them His own.
 2. Think about it! In spite of spectacular prophecies that prove their God the only God.
 3. Beware reader! Hast thou been faithful and fervent in praying, or no longer calling?
 4. Beware reader! Hast though attended His assemblies with enthusiasm, or drudgery?
- B. This very comforting section of scripture has justified reminders of Israel's many sins.
1. It is good for our souls and His praise and glory to remember offences against Him.

2. We deserve every bit of chastening (and then some) that He sends our way for sins.
 3. We do not deserve any of His blessings and favor that He in mercy bestows on us.
- C. Do you get weary of worshipping God? Church attendance? Preaching sound doctrine?
- D. Malachi 1 gives a detailed indictment of that generation for being wearied by religion.
- E. Note the three uses of *weary* in this and the following two verse, with unique meanings.

23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

- A. God by Isaiah identified the miserly stinginess of the people for sacrifices of worship.
1. Since the context indicates no idolatry at this time (Is 43:12), we go with dereliction.
 2. Though Israel only worshipped the true and living God, they did not pay for praise.
 3. They did not bring small cattle of kids and lambs for daily duties, let alone the large.
- B. Though God Jehovah did require offerings and incense, He did far less than idolaters.
1. Think! The pagan religions around them went so far as to burn children to their idols.
 2. Think! Many of their offerings and sacrifices were of the freewill variety, not forced.
 3. Think! They could celebrate eating themselves and walking with God without cost.
 4. Think! God's religion was much more than just an unending list of costly rituals.
 5. God indicted their weariness with His worship, for He had not made it so (Is 43:22).
 6. God's rules are not grievous (I Jn 5:3); if you embrace them, they rejoice the soul.
- C. Malachi 1 gives a detailed indictment of that generation for being wearied by religion.
- d. See three uses of weary in this, the previous, and following verse, with unique meaning.

24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

- A. They had two sins – they did not bring all the offerings a grateful people would bring.
- B. They had two sins – they had been negligent in their moral duties and had many sins.
- C. Observe the creative contrast that God spelled out to further condemn their carnality.
1. They complained verbally or by actions of ... difficult servitude that *wearied* them.
 2. But God had not given them a difficult religion of servitude leading to *weariness*.
 3. But God condemned them ... for they had forced Him to be *wearied* by their sins.
 4. There is no authority in your life that deserves so much and identifies faults so well.

25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

- A. While you think me too hard and severe and my worship wearies you, I forgive you.
1. This is was a special group of Jews that He would bring back from pain in Babylon.

- 2. Do not forget that most other groups of such sinners were often judged very severely.
- B. God forgave them, like He forgives us, for His own sake of proving and showing mercy.
- C. Get the contrast here clearly – God forgives your hated sins, while you continue in them.
 - 1. God deserves our very best for numerous reasons, but most are belly worshippers.
 - 2. We deserve His very worst for sinning against privilege, but He forgives freely.

26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

- A. God knew no reason to save them, so He ironically charged them to justify themselves.
- B. The context before and after is their sins leading to His justifiable chastening of them.

27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

- A. The Jews' first father here is not Adam or Abraham, but rather their princes and rulers.
 - 1. Adam was first father of all men, not just Jews; he violates parallelism with teachers.
 - 2. Abraham is always remembered for his faithfulness, not for sins, which were few.
 - 3. Saul was Israel's first king and sinned; Solomon was first king in rank and sinned.
 - 4. The Jews' kings then were Hezekiah (ambassadors) and Manasseh (profane altar).
 - 5. We refer to civil rulers as fathers of our own nation, so do not deny God the usage.
 - 6. The singular is a collective noun for their fathers in general (Ezra 9:7; Ac 7:38-53).
 - 7. This collective father is called the first for from the beginning Israel's fathers sinned.
 - 8. We do not get off into original sin here, lest it be incongruous with Israel's teachers.
 - 9. Therefore, we deny Adam, Abraham, Ahaz, Manasseh as only being intended here.
 - 10. The following verse lends further support to a collective noun of Israel's princes.
- B. The priests and prophets of Israel were no better, often being the instigators in iniquity.
- C. It was common for God's prophets to condemn the Jews' fathers and teachers (Num 32:14; Psalm 78:8; 106:6-7; Jer 3:25; Zech 1:4-6; Mal 3:7 ... Isaiah 28:7; 56:10-12; Jer 5:31; 23:11-15; Lam 4:13-14; Ezek 22;25-28; Hosea 4:6; Micah 3:11; Mal 2:5-8).

28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

- A. The reason for your captivity in Babylon is not my fault but rather your fault by sins.
 - 1. Since your priests profaned my worship, I have profaned their office in a pagan land.
 - 2. Since you resented my law as a bother, I have brought the written curse of it on you.
 - 3. Since you reproached me by your wickedness, I gave you to reproaches as captives.
- B. Jacob = Israel, and the nation by either name was deserted by God to Nebuchadnezzar.
- C. This indictment at the end does not reduce the comfort but enhances it by His mercy.