

Commentary on Isaiah chapter 41, by Chuck Smith 8.30.23

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August memory verse 1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV) having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

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In the forty-first chapter of Isaiah in the first part of the chapter, God begins His predictions concerning Cyrus who was not yet born. A man who was not to be born for a hundred and fifty years. But God begins to talk about him. How he's going to raise him up. How he's going to prosper him. How he's going to give him a kingdom and subdue nations before him. As we progress in our study, we'll find that God actually names him. "In order to prove that I'm really God, there's no one else like Me, I'm going to call you by your name. It is Cyrus," and He calls him His servant. So that it is interesting that God begins a hundred and fifty years before a man is born to tell about his life and what God is going to do through his life.

Keep silence before me, O ye coast ([Isa 41:1](#));

The word islands there is literally coast.

and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; let them speak: let us come near together to judgment ([Isa 41:1](#)).

Now as He speaks of Cyrus, He said,

Who raised up the righteous man from the east, he called him to his foot, he gave the nations before him, and made him to rule over the kings? ([Isa 41:2](#))

Now the question is: who did this? And the answer is, "I the Lord," the last part of verse 4. "He made him to rule over the kings."

he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. For he [that is, Cyrus] 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? ([Isa 41:2-4](#))

Or naming the persons from the beginning.

I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he ([Isa 41:4](#)).

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So the question: who's raised up this man? Who's brought him forth? Who's given him the kingdom? "I the Lord."

The coast saw it, and they feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, and they drew near, and came. They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smoothed with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved. But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend ([Isa 41:5-8](#)).

Now beginning with verse 8, he turns the attention away from Cyrus and now to Israel, the nation, to Jacob. "You're my servant," God declares. And in Isaiah, Isaiah speaks of Israel as the servant of the Lord and then, of course, it speaks of Jesus Christ as the servant of the Lord. And also David is mentioned as God's servant in the book of Isaiah.

Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and I have called thee from the chief men, and I have 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 ([Isa 41:9-10](#)).

Now, in a very narrow sense, this is the promise that God has made unto His chosen. Unto Jacob and Israel whom He will call together from the ends of the earth where they have been scattered. God said, "I have not cast thee away."

Now there is a teaching today that is not scriptural, and that is that God has cast away the nation of Israel and that God's purposes now will be fulfilled through the church, that Israel has been rejected and cast away. That is not scriptural. In fact, the whole prophecy of Hosea is dedicated to God taking back the unfaithful wife and redeeming her again and taking her for His bride once more. And the whole book of Hosea is a simile. It's an allegorical type of a book and even as God said, "Go down and take a wife and marry her." And he bore children and then he had a child but he said, "That's not mine." Called it, "Loruhamah, not my child." And she left and went out and became a harlot, a prostitute. And after years of time God said to Hosea, "Now go find your wife and redeem her." She had sold her life and God said, "Buy her back and take her as your wife once again and restore her." And then God spoke about how He was going to restore Israel.

Paul said, "Has God cast them away whom He has chosen? God forbid." And Paul all the way through his teaching tells about how God is going to restore them again and that the cutting off was the salvation of the Gentiles. What will the gathering together of them be? God's working with them once more. But the Kingdom Age. "Know ye not," he said, in [Romans 11](#), "that blindness has happened to Israel in part until the fullness of the Gentiles come in? But then all Israel shall be saved. Thus saith the scripture, There shall go forth, shall deliver out of Zion" and so forth ([Romans 11:25-26](#)). So God is yet to work with them. And when God begins to work with them, we will have entered into

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the final seven years of Satan's rule upon the earth. The final seven years prior to the establishing of God's kingdom upon the earth.

So God is going to once more deal with the nation Israel in a very special way, after He has completed His work among the Gentiles. So here God declares, "I have chosen thee, I have not cast thee away." They are God's chosen people. You can't get away from it. God has not cast them away. They have, in a sense, cast God away as Isaiah will talk in the next few chapters of how they have not offered the sacrifices to God. How they have shut God out. But God has not shut them out, but shall yet deal with them in a very remarkable way.

Now God speaks about those that have been incensed against them, and surely these people have been a persecuted people. And it is indeed tragic that much of the persecution against the Jew has arisen from the church. I think that God is one of the most maligned persons in the universe. Maligned by Satan. How he has maligned God.

And so, because of what people have done in the name of Christ, because of those that have persecuted the Jews in the name of Jesus Christ, it has created a great bitterness in the heart of many Jews. And rightfully so, for the church and against Christianity, because they usually equate the church with Christianity.

All of those that were incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish ([Isa 41:11](#)).

It doesn't pay to strive with them. God says, "I've chosen you. I've not cast you away. And those that strive with you are going to perish." God promised to Abraham, "I will bless those that bless thee, and I will curse those that curse thee" ([Genesis 12:3](#)).

Jesus in the judgment, not the final judgment, but in the judgment that He will bring when He returns to the earth and gathers together the nations for judgment, the judgment against the nations will be concerning their treatment of the Jews. For He said, "I was hungry and you did not feed Me. Thirsty, you did not give Me to drink. Naked, you did not clothe Me. Sick and you did not help Me." "Lord, when did we see You hungry, naked, thirsty, sick?" He said, "Inasmuch as you did it not to the least of these My brethren, the Jews, you have not done it unto Me" ([Matthew 25:42-45](#)). He still refers to them as His brethren. They've been chosen of God. God has not cast them away.

You will seek them, and you will not find them, even those that contended with you: and they that war against you shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nothing ([Isa 41:12](#)).

For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee ([Isa 41:13](#)).

And who can deny but what God has not helped these people immeasurably.

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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: and you will thresh the mountains, and beat them small, you will make the hills as chaff. 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. 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. I will open up 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. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the acacia trees, and the myrtle, and the oil trees; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: 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 ([Isa 41:14-20](#)).

To go over to Israel today is just a live experience in the fulfillment of prophecy, as you see these things of which Isaiah spoke actually being fulfilled. Areas that were once parched wilderness, desert areas, you see the vast irrigation project, the pools of water. You see the giant sprinkler systems and all that they have, as they have become a very strong agricultural nation. Planting hundreds of millions of trees in those wilderness areas, and the interesting thing, the various types of trees for the various benefits that each tree gives. Planting the pine tree and the fir tree because they have a capacity of growing almost on rocks. The roots go down into the crevices and as they grow down and they begin to grow, then they crack the rocks and with the rocks cracking, the rain of course, comes and carries the top soil on down. And they're forming tremendous topsoil in the valleys and getting tremendous agricultural crops again and planting the eucalyptus trees in the marsh areas because they drink up so much water. And their whole project of reforestation of Israel is just an exciting thing. And here all predicted in Isaiah as God declares, "I've not cast them off," and what He is going to do. And the purpose of doing is that they might see, and know, and consider, and understand together that the hand of the Lord hath done this.

Now I like this. God makes a challenge to those false gods that the people were worshipping at that time. And He said,

Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things that are yet to come. Show the things that are to come after these things, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he who chooses you ([Isa 41:21-23](#)).

So God speaks out against the worship of the false gods that the Israelites were involved in at this particular period of their history. "Now look, if they're really God, let them tell us something before it happens, so that after it happens we really know that they know what they're talking about." And He's challenging them in the area of

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prophecy. Now prophecy is one of the strongest arguments for the inspiration of the scriptures. The fact that God has spoken in advance of things that would happen, giving the names of persons, the names of places, and detailing the events that would be happening and the fact that they have been fulfilled becomes one of the strongest arguments for the inspiration of the scriptures.

For you see, when you delve into this area of prophecy, in order to prove the inspiration of the scriptures, it is necessary that you have one hundred percent accuracy. If one word of God failed, then it means that it wasn't God who spoke. But when you have thousands of prophecies that have come to pass exactly as declared, then it begins to give extremely strong evidence that it was indeed God who spoke. Now there was a very tragic day in the history of Israel when the Roman government took away from the Jews the rite of capital punishment. And when the Roman government removed from them the rite of capital punishment, they felt that at that point they had lost their power to govern. For they related capital punishment to government, for when God established human government under Noah, He established it with the provision of capital punishment.

Now you remember when Jacob was pronouncing the prophecies upon his sons on his dying bed, he said unto Judah that, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until the Messiah comes" ([Genesis 49:10](#)). The sceptre being the ruling power. And when the government of Rome took away in about 12 A.D., they took away from the Jews the power of capital punishment, the rabbis and the priests put on sackcloth. They put ashes on their heads. And for a week they went wailing through the streets of Jerusalem because they said, "God's Word has failed. The scepter has departed. Shiloh has not come." What they didn't know was that in the village of Nazareth at that time He was there growing up. But they really felt that God's Word had failed. And that means that it wasn't God's Word because God's Word can't fail. And to them it was a national disaster that God's Word should fail. But not one word of God's prophecy has ever failed.

And so God challenges the other gods, "If you're really gods, you say you're gods, all right then, do something. Show yourself. Make us amazed. Tell us something before it happens so that when it comes to pass, we will really know that you are gods." And I love the way God challenges these false gods. Now God goes on to declare,

I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun he shall call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declares, yea, there is none that hears your words ([Isa 41:25-26](#)).

God was speaking again of Cyrus. "I've raised up one. He's going to come and you're going to know that I know what I'm talking about. But which of you, the false gods, have declared anything before it happened and it actually came to pass?"

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The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that brings good tidings. For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counselor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion ([Isa 41:27-29](#)).

These false gods that the people were worshipping. God says there's no counselor among them. They're empty. They're vain.