



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"They're Looking at the Wrong Light"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Is 44:6-20; *Isaiah*. 43:25-28; 44:1-5; 21-23; 42:6-9; 40:31; 41:1

Isaiah 44:6–20 is one of those passages where Adonai doesn't just *correct* idolatry—He exposes it. And He does it with this sharp, almost painful irony. It's like He's saying, "Slow down. Look at what you're doing. Listen to your own logic." Because what's happening in exile is that Israel is surrounded by Babylon's gods, Babylon's religious confidence, Babylon's monuments—and it can *feel* like the nations' idols are winning. Jerusalem is rubble. The people are displaced. And the temptation is to start thinking, "Maybe their light is real. Maybe their gods have power. Maybe we should chase what they chase."

But the Lord refuses to let the end of Is. 43 be the final word. Yes, judgment came. Yes, the people are in a place they deserved because of rebellion. And still Adonai says, *I made you. I formed you from the womb. I will help you.* He calls them "My servant" again—still His. He speaks comfort: *Don't fear.* He promises water on thirsty ground, streams on dry places, His Spirit poured out, discernment awakening, and a people who will openly say with lips and hands, "I am Adonai's." Then, right as that identity is being rebuilt, God turns and says: "Now let's talk about the counterfeit light you're tempted to trust."

1. The First and the Last Is the Only Light Worth Trusting

Adonai opens this whole section by reminding Israel who He is before He ever talks about idols: "*Thus says Adonai, Israel's King and his Redeemer... I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God beside Me.*" (Isa. 44:6). In exile, surrounded by Babylon's gods, it could feel like the nations' idols were winning. Jerusalem was rubble, the people were displaced, and the temptation was to believe the wrong light. But God says, "I am still your King, and I am still your Redeemer." A king does not abandon his people, and a kinsman-redeemer does not leave his relative in tragedy. Adonai-Tzva'ot, the Lord of hosts, has the power to bring Israel out, because His authority is not fragile or borrowed.

Then He declares something the idols can never claim: "*I am the first and I am the last.*" (Isa. 44:6). Idols have a beginning — a craftsman shaped them. But Adonai is self-existing, self-sufficient, supreme. That's why He challenges the nations: "*Who is like Me?... Let him proclaim it... Let them declare what is coming and future events.*" (Isa. 44:7). The Lord looks at His people and says, "*Do not dread... you are My witnesses... Is there any other Rock? I know of none.*" (Isa. 44:8). His character is the assurance of His people. The true light is not found in something you produce — it IS the One who produced you.

2. Idolatry Is Worshiping the Work of Your Own Hands

The Lord turns to the idols of the world and exposes their emptiness: "*Those who fashion idols are empty... Their precious things do not profit... Their witnesses do not see or know.*" (Isa. 44:9). The makers become like what they worship — futile, formless, disappointed. The things they long for most deeply, their "precious things," cannot actually deliver. And Isaiah is showing that idolatry is not only ancient statue worship — it is humanity bowing down to what it has created, trusting in something made from the stuff of creation to do what only the Creator can do.

Then the irony sharpens: the craftsmen are only human. The blacksmith works with all his strength — until he gets hungry, until his strength fails, until he grows weary (Isa. 44:12). The "god" depends entirely on the maker's capacity. That's why Isaiah contrasts it with the Lord's promise: "*They who wait for Adonai will renew their strength.*" (Isa. 40:31). Idolatry is ultimately self-worship — shaping a god in

your own image, or crafting a version of God that fits your desires. But the true God is not formed by us. He is the One who formed us.

3. The Leftover Light Can't Heal a Deceived Heart

Isaiah drives the absurdity home with almost painful detail. A man cuts down a tree — one he planted, one rain made grow (Isa. 44:14). Then he uses part of it to warm himself and bake bread, and with the rest he makes a god. *"He burns half of it in the fire... Yet with the remainder he makes a god... and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god!'"* (Isa. 44:16–17). The idol is literally made from leftovers, incidental scraps from self-preservation. And yet he bows down and calls it salvation. That's why the title is so fitting: they are looking at the wrong light — the light they produced rather than the Light who produced them.

And the tragedy is that they cannot even see it. *"They do not know or understand... plastered over from seeing are their eyes."* (Isa. 44:18). Delusion blinds. A deceived heart leads them astray until they are *"feeding on ashes"* and cannot even admit, *"Isn't what is in my right hand a fraud?"* (Isa. 44:20). But Adonai calls Israel back: *"I formed you... you will not be forgotten... Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."* (Isa. 44:21–22). The false light cannot save, cannot warm, cannot feed — but the Redeemer can. He alone.

CONCLUSION:

This is the dividing line Isaiah keeps pressing: are you trusting the light that you made, or are you returning to the Light that made you? Because the idols of Babylon are not just ancient statues — they represent the human instinct to depend on what our own hands can produce. And that same idolatry is everywhere today. People still say, "Save me," to money, success, security, power, control, even to a version of God crafted in their own image. They make it, they shape it, and then they bow down before it — looking at the wrong light.

Today, stop trusting what cannot deliver. Adonai says, *"Remember these things... I formed you... you will not be forgotten by Me... Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."* (Isa. 44:21–22). If you've been trying to be your own source of light, warmth, and salvation, today is the day to come to the end of yourself and say, "Lord, form me into Your likeness. Pour out Your Spirit. Open my eyes. And let me be the light You've called me to be — not worshiping what I've made, but worshiping the One who made me."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where are you most tempted to trust something you've produced instead of trusting Adonai as your Rock?
2. What does it mean to you that God calls Himself *"the First and the Last"* (Isa. 44:6)?
3. What are some modern "idols" people look to for security, comfort, or salvation?
4. Isaiah says the idol-maker ends up *"feeding on ashes"* (Isa. 44:20). What does that look like spiritually today?
5. What would it look like for you personally to obey the invitation, *"Return to Me, for I have redeemed you"* (Isa. 44:22) this week?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkenu, Our Father, Our King, Adonai, You alone are God. You are the First and the Last, our King and our Redeemer, and there is no Rock besides You. Forgive us for the ways we have trusted what our own hands have made, for looking to lesser lights to save, comfort, or satisfy us. Open our eyes where deception has blinded us, and turn our hearts fully back to You. Thank You that You have formed us, that we are not forgotten, and that You blot out our sins and call us to return. Pour out Your Spirit upon us, renew our strength, and shape us into the servants You've called us to be. Let our lives reflect Your true light to those still walking in darkness. *B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.