

Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Comfort, Part 2 (c. 689 BC)

Isaiah 42:18–44:23

Israel's Failure to See and Hear

42:18 Hear, you deaf!

And look, you blind, that you may see.

- 19 Who is blind but My servant,
Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send?
Who is so blind as he that is at peace *with Me*,
Or so blind as the servant of the LORD?
- 20 You have seen many things, but you do not observe *them*;
Your ears are open, but none hears.
- 21 The LORD was pleased for His righteousness' sake
To make the law great and glorious.
- 22 But this is a people plundered and despoiled;
All of them are trapped in caves,
Or are hidden away in prisons;
They have become a prey with none to deliver *them*,
And a spoil, with none to say, "Give *them* back!"
- 23 Who among you will give ear to this?
Who will give heed and listen hereafter?
- 24 Who gave Jacob up for spoil, and Israel to plunderers?
Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned,
And in whose ways they were not willing to walk,
And whose law they did not obey?
- 25 So He poured out on him the heat of His anger
And the fierceness of battle;
And it set him aflame all around,
Yet he did not recognize *it*;
And it burned him, but he paid no attention.

God's Love for Israel—He Will Save Them

43:1 But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,

And He who formed you, O Israel,

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are Mine!

- 2 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they will not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched,
Nor will the flame burn you.
- 3 "For I am the LORD your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I have given Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in your place.
- 4 "Since you are precious in My sight,
Since you are honored and I love you,
I will give *other* men in your place and *other* peoples in exchange for your life.
- 5 "Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,

And gather you from the west.

- 6 “I will say to the north, ‘Give *them* up!’
And to the south, ‘Do not hold *them* back.’
Bring My sons from afar
And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
7 Everyone who is called by My name,
And whom I have created for My glory,
Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

The Courtroom—You Are My Witnesses

- 8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes,
And the deaf, even though they have ears.
9 All the nations have gathered together
So that the peoples may be assembled.
Who among them can declare this
And proclaim to us the former things?
Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified,
Or let them hear and say, “It is true.”
10 “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD,
“And My servant whom I have chosen,
So that you may know and believe Me
And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
And there will be none after Me.
11 “I, even I, am the LORD,
And there is no savior besides Me.
12 “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed,
And there was no strange *god* among you;
So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD,
“And I am God.
13 “Even from eternity I am He,
And there is none who can deliver out of My hand;
I act and who can reverse it?”

The New Exodus

- 14 Thus says the LORD your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,

“For your sake I have sent to Babylon,
And will bring them all down as fugitives,
Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice.

- 15 “I am the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King.”
16 Thus says the LORD,

Who makes a way through the sea
And a path through the mighty waters,
17 Who brings forth the chariot and the horse,
The army and the mighty man

- (They will lie down together *and* not rise again;
They have been quenched *and* extinguished like a wick):
- 18 “Do not call to mind the former things,
Or ponder things of the past.
- 19 “Behold, I will do something new,
Now it will spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.
- 20 “The beasts of the field will glorify Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I have given waters in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My chosen people.
- 21 “The people whom I formed for Myself
Will declare My praise.

Israel’s Failure to Love God

- 22 “Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob;
But you have become weary of Me, O Israel.
- 23 “You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.
- 24 “You have bought Me not sweet cane with money,
Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
Rather you have burdened Me with your sins,
You have wearied Me with your iniquities.
- 25 “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake,
And I will not remember your sins.
- 26 “Put Me in remembrance, let us argue our case together;
State your *cause*, that you may be proved right.
- 27 “Your first forefather sinned,
And your spokesmen have transgressed against Me.
- 28 “So I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary,
And I will consign Jacob to the ban and Israel to revilement.

Future Blessing for the Lord’s Chosen

- 44:1 “But now listen, O Jacob, My servant,
And Israel, whom I have chosen:
- 2 Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the womb, who will help you,
‘Do not fear, O Jacob My servant;
And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.
- 3 ‘For I will pour out water on the thirsty *land*
And streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring
And My blessing on your descendants;
- 4 And they will spring up among the grass

Like poplars by streams of water.’

- 5 “This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s’;
And that one will call on the name of Jacob;
And another will write *on* his hand, ‘Belonging to the LORD,’
And will name Israel’s name with honor.

The Folly of Idolatry

- 6 “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

‘I am the first and I am the last,
And there is no God besides Me.

- 7 ‘Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it;
Yes, let him recount it to Me in order,
From the time that I established the ancient nation.
And let them declare to them the things that are coming
And the events that are going to take place.

- 8 ‘Do not tremble and do not be afraid;
Have I not long since announced *it* to you and declared *it*?
And you are My witnesses.
Is there any God besides Me,
Or is there any *other* Rock?
I know of none.’”

9 Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame.

10 Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit?

11 Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame.

12 The man shapes iron into a cutting tool and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary.

13 *Another* shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house.

14 Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak and raises *it* for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow.

15 Then it becomes *something* for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down before it.

16 Half of it he burns in the fire; over *this* half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, “Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire.”

17 But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god.”

18 They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend.

19 No one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, “I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat *it*. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!”

20 He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

21 “Remember these things, 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.

22 “I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud
And your sins like a heavy mist.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”

23 Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it*!
Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it;
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob
And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

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