

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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ISAIAH CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

THE INFINITELY STRONG ONE

“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. 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. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he” (verses 1-4).

IN CHAPTER forty-one God is still put in contrast with man’s weakness. These are promises made to Israel when they are restored to Him, but they follow the account of the majesty of God, and it is man in his weakness depending on the infinitely Strong One.

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. 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.

“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. 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. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. 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. 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” (verses 8-15).

To know God and to confide in Him is to be invincible. None can really injure one whose confidence is in the Lord, for He will cause all that seems to be evil to work for the good of those who put their trust in Him. It is thus that fear, that deadly enemy of the heart, is overcome.

In due time God will deal with those who seek to injure His people. He will mete out righteous judgment to those who trouble His saints (II Thessalonians 1:6, 7). The believer can afford to leave all in His hands and so go on in quietness and confidence, through good or evil report.

Since retribution is in God's hands the enemies of God's people shall soon pass away and be forgotten, but those who do the will of God abide forever. We have the reassuring promise, "**Fear not; I will help thee.**" It is God Himself who has given this word.

Faith lays hold of it and the heart enters into rest, content to know that He who loved us enough to give His Son to die for us will never fail those who commit their ways unto Him. These promises come in as an encouraging preface before the Lord points out the folly of turning to senseless idols who are absolutely unable to help.

The words here, "**Abraham My friend,**" are referred to in James 2:23, where Abraham is called "**the friend of God.**" What a wonderful thing for God to say of any man - "**My friend**"! The Lord Jesus said to His disciples: "**Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: I have called you friends.**" The servant is to do what he is told. It is not for him to ask, "**Why should I do this?**" But to a friend one unburdens his heart, and the Lord speaks of Abraham as "**My friend.**"

He took him into His confidence in regard to Sodom's judgment. So all the way through, God delights to open up His heart and mind to His friends. That is the object of the prophetic Scriptures. They open up God's truth so that His friends may enter into it and understand that which He is about to do.

The expression concerning Israel that God will make them a "**sharp threshing instrument with teeth,**" points on to the great harvest of the last days when a remnant of Israel restored to the Lord will be used of Him to bring many down before Him in repentance and lead them to put faith in the message that they proclaim.

As servants of Christ we also need to be sharp threshing instruments with teeth. A great deal of preaching has very few "teeth." We should be faithful in pointing out the wickedness of mankind and the exceeding sinfulness of sin that men may realize where they stand before God. So preaching needs to have "teeth," else it may be absolutely powerless and colorless, and saved or unsaved can sit and listen to it and enjoy it.

~ end of chapter 41 ~

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