

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

THEME:

The greatness of God and weakness of man contrasted.

REMARKS:

This chapter continues the thought of chapter 40 in setting forth the greatness of God. The emphasis here is not upon God as Creator so much as upon His dealings with man. The greatness of God is revealed in creation and human history.

Some things in this chapter are rather enigmatic. It seems as if there is a bare profile of prophecy in the background, but the thought is that God will protect and lead His own through the world fraught with pitfalls and dangers. There is comfort here for the child of God.

OUTLINE:

1. **God OVERRULES Individuals.** Verses 1-6
2. **God OVERTURES Israel to Trust Him.** Verses 7-20
3. **God OVERTURNS Idols.** Verses 21-29

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.**

The whole world of individuals is moving to judgment. A showdown is coming between light and darkness—faith and unbelief.

Verse 2—**Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword and as driven stubble to his bow.**

“**Righteous man from the east**” is a strong expression.

Some have found in it a veiled suggestion of Cyrus. The word actually refers to a quality, “righteousness,” and not to a person. It could be a reference to the Coming of Christ to bring in the rule of righteousness.

Verse 3—**He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.**

Verse 4—**Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and the last; I am he.**

Verse 5—**The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.**

Verse 6—**They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.**

Since God is coming to right the wrongs and relieve injustices, individuals who are right with God can be of good courage, here is hope for the little man who trusts God.

Verse 7—**So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.**

In the emergency, many resorted to making a temporary idol following their refusal to look to God.

Verse 8—**But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.**

God now turns to Israel to comfort them in their distress. God chose them when they were still Jacob—the crooked one. God made him “**a prince.**”

Abraham is called the friend of God.

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness and he was called the Friend of God (James 2:23).

God took him into confidence when He was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Believers are called the friends of Christ today.

Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you (John 15:15).

He longs to take us into His confidence.

Verse 10—Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

This verse has been the source of comfort for God's children in every age.

Verse 11—Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

Verse 12—Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

To oppose God is the height of folly which time alone will reveal.

Verse 13—For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Here is God's gracious overture to trust Him—what comfort!

Verse 14—Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

It is not the goodness of man which prompts God to hold man's hand, note well the expression "thou worm Jacob." He is "thy redeemer."

Verse 15—Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

Evidently a reference to the witness of the remnant which will bring many down to repentance.

Verse 16—Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 17—When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Verse 18—I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Verse 19—I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

Verse 20—**That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.**

This is a reference to material blessings of the Millennium.

Verse 21—**Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.**

This is a challenge to idolaters.

Verse 22—**Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.**

Can idols explain the origin of the universe of man?

Verse 23—**Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.**

Do idols know the future?

Verse 24—**Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.**

Man cannot explain His past and he does not know his future apart from God. That makes all of man's effort, apart from God, a very vain thing.

Verse 25—**I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.**

This is a reference to the same one mentioned in verse 2, here he comes from the north.

Verse 26—**Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.**

Verse 27—**The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.**

Verse 28—**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.**

Verse 29—**Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.**

Confusion is the end result of idolatry or any philosophy which is anti-God or atheistic. It does not have an answer to the problems of life. These man-made systems cannot satisfy the human heart. The answer is found in the “**one that bringeth good tidings.**”

~ end of chapter 41 ~

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