Isaiah – Chapter 44

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Theme: God comforted His people with Cyrus and mocked idolaters and counselors for knowing nothing.

Outline:

1-5 God's Comforting Promises of Great Good

6-8 God's Unique Power of Fulfilled Prophecies

9-17 An Extended Mockery of Idols and Idolaters

18-20 An Explanation for Idolaters' Blind Insanity

21-23 God's Forgiveness of Israel to Cause Praise

24-26 God's Mockery of Diviners and Wise Men

27-28 God Foretold Cyrus's Victory and Orders

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah chapters 13-14, 35, 39, 41, 43, 45; Jeremiah 25, 27, 50-51; Daniel 2, 5, 7.

Related Links:

1. Exposition of Isaiah 13 *(Babylon beat)*.
2. Exposition of Isaiah 14 *(Belshazzar)*
3. Exposition of Isaiah 35 *(Spirit revival)*.
4. Exposition of Isaiah 41 *(Cyrus declared)*.
5. Exposition of Isaiah 43 *(Babel beat)*.
6. History-Prophecy.
7. Glory of Fulfilled Prophecy.
8. Cyrus Decree to Rebuild.
9. *God Is Author of Confusion*.
10. I Gave Egypt for Thy Ransom.
11. Boasting of God – Isaiah.
12. The Dominion of God.

Introduction:

A. This chapter, the fifth in the comfort section of the book, should build faith and apologetics confidence.
   1. **Comfort**. To strengthen (morally or spiritually); to encourage, hearten, inspirit, incite. To minister delight or pleasure to; to gladden, cheer, please, entertain.
   2. Isaiah 41 had God mocking idolatrous nations about the rise of Cyrus to save and promote Israel.
   3. Isaiah 43 had God mocking idolatrous nations about His defeat and sacrifice of Babylon for Jews.

4. It is our duty in scripture to work hard for God's approval by applying the words to the right event.
5. Though there are wonderful words in these chapters, we want the sense of them not just the sound.
6. Therefore, it is key to carefully analyze the context and the content to apply it to the right event.
7. The chapter divisions are not inspired, but God has providentially preserved them with some value.
8. 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).
9. Recall that Isaiah has already foretold Babylon's ruin (Isaiah 13-14; 21:1-12; 41:1-9; 43:14-18).
10. Though the event is near 150 years away, God here proves He is God by this incredible prophecy.

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.
7. Fulfilled prophecies – like this – are one of the greatest proofs of God's existence and Bible truth.

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 promises to Israel to defeat of Babylon, installation of Cyrus, and use of him.

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.
4. Idolatry – and all other religions by extension – cannot be witnesses of anything but their insanity.

E. This chapter is the fifth 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.

F. This chapter includes mockery of idolatry and idolaters and also the mockery of Babylon's wise men.
1. God sending this confusion tells sovereign authority and dominion over men beyond most pulpits.
2. For those who want their faith on what the Bibles teaches, here is another opportunity to separate.

3. The Author of Confusion.

G. To fully appreciate the value and power of this chapter, a person needs to learn about Cyrus the Great.
   1. He is the main character in these 40's chapters of Isaiah, for God used him greatly (Is 44:28; 45:1).
   2. His commandment to rebuild Jerusalem is what started Daniel's crucial timeline (Daniel 9:24-27).
   3. Skeptics and students resent Cyrus, for this supernatural prophecy and/or denying Ussher/Ptolemy.
   4. The overthrow of the mighty city of Babylon in one night and release of the Jews is clearly epic.
   5. God loved this event and spends these 40's chapters of Isaiah to boast about His prophecy of him.
   6. Though the name Cyrus is in the pages of scripture nineteen times, most Christians know nothing.
   7. When a man denies the supernatural about Cyrus and/or starting Daniel's prophecy, he is ignorant.

H. What do we want to get out of this chapter? There are several goals and reasons to learn this chapter.
   1. It should build our faith by the glory and power of fulfilled prophecies that are declared in detail.
   2. It should build our worship of a God that gloriously declares Himself superior to all other religions.
   3. It should comfort us when hearing of political change or upheaval that He is always in total control.
   4. It should gratify our souls to know God loves His children enough to sacrifice other lives for them.
   5. It should secure our minds knowing God can and will overthrow the greatest of enemies for us

God's Comforting Promises of Great Good – Verses 1-5

1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

A. The previous chapter ended with the Jews deserving captivity in Babylon (Is 43:22-28).
   1. The inspired disjunctive here, *yet now hear,* is contrary to this extended chastening.
   2. Though Israel deserved God's severe chastening, His glorious grace rose above sin.
   3. In spite of their sins and deserved captivity, God wanted to share some good news.

B. But God had not deserted them there, and He had wonderful plans for their restoration.
   1. Daniel discovered by reading Jeremiah that seventy years was the end (Dan 9:1-2).
   2. Seventy years is a long time, especially those who measure their lives hour by hour.
   3. Never forget that God's timetable is different from yours, and His is much better.

C. The difference maker is God's electing grace by which He chooses some to be His own.
   1. God set His love on this fewest people or smallest nation for Himself (Deut 7:6-8).
   2. Once God chooses a person or nation as His, He will ultimately take care of them.
   3. See the guaranteed and certain connection and salvation of the elect (Rom 8:28-39).

2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

A. The previous verse promised some good news for Israel long in captivity for their sins.

B. Two things are key here – they were God's by providential formation and by election.
   1. Since God has made and formed all by creation, this must be a special sense of both.

2. God has chosen them to be His own and to be servants for His worship and praise.

C. When God has set His affection on you – He will help His own; there is no need to fear.

D. Jesurun (here only) = Jeshurun (De 32:15; 33:5,26) = symbolic nickname, *upright one.*
   1. Remember how God called Israel precious and honorable and thus loved (Is 43:4).
   2. Compare how God extended or explained names of Israel as righteous (Num 23:10).

3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

A. Zion had been captive in foreign and strange Babylon for 70 years, but God would help.
   1. The people were dried up in a sense and way – by God leaving them to their enemies.
   2. But as He promised a revival to Jeremiah, so here is Isaiah's version (Jer 24:1-10).
   3. Isaiah had promised this revival before in earlier chapters (Is 25:1-12; 35:1-10; etc.).

B. His remedy was to pour providential mercies and His Spirit on them and their children.
   1. What more could a people desire? The soul-satisfying presence and power of God!
   2. This is much more than providential blessings on agricultural needs of the remnant.
   3. This is spiritual revival, which is clearly evident by reading the next two verses here.
   4. This is spiritual revival, which is evident by reading history (Ezra 1:3,5; Neh 2:12).

4 And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

A. A botanical metaphor extended here for God's spiritual revival of Israel – growing fast.

B. The Jews would spring up by influence of God's Spirit like willows flourish with water.

C. Even man with a yard knows that grass grows very fast with abundant waters supply.

5 One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

A. Here is the proof and result of the spiritual revival God promised His captive remnant.
   1. God had promised to help them, and the context indicates spiritual help (Is 44:1-4).
   2. It would involve the pouring out of His Spirit on them – keep it in mind (I Cor 12:3).
   3. They were good figs (Jer 24:1-10), but how bold were they with pagans in Babylon?
   4. They were a shame among the heathen (Deu 28:37; I Kgs 9:7; Ps 137:1-9; Joel 2:17).
   5. How could they claim Jehovah among their captors, for their God had deserted them.
   6. There had been legislation more than once against the worship of their God Jehovah.
   7. The hatred of Jews in the Persian Empire should not be thought strange in Babylon.

B. There are about four varying descriptions here of the religious revival back to Jehovah.
   1. One would say by the Spirit, *I am a follower and worshipper of the God Jehovah.*
   2. Another would say by the Spirit, *I am a descendant of Jacob and so a dedicated Jew.*
   3. Another would write by the Spirit, *I am a follower and worshipper of God Jehovah.*

4. Another would claim Israel as his surname, *I am Joseph of the people of Israel.*

C. This must be by implication and was also by history a drastic change from their shame.

D. These details of verbal worship of the true God require His Spirit (Is 44:3; I Cor 12:3).

E. Reader, how fearful or bold are you about your God, His Son, His word, His rules, etc.?
   1. America in 2020 allows only one group to be severely mocked – Bible Christians.
   2. Do not deny Jesus before men lest Jesus deny you before His Father (Mat 10:32-33).

God's Unique Power of Fulfilled Prophecies – Verses 6-8

6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

A. Rightly divide the words carefully – Jehovah was both the King and redeemer of Israel.
   1. The LORD Jehovah was King of Israel – He Himself was the Jew's divine monarch.
   2. The LORD of hosts was his redeemer – Israel's redeemer, not God's own redeemer.
   3. Do you know this glorious God, Who is both the Ruler and Redeemer of His people?
   4. For sinners, a King without redemption is terror, a Redeemer without rule is weak.

B. Here is God's declaration of Himself; we should not shy away from also declaring it.
   1. He is the first and the last. He is the Origin and the Objective End of all things.
   2. He is the only God, and there is no other God, no matter the imaginations of men.
   3. His declaration about Himself will continue for the next two verses about His deity.
   4. Let us declare our unity in Him by intolerance about Him (I Cor 8:3-6; Eph 4:1-6).

7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

A. God Jehovah, declared Himself the only God, proving Himself so by fulfilled prophecy.
   1. He declared Himself able to foretell the future and asked if other Gods could do so?
   2. This is a chief proof of divine, supernatural power He solicited before (Is 41:22-23).

B. The only true and living God, the LORD Jehovah, knew no other God able to prophesy.
   1. He asked if there was any God that had called, declared, and detailed coming events.
   2. He had done so since the very beginning of appointing the Jews to be His people.
   3. If there is any God or His priests that can do so, then let them show it to the Jews.

C. The matter here is Israel as Jehovah's witnesses, based on His unique prophetic power.
   1. As in the following verse and elsewhere, the Jews were witnesses (Isaiah 43:10,12).
   2. The contest and test of deity to our God and His church was to be fulfilled prophecy.
   3. God had from the beginning with Abraham and Moses declared the future to them.
   4. If there was a God that could do so, he should inform His devotees of the occasion.

D. Glory! Fulfilled Prophecy.

8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

A. God called on the Jews to believe His prophecy and be witnesses of His true divinity.
B. The Jews were to be witnesses of the only living and true God foretelling future details.
    1. Compare the wonderful opportunity we have as Isaiah had identified (Is 41:22-23).
    2. Compare witnesses of idols next – their organs of sense cannot see or know anything.
C. There is no other God, proven so by fulfilled prophecy, thus no reason for Israel to fear.
D. The captivity in Babylon should not terrify – God was truly God; He foretold salvation.

An Extended Mockery of Idols and Idolatry – Verses 9-17

9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

A. This is a classic passage – maybe the best – of God's mockery of idolaters (Is 44:9-20).
    1. Compare pagan *witnesses* of idols here to *witnesses* of Jehovah previous (Is 44:8).
    2. The mockery is of more than idols or idolatry; it emphasizes idolaters (Ps 115:1-8).
    3. The Jews – worshippers of Jehovah – had evidence proving supernatural divinity.
    4. The heathen – worshippers of idols – had evidence proving their gods to be frauds.
B. The text does not open condemning graven images but rather the vanity of their makers.
    1. It takes a very foolish and worthless person to construct an idol for divine worship.
    2. Any such form of religion and its devotees are clearly under very great delusion.
C. The text then proceeds to the idols themselves – the delectable things of those idolaters.
    1. **Delectable**. Affording delight; delightful, pleasant. This is the only use in the Bible.
    2. Idolaters make a great deal about their idols for their superstitious ignorance is real.
D. Idolaters are their own witnesses of the hopeless, insane veneration of worthless statues.
    1. They know they made the idols and that the statues do not see and do not know.
    2. For comparison and contrast, remember that these know the Creator (Rom 1:18-25).
E. The bottom line and eventual conclusion of all idolatry is great shame for such stupidity.
    1. False religion is like wrongly dividing scripture – it shames the man (II Tim 2:15).
    2. The passage is full of shame by its content and message and indictment (Is 44:11).
    3. Opposite shame of idolaters, worshippers of Jehovah could glory (Is 41:16; 45:25).
    4. Whether idolaters admit the shame or not, it is true and others do (Rom 1:22,24,27).

10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?

A. God here did not ask for a name of one idolater that might have graven himself a god.
B. Rather and instead, God mocked all idolaters for stupidity by His rhetorical question.
    1. Who (or why?) would be a man foolish and vain enough to build a helpless idol?

2. God from here forward in this long description will mock these unprofitable idols.

C. Let us answer God's question – only an insanely stupid and foolishly deceived man!

D. God's mockery of idolatry here began with a graven god made out of various metals.

11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

A. God's mockery of idolatry here continued with graven gods made out of various metals.

B. God warned that all these craftsmen that made idols would soon be afraid and ashamed.

C. Religion is to secure our souls from the spirit and eternal world, but idols cannot at all.

1. Any religion that leaves a person afraid and/or ashamed is a vain and worthless faith.
2. God used idolatry's great inability to avoid fear and shame against it (Isaiah 45:16).
3. And He exalted His religion that removes both (Is 45:17; 41:13-14; 43:1,5; 44:2).

12 The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

A. God's mockery of idolatry here continued with a graven god made out of various metals.

B. Consider … the man forming the idol is so weak he gets hungry, fails, gets thirst, faints.

C. Consider … if the being making the god is so vulnerable to weakness, what of his god?

13 The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

A. God then moved to idolatry of wood gods, not metal, to ridicule it down to eating ashes.

B. The wooden statue here is one that is carved to look like a human head, bust, or figure.

C. God mocked the effort by the details of the tools necessary to form this wooden god.

14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

A. Idolaters make investments to learn about trees so they can specialize in wooden gods.

B. He knows certain kinds of trees and wood will last longer and be better suited for idols.

15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

A. Our God, Creator of the universe, mocked idolaters for their other uses of god material.

B. This fool took a tree to burn for cooking and for heat and then used the rest for a god.

C. As we justly mock the idolater, we always know we would be one without God's grace.

16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

A. Our God, Creator of the universe, mocked idolaters for their other uses of god material.

B. This fool took a tree to burn for cooking and for heat and then used the rest for a god.

C. As we justly mock the idolater, we always know we would be one without God's grac

17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

A. A leftover god! Meaning a god made from the leftovers of a tree or log after other uses!

B. Our God gets into the details – the details of mocking the worshipper of a totem pole.

An Explanation for Idolaters' Blind Insanity – Verses 18-20

18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

A. Why are those in false religions without basic understanding? God rewired them to it.

B. God does not shut the eyes and hearts of men from truth or sense when they deny Him.

C. Author of Confusion.

D.

19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

A. The facts here: a log was used for heat and cooking and the rest of it turned into a god.
   1. God repeated this ridiculous situation again for emphasis and to expose its insanity.
   2. Any man should be able to consider the facts and admit the whole this is ridiculous.

B. Idolaters, or any false religionists, cannot consider or analyze their actions to see the lie.
   1. American Indians cannot grasp that their totem poles or great spirit is nothing at all.
   2. Eastern Indians cannot grasp that bathing in the Ganges is stupid and without profit.
   3. Muslims cannot grasp they adore a meteorite and their prophet could not prophesy.
   4. Catholics cannot grasp that the dissolving cracker god in their mouths is not Jesus.
   5. Mormons cannot grasp that the peeper Joseph Smith never saw an angel of Jehovah.
   6. Jehovah's Witnesses cannot grasp that their founder Russell was a cheat, fraud, liar.
   7. Charismatics cannot grasp that Benny has never healed anyone unless the devil did.

C. Right Side Up in an Upside Down World.

20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

A. God further mocked idolaters by using His metaphor of a wood idol as feeding on ashes.

B. While the fool may have saved part of the wood from the fire, it was equivalent to ashes.

C. The hearts of idolaters, and of all false religionists, are deceived into turning to vanity.

1. Deceit is a terrible things, for you think truth a lie and a lie truth to your own ruin.
2. There is a sensible approach of religion to seek a higher power, not a lower vanity!
3. His soul is so deceived by sin and God that he cannot save his soul by seeing the lie.
4. God rewires men to worship such ridiculous objects (Rom 1:18-25; II Thess 2:9-12).

D. Author of Confusion.

God's Forgiveness of Israel to Cause Praise – Verses 21-23

21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

A. God called the Jews to remember these foolish idolaters and their very stupid religion.
B. As opposed to be servants of worthless idols, Israel was the servant of GOD Jehovah.
C. The idol gods of the heathen could not know anything, but God would not forget Israel.

22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

A. The Jews of Judah were in Babylon for their sins, as Daniel confessed (Daniel 9:1-19).
B. God blotted out their transgressions and sins for them to return after buying them back.
C. When God is reconciled toward us, then we must also reconcile as well (II Co 5:18-20).
D. There is no reason to leap forward here 600 years to blood redemption by the cross.
    1. Compare the following verse – what redemption is the main theme of these chapters?
    2. Compare the next verses – is not the issue here escape from Babylon to Jerusalem?
    3. Compare more distant verses – the emphasized fact before the chapter ends is Cyrus.

23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

A. God and His prophet called on the whole creation to give praise to God for saving Israel.
B. The LORD Jehovah had redeemed or saved Israel His chosen people out of Babylon.
    1. They could not have done it themselves, being so weak in the mightiest city on earth.
    2. God rescued Israel out of Babylon in one night by His blessings on Cyrus the Great.
    3. God glorified Himself to the whole world by overthrowing the great city (Is 47:5-7).

God's Mockery of Diviners and Wise Men – Verses 24-26

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

A. Israel's redeemer was LORD Jehovah, who had chosen them and created the universe.
B. Reference to God's creation of all things is very common and should be used by faith.

25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

A. God had warned all nations that all other sources of counsel were wrong (Jer 27:1-11).
B. Our glorious God, Jehovah of Israel, overrode all ideas and wisdom of Babylon's magi.
    1. Babylon's magi were magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, soothsayers (Dan 5:7,11).
    2. Only Daniel could interpret wall writing at Belshazzar's party (Daniel 5:17,25-29).
C. Author of Confusion.

26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

A. God's servants here are His prophets that foretold the Jews returning to build Jerusalem.
B. Isaiah was surely God's servant and foretold rescue from Babylon here and elsewhere.
C. Jeremiah, 100 years after Isaiah, was read by Daniel (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; II Chr 36:21).

God Foretold Cyrus's Victory and Orders – Verses 27-28

27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

A. Amazing prophetic detail – the method by which Darius and Cyrus captured Babylon!
    1. Their army corps of engineers diverted the Euphrates to an area designed for floods.
    2. The joint Median and Persian army entered the city by the riverbed at both ends.
    3. There is a possibility that Isaiah has already alluded to this military tactic (Is 43:14).
B. Jeremiah likely also foretold this means of taking the city (Jeremiah 50:38; 51:32,36).
C. Babylon's Overthrow.

28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

A. God Jehovah here identified the Persian king that would do His will to save His church.
    1. This is Cyrus II of Persia, commonly known as Cyrus the Great in secular history.
    2. This fabulous prophecy of which God boasts often was revealed already (Is 41:2-4).
    3. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon will run through this section (Is 49:24-26).
    4. Bible scorners or skeptics invent other authors of Isaiah to avoid the supernatural.
    5. Bible students that worship Ussher/Ptolemy deny Cyrus for Artaxerxes for Daniel 9.
B. God called Cyrus by name about 100 years before his birth, 160 years before Babylon.
    1. These are the most conservative estimates, as commentators may choose 150 or 200.
    2. In our BC/AD years – Isaiah prophesied 617; Cyrus born 517; he took Babylon 456.
    3. This kind of fulfilled prophecy should build our faith and cause loud shouts of praise.
    4. Isaiah prophesied during the Assyrian Empire, but foretold Babylon and then Persia.

5. Very Short Chronology.
6. Ptolemy Error 80 Years.
7. Fulfilled Prophecy.

C. The pagan, Persian king Cyrus II was God's choice for a shepherd to rescue His church.
   1. A shepherd is the caretaker and caregiver of sheep, who feeds and protects the sheep.
   2. Cyrus protected the Jews, released the Jews to new pasture, and provided their way.
   3. Kings and queens are nursing fathers and mothers (Is 49:23), but also our shepherds.

D. This heathen king would do all God's *pleasure,* mainly to rebuild Jerusalem and temple.
   1. The context/content of these chapters in Israel's history was ending time in Babylon.
   2. God can, has, and will use pagan kings to achieve His pleasure on earth (Is 46:9-11).
   3. God's pleasure was to kill Belshazzar and overthrow Babylon by Cyrus (Is 48:14).

E. The crucial issue about Cyrus and Jerusalem and its temple is his command to rebuild.
   1. Note carefully here that the inspired prophecy is Cyrus's order to rebuild them both.
   2. As far as this text is concerned, if Cyrus did nothing but order it, Isaiah is fulfilled.
   3. Daniel's prophecy of 70 years began its timeline with a command to rebuild the city.
   4. As far as that text is concerned, if Cyrus did nothing but order it, Daniel is fulfilled.
   5. God moved Cyrus to write his command to rebuild (II Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2).
   6. Therefore, all foolish and wise men that reject Cyrus are clearly and forever wrong.
   7. Cyrus was God's servant and no other; Artaxerxes came far short of Cyrus in deeds.
   8. However, we know from the context here that Cyrus did build the city (Isaiah 45:13).
   9. Daniel's 70 Weeks.
   10. Ptolemy Error 80 Years.