

**Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isaiah 40-55)**  
**(#11) God's Denouncement of Idols and their Makers (Isaiah 44:9-20)**

(Because our weekly outline Of Isaiah 40-55 is growing too lengthy,  
it is now placed at the end of these notes.)

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God's major purpose through His work in history is that He is glorified as the one true God who has revealed Himself as the Creator of all that is, the Judge of the entire human race, and the Redeemer of His people. It should be our major aim in life to know this true God, Who is and Who works His purposes in history. As our Lord Jesus expressed to His Father, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You sent" (John 17:3).

Here in Isaiah 43 and 44 God was revealing Himself and His nature. The prophet had described God, who He was, and what He was like. But then God Himself stepped forward and spoke, as we read in Isaiah 44:6, "***I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.***" No power exists, nor has existed or will exist, which can prevent God from accomplishing His purposes. God has never been taken by surprise, outwitted, or defeated, or even resisted so as to hinder Him with respect to His workings. He would have us come to the place that He had once brought the ancient Emperor of Babylon, who said, "I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.  
<sup>35</sup>All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;  
He does according to His will in the army of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of the earth.  
No one can restrain His hand  
Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (Dan. 4:34f)

In describing His own glory, God made the appeal in **verse 7**:

***And who can proclaim as I do?  
Then let him 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 show these to them.***

Here God gave forth a challenge. It is directed toward idols, but of course it was ultimately directed to the idol makers and idol worshippers. The idols are addressed as if they really were gods, and He challenged them to reveal themselves, to recount any event that they had predicted would come to pass and that they had caused to come to pass.

We then read in **verse 8**,

***<sup>8</sup>Do not fear, nor be afraid;  
Have I not told you from that time, and declared it?  
You are My witnesses.  
Is there a God besides Me?  
Indeed there is no other Rock;***

*I know not one.”*

The false gods did not really exist, but they were addressed for the benefit and comfort of His people. Here His people are encouraged to trust Him and not to be afraid of anything that has threatened them. And besides, there is no one else to depend upon Who is strong, as say a rock. Their God is all that there is.

We next read a rather lengthy...

#### **K. Satire against Idolatry (44:9-20)**

Recall that when this prophecy was delivered to its intended recipients, that these were Jewish exiles who were held captive and in bondage in Babylon. The Lord God had purposed that He would deliver His people from their oppressors, enabling their return to Zion where they would serve Him and worship Him openly and freely. But from the perspective of His people who were held in captivity, their rulers and oppressors were not willing to release them. Moreover their captors were too powerful to resist and the people were too weak to overthrow their authority. But God would show His people that these Babylonians were idolaters, who relied on gods who were no gods, gods that did not exist. God is showing His people that these oppressors were powerless to prevent God from delivering His people, when God stepped forward to affect their release.

By way of application for us, our God would set us free from all that would prevent us from serving Him freely and fully. For there are forces that would prevent us from doing so, to keep us from serving our God in faith, fellowship, and obedience to His will. The world allures us; the devil pursues us; our own sin defeats and binds us. But our God, in whom we place our trust, would set us free from all forces that would wield their tyrannical power over us. God has sent His Son to set His people free so that we may serve our God in holiness and happiness.

The opening chapter of Luke's Gospel records this purpose of God for sending His Son. We read of this in the prophecy of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, when he declared that his son would be the forerunner of the Son of David who would rule over His people. Here are Zechariah's words inspired by the Holy Spirit:

“Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,  
<sup>69</sup>And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,  
<sup>70</sup>As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who have been since the world began,  
<sup>71</sup>That we should be saved from our enemies  
And from the hand of all who hate us,  
<sup>72</sup>To perform the mercy promised to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup>The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:  
<sup>74</sup>To grant us that we,

***Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,***

<sup>75</sup> ***In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.*** (Luke 1:68-5)

Take note of this language that bridges the Old Testament theme of physical bondage and the need for God to set His people free and the New Testament reality of God sending Jesus Christ to deliver us from our spiritual enemies, including our own sins, so that we may serve Him, living in a holy manner and in a state of peace. The same ideas are present here that are present in Isaiah's prophecy respecting God delivering Israel from its Babylonian masters. The account of God delivering His people from Babylon is a type, or a foreshadowing of the greater deliverance from the damning and domineering effects of sin that plague His people, from which Jesus Christ brings deliverance.

The Lord Jesus Himself declared that He sets His people free from sin so that they might serve God acceptably. For as long as we serve sin, we are unable to serve our God as He would have us serve Him. We read of our Lord Jesus' interaction with certain Jewish men, some of whom believed on Him and some who did not. We read in **John 8:31-36** these words,

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup>And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

<sup>33</sup>They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup>And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup>Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Now as we have pointed out many times, the Jewish people that Isaiah's prophecy addressed, were in physical bondage in Babylon due to God's judgment upon them for their sin. These people could not deliver themselves. God must deliver them from bondage or it would not happen. But the real problem of this people was not the physical power of their physical enemies to keep them from political liberty. They were in Babylon due to God's judgment upon them for their sin. It was their sin that had bound them and it was their sin from which they needed to be set free.

And so, by way of application, as we read of the futility of those Babylonians, who trusted in their idols to prevent God from setting His people free, so we should be encouraged with this certainty: As a Christian You may be assured that **there is no sin with which you battle, that sin that seems so easily defeats you and keeps you from being free in conscience toward God, there is no sin that can resist the purpose and power of God through Jesus Christ when He has purposed to deliver you from its power.**

Now when we say that Jesus Christ can set us free from the power of sin, we are not saying that in this life we will be delivered from the presence of sin. As long as we dwell in these earthly bodies, which are prone to sin. We live in this fallen world with a devil to tempt us to sin, we will never be delivered from the threat or the presence of sin. We deceive ourselves if we think that we can arrive to a state of perfection in this life or if we think that we will ever arrive to the place that sin will no longer be present in us while we are in this world. As we read in 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But we can and we must be delivered from the tyranny of sin, so that the will of God in Jesus Christ governs our lives, not the sin that dwells within us. This is the nature and the way of true salvation, as we read in Romans 8:11ff.

<sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, brethren, we are debtors-- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>***For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*** (Rom. 8:11-13)

This is also clearly stated in **Galatians 6:7-9**.

<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>***For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*** <sup>9</sup>And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Let us turn our attention to this passage in which God mocks the idolaters and their idols, showing their inability to prevent God from setting His people free. We first encounter a number of verses in which we read of...

### **1. God's Attack on the Folly of Idolaters (44:9-20)**

First, the prophet shows the utter folly of idolatry (vs. 9-11).

*<sup>9</sup>Those who make an image, all of them are useless,  
And their precious things shall not profit;  
They are their own witnesses;  
They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.*

*<sup>10</sup>Who would form a god or mold an image  
That profits him nothing?*

*<sup>11</sup>Surely all his companions would be ashamed;  
And the workmen, they are mere men.  
Let them all be gathered together,  
Let them stand up;  
Yet they shall fear,  
They shall be ashamed together.*

The belief in, and the worship of these idols bring no benefit to them. Idolatry actually produces a false hope. The idolaters are ignorant of what they are doing, utterly void of sense. The people who worship these idols become like these idols—blind and ignorant. Their end will be shame and misery.

We next read in verse 12 that the producers of the idols are ridiculed.

*<sup>12</sup>The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals,  
Fashions it with hammers,  
And works it with the strength of his arms.  
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails;  
He drinks no water and is faint.*

The maker of the idol is no better for his labor. Actually he is worse off. He has expended his time and energy for nothing. And he receives no true benefit for all his attention and effort.

Now where the blacksmith was considered in verse 12, in verse 13 we read of the carpenter, who also contributes to the making of an idol. Idols were wood with metal fashioned over them. The thought is that gods which are the creations of their own hands, for which the idol makers had expended effort, does not bring them return; rather, their idolatry leaves them only weakened in comparison to what they were when they began. We read in **verse 13**:

*<sup>13</sup>The craftsman stretches out his rule,  
He marks one out with chalk;  
He fashions it with a plane,  
He marks it out with the compass,  
And makes it like the figure of a man,  
According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.*

Here we have a description of the ancient wood sculptor's work. Consider the great expenditure of time and effort in the production of idols. "The more laboriously they (the idolaters) toil for their own destruction, the more base and shameful our slothfulness, by which we defraud God of His lawful worship" (Calvin).

In **verses 14** through **17** the work of the idol maker is described from first to last. In doing so the folly of the idolater is shown for putting his trust in a worthless thing that he has made with his own hands.

*<sup>14</sup>He cuts down cedars for himself,  
And takes the cypress and the oak;  
He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest.  
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it.*

<sup>15</sup>*Then it shall be for a man to burn,  
For he will take some of it and warm himself;  
Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread;  
Indeed he makes a god and worships it;  
He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.*

<sup>16</sup>*He burns half of it in the fire;  
With this half he eats meat;  
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.  
He even warms himself and says,  
“Ah! I am warm,  
I have seen the fire.”*

<sup>17</sup>*And the rest of it he makes into a god,  
His carved image.  
He falls down before it and worships it,  
Prays to it and says,  
“Deliver me, for you are my god!”*

The generic idolater is described here. He gives great attention and expends great effort in his task. But he does not sit back and consider logically what he is doing. Common sense should indicate that if you take of the same substance and use it as firewood and you take another portion and make a god, that the god is no better than the ashes that are left over from the fire.

**John Calvin** commented on the great effort that idolaters put forth to worship their false gods. Should we as Christians who worship the true God be less devoted to the true God than they of their false gods?

It ought also to be remarked that, since idolaters are impelled by so great eagerness to worship idols, we ought to be ashamed of our coldness in the true worship of God. Let us be ashamed, I say, that we are so negligent and cold and even freezing, when the worshippers of idols are so ardent; and let us consider that we must render an account. With what rage are the Turks (i.e. muslims) seized, when the question relates to the defense of the reveries of their prophet Mahomet, for whom they gladly both shed their blood and part with their life! By what rage are the Papists (i.e. Roman Catholics) impelled to follow their superstitions! Yet we scarcely become warm, and sometimes extinguish the sparks of that zeal which the Lord has kindled in us. To this also applies that expostulation of Jeremiah,

“Is there any nation that hath forsaken its gods? But My people have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged for themselves cisterns which cannot hold water.” (Jer. 2:10-13)

This comparison, therefore, ought to be carefully observed, that we may not be less steadfast in defending truth than they are obstinate in falsehood.<sup>1</sup>

Let us next read **verses 18-20**, in which we read of God’s judicial dealings with those who refuse to hear Him and His words, but rather look to worthless idols.

<sup>18</sup>*They do not know nor understand;  
For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see,  
And their hearts, so that they cannot understand.*

<sup>19</sup>*And no one considers in his heart,  
Nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say,  
“I have burned half of it in the fire,  
Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals;  
I have roasted meat and eaten it;*

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on Isaiah*, vol. 3, PDF file, p. 228.

*And shall I make the rest of it an abomination?  
Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"  
<sup>20</sup>He feeds on ashes;  
A deceived heart has turned him aside;  
And he cannot deliver his soul,  
Nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"*

We see that God had determined to judge them. And so, He confirms them in their sin, judicially blinding them so that they are unable to see their folly and turn from it. They become blind like their idols are blind. They continue in their folly to their destruction.

In what sense God is said to blind men, and to "give them up to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28) is evident from various passages of Scripture; that is, when He takes away the light of His Spirit, and gives a loose rein to the lust of men, so that no reasoning can restrain them. He likewise arms Satan with the efficiency of error, so that they who have refused to obey the truth do not guard against his snares, and are liable to be deceived by his impostures. What then can be left in us but the thickest darkness and gross ignorance, so that this tyrant, the father of lies and of darkness, ravages at his pleasure both within and without? For there will not be found in us any spark of light to dispel the clouds of error, but, impelled by a spirit of giddiness with which God strikes the reprobate, (2 Thess. 2:11) we shall be driven about in a strange manner at the will of Satan.<sup>2</sup>

We next read...

#### **L. An Appeal for Israel to Respond to God (44:21-23)**

In **verse 21** God spoke to His people to encourage them in His purpose to deliver them from their oppressors. First, He assured them that He had regard for them. He recalls to them that He had created them. He stated that He created them for a purpose, for He created Israel to be His servant. God would see to it that His purpose for having created them would come to pass.

*"Remember these, O Jacob,  
And Israel, for you are My servant;  
I have formed you, you are My servant;  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me!*

And so, God reminds these people of Israel that they have been called to higher things. In contrast to idolaters who create their gods, the one true God had fashioned them. Here the Lord assures His people that He has designs for them since they are His possession.

Now again, God was speaking to these Israelites in the context of them being in bondage to the Babylonians. The Babylonians were idolaters, as had been the Israelites. One of the reasons that God took them into exile to Babylon was to cure them of their idolatry. The prophet is giving them an object lesson. "Look at the folly of these idolaters and learn from them. Idolatry is senseless and useless."

Then God assured His people that He no longer took into account their sin that had resulted in God having expelled them from their homeland and had sent them into exile. God pardoned them and therefore He calls them to return onto Him. **Verse 22** reads,

*<sup>22</sup>I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions,  
And like a cloud, your sins.  
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 230.

This looks forward to the end of the exile, God declaring to them that He had put behind Him the cause for their judgment. He once again was to bring them back into their land. Their transgressions and sins are likened to the morning mists and clouds that are dissipated by the heat of the sun. Their sins are removed from them which resulted in no more barriers between them and God. In response to God's action of putting away their sins they are to put them away from themselves and return fully to the Lord.

In the same way, God has blotted out our sins, our transgressions against His Law. The response ought to be one of gratefulness, repentance from sin, and submission to Him as our God.

Let us recognize that the fact that God could and did forgive their sins was due to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, although Jesus would not be born in Bethlehem until about 400 years later than this event. God "overlooked" the sins of His people prior to the death of Jesus, for their sins had not yet been paid for when Jesus died upon His cross. Paul wrote God's forgiveness of sins of Old Testament saints in Romans 3:

For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, ***because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed***, <sup>26</sup>to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:22-26)

"The sins that were previously committed" were those of His people prior to the death of Jesus Christ on His cross. When God declared through Isaiah that the sins of these people were "blotted out", it was with view to the one atoning sacrifice for sin that God recognizes, the death of His own Son on behalf of His people.

This great work of God on behalf of His people should lead them to rejoice in the great mercy and grace shown to them. We read in **verse 23** of the prophet's instruction for all of creation to praise God for His great work of redeeming His people.

***<sup>23</sup>Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it!  
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;  
Break forth into singing, you mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it!  
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,  
And glorified Himself in Israel.***

They are to voice praise to God for His great work which ***He would yet perform*** of redeeming them from their enemies. God will have glorified Himself in saving His people, they should seek to make known His goodness and power in all the earth.

If they were to respond in this manner for a temporal deliverance from their captors, how much more should we praise Him for ***the far greater deliverance that He has wrought on our behalf!*** Praise should be made for the great salvation of God that He has so freely granted us. And, if this kind of praise was to be offered for the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, how much more for the deliverance which we have experienced and will yet experience. God is glorified most in His work of redeeming His people.

We next read of the human instrument that God would raise up to enable His people to be released from Babylon.

#### **M. God Commissions the Persian Emperor Cyrus to Deliver His People (44:24-45:13)**

In order to confirm to His people the fact that He will bring to pass what He has promised, the Lord describes Himself in terms that depict His power. He reminds them of the great power He showed when He first redeemed them at their birth as a nation when they were brought forth from Egypt.

***Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,***

*And He who formed you from the womb:  
"I am the LORD, who makes all things,  
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,  
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;  
<sup>25</sup>Who frustrates the signs of the babblers,  
And drives diviners mad;  
Who turns wise men backward,  
And makes their knowledge foolishness;*

The Babylonians thought they could predict the future through astrology. God calls them liars and madmen, who trade in folly. It is God who made the heavens and the earth also. God acts in a way to confound His enemies.

The Lord, in order to assure His people more fully, states His intention to deliver His people and enable their return to their homeland. **Verse 26** describes God before God speaks, affirming His commitment to deliver His people.

*<sup>26</sup>Who confirms the word of His servant,  
And performs the counsel of His messengers;  
Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,'  
To the cities of Judah,  
'You shall be built,'  
And I will raise up her waste places;*

The prophet described God as having been faithful to His servants, the prophets. Everything that He ever told His servants to speak forth that He determined to do, He did. He was faithful to His spokesmen. Here, the word says that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, even though it had been destroyed by the Babylonians and laid in ruins even as this word was given. And it came to pass that Jerusalem was rebuilt when a remnant returned after their release from exile.

We read that God's deliverance would be like to that He performed in the past.

*<sup>27</sup>Who says to the deep, 'Be dry!  
And I will dry up your rivers';*

As God would not allow the Red Sea to keep His people in bondage in Egypt, when He had originally promised to bring them out, so the same God has the same power to bring to pass what He declared He would do.

We then read an amazing prophecy in **verse 28**.

*<sup>28</sup>Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd,  
And he shall perform all My pleasure,  
Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built,"  
And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."'*

Here God identified by name the instrument by which He would bring to pass the release of His people. Here the emperor of Persia is identified by name perhaps 150 years before the event. Cyrus would be the Persian king whom God would use to destroy the Babylonians and deliver His people from their bondage. The end, of course, is that the people would be free to worship Him in His temple. Our freedom should not be viewed as chiefly to serve us in a state of comfort, but to serve Him without fear or hindrance.

This naming of Cyrus by Isaiah long before Cyrus was even born has resulted in liberal scholars to deny the historicity of this portion of the book of Isaiah, denying that this could have been written by Isaiah. Because they deny the possibility of predictive prophecy, they say that a writer who pretended to write as Isaiah had written this account after it had taken place, writing it as if it had been predicted long before. It is not that they have any evidence to suggest this, but it is their own bias against the belief in a God who gives His servants the

prophets insight into future events that has led them to their conclusions. But interestingly, there is an ancient account of one bringing this prophecy of Isaiah to King Cyrus after he had conquered Babylon. He was so impressed at this prophecy of Isaiah that it moved him to show favor to the Jews and he released them from their captivity. Here is the account from the first century historian, **Josephus**:

1. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus (1) which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city, that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity, and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them; for he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: "Thus saith Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea."

2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, *when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, (2) and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices.*

3. When Cyrus had said this to the Israelites, the rulers of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites and priests, went in haste to Jerusalem; yet did many of them stay at Babylon, as not willing to leave their possessions; and when they were come thither, all the king's friends assisted them, and brought in, for the building of the temple, some gold, and some silver, and some a great many cattle and horses. So they performed their vows to God, and offered the sacrifices that had been accustomed of old time; I mean this upon the rebuilding of their city, and the revival of the ancient practices relating to their worship. Cyrus also sent back to them the vessels of God which king Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged out of the temple, and had carried to Babylon. So he committed these things to Mithridates, the treasurer, to be sent away, with an order to give them to Sanabassar, that he might keep them till the temple was built; and when it was finished, he might deliver them to the priests and rulers of the multitude, in order to their being restored to the temple. Cyrus also sent an epistle to the governors that were in Syria, the contents whereof here follow:

#### **"KING CYRUS TO SISINNES AND SATHRABUZANES SENDETH GREETING.**

"I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before. I have also sent my treasurer Mithridates, and Zorobabel, the governor of the Jews, that they may lay the foundations of the temple, and may build it sixty cubits high, and of the same latitude, making three edifices of polished stones, and one of the wood of the country, and the same order extends to the altar whereon they offer sacrifices to God. I require also that the expenses for these things may be given out of my revenues. Moreover, I have also sent the vessels which king Nebuchadnezzar pillaged out of the temple, and have given them to Mithridates the treasurer, and to Zorobabel the governor of the Jews, that they may have them carried to Jerusalem, and may restore them to the temple of God. Now their number is as follows: Fifty chargers of gold, and five hundred of silver; forty Thericlean cups of gold, and five hundred of silver; fifty basons of gold, and five hundred of silver; thirty vessels for pouring [the drink-offerings], and three hundred of silver; thirty vials of gold,

and two thousand four hundred of silver; with a thousand other large vessels. (3) I permit them to have the same honor which they were used to have from their forefathers, as also for their small cattle, and for wine and oil, two hundred and five thousand and five hundred drachme; and for wheat flour, twenty thousand and five hundred artabae; and I give order that these expenses shall be given them out of the tributes due from Samaria. The priests shall also offer these sacrifices according to the laws of Moses in Jerusalem; and when they offer them, they shall pray to God for the preservation of the king and of his family, that the kingdom of Persia may continue. But my will is, that those who disobey these injunctions, and make them void, shall be hung upon a cross, and their substance brought into the king's treasury.” And such was the import of this epistle. Now the number of those that came out of captivity to Jerusalem, were forty-two thousand four hundred and sixty-two.

Let us be encouraged by these words of our God. If you believe on Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God has bound Himself to deliver you and preserve you from all that threatens you. Do not fear, but have faith in You God, for He has declared to His people.

In righteousness you shall be established;  
 You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;  
 And from terror, for it shall not come near you.  
<sup>15</sup>Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.  
 Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake...

<sup>17</sup>No weapon formed against you shall prosper,  
 And every tongue which rises against you in judgment  
 You shall condemn.  
 This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
 And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD. (Isa 54:14f, 17)

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Outline of Isaiah 40-66  
 SECTION THREE: ORACLES OF REDEMPTION AND CONSUMMATION

- I. The Book of the Consolation of Israel (Chs. 40-55)
  - A. 40:1-11 The Prophet is to Announce God’s Coming
  - B. 40:12-31 The Creator of the Universe
  - C. 41:1-29 God Promises to Deliver His People from Babylon
  - D. 42:1-9 The First Servant Song
  - E. 42:10-13 Sing to the Lord a New Song
  - F. 42:14-17 God declares His resolve to battle on behalf of His people
  - G. 42:18-25 Israel, the Blind and Deaf Servant of God
  - H. 43:1-7 God’s Commitment to Save His People by His Grace (43:1-7)
  - I. 43:8-13 The Servant Israel is the Lord’s Witness
  - J. 43:14-44:8 The Redemption and Restoration of Israel from Babylon
  - K. 44:9-20 Satire against Idolatry
  - L. 44:21-23 Israel is Forgiven and Redeemed
  - M. 44:24-45:13 The Commission of Cyrus

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