

**Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isaiah 40-55)**  
**(#14) God Glorified in the Destruction of Babylon**  
**and the Deliverance of Israel (Chs. 46, 47, & 48)**

(The outline of Isaiah 40-55 is placed at the end of these notes.)

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We have considered the prophetic message of Isaiah of both its short term promise of God delivering a remnant of Jews out of their exile in Babylon, and of the longer term prophecy of God bringing salvation to both Jews and Gentiles through the coming Messiah, which we have been fulfilling in our present church age. The last time we were in Isaiah, two Sundays ago, we considered the message of Isaiah 45, in which God foretold through His prophet that He would raise up the Persian king Cyrus to defeat Babylon and enable the release of the Jews from their exile and their return to their homeland.

Today we arrive at Isaiah 46. In this chapter we read in more detail God's intention to overthrow Babylon in order to deliver His people. It is essentially the same message that we have already found in Isaiah, but told with different detail and points of emphasis. In Isaiah 46 we read of the worthlessness of Babylon's idols in which the people trusted, to deliver them from God's judgment. The message of God's delivering the Jews from Babylon continues through the next chapter also, Isaiah 47, and even through Isaiah 48. Isaiah 47 describes the defeat and humiliation of ancient Babylon that God accomplished by the Persians. Isaiah 48 then tells of God's purpose through the Jewish exile in Babylon to refine His people to the end that God would be glorified in Him bringing them deliverance from their captivity and restoring them to their land.

There is much information contained in these chapters regarding the deliverance of the remnant of Israel from Babylon in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. We may find the prophecies of these chapters somewhat repetitive of what we have already considered. But the lengthy treatment of this event and the many details of these chapters are warranted when one reflects upon the great importance of this temporal deliverance and what it reveals to us about the nature of God and His ways in history. But because we do not desire to be too focused on the historical event itself, today we will attempt to survey these chapters, describing the contents broadly, but only emphasizing some of the major lessons for us that they contain. This is not a common approach for a Sunday morning sermon, but I think that it will be best for our purposes as we work through these chapters. And so, let us first consider the message of Isaiah 46.

**O. The Lord Supports Israel; or, the Overthrow of Babylon's gods (46:1-13)**

**1. Pronouncement of Judgment against the gods of Babylon (46:1, 2)**

In Isaiah 45 we read of God's intention to deliver His people, Israel, from their bondage in Babylon. In order for this to take place, God would need to defeat and destroy Babylon. And for Babylon to be defeated, it would mean that God would overthrow what they considered to be their gods. The defeat of the Babylonians would mean that their gods, too, were defeated. Here in **verses 1 and 2** the major gods of the Babylonians are described as being carried away, even as the Babylonians flee their destroyers.

<sup>1</sup>Bel bows down, Nebo stoops;  
Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.  
Your carriages were heavily loaded,  
A burden to the weary beast.

Bel was the name of the chief god of the Babylonians; he is also called Marduke. The god, Nebo, was regarded as the son of Bel. Bel's chief temple was in the city of Borsippa, about 12 miles south of Babylon. The ancient historian Herodotus said the image of Bel was 12 foot tall and made of gold.

The names of the gods were often reflected in the names of the people. Daniel was renamed Belteshazzar; Nebuchadnezzar was so named due to Nebo (Nebu). In Palestine, Bel was called Baal. Here the two chief gods are depicted as being hauled off from their temples on/by stock animals. The gods could not deliver themselves; they had to be rescued. They are described as burdensome even to these stock animals that were carrying them. They were so much dead weight being carted off.

<sup>2</sup>They stoop, they bow down together;  
They could not deliver the burden,  
But have themselves gone into captivity.

The gods are in the posture of being bowed over in an undignified manner, even while they are carried on the animals. The idea is that they were totally unable to save themselves yet alone save the people who relied on them for their safety.

## **2. The Promise of Salvation by Jehovah (46:3, 4)**

<sup>3</sup>“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,  
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,  
Who have been upheld by Me from birth,  
Who have been carried from the womb:

The gods of the Babylonians were being borne along by beasts, here the Lord tells His people that He has all along borne them throughout their existence as a people. Thus, God speaks of His tender concern and watch care for a remnant of Israel. He has been watching over them and superintending their care, even while they were in captivity.

<sup>4</sup>Even to your old age, I am He,  
And even to gray hairs I will carry you!  
I have made, and I will bear;  
Even I will carry, and will deliver you.

God promised them that His care for them would continue. He would continue to bear them throughout their existence. What God starts, He finishes. What He purposes to do, He will see to it that it is done. This is true of God in His dealings with all of His people who are the objects of His saving work. These promises to the remnant of Israel are promises that you may take to heart as a true believer in Jesus Christ. God says to you who are in Christ:

<sup>4</sup>Even to your old age, I am He,  
And even to gray hairs I will carry you!  
I have made, and I will bear;  
Even I will carry, and will deliver you.

## **3. Proclamation of God against all idolatry (46:5-13)**

The God of Israel has no rivals. All other gods are but pretenders. God challenges others to challenge Him.

<sup>5</sup>“To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal  
And compare Me, that we should be alike?

No idol can be fashioned that compares to the true God or that can adequately depict the nature of the true God. There is nothing to which He can be compared. God is infinite in all His attributes. He cannot be fathomed. A god cannot be imagined that can measure up to the one true God. And then we read in **verse 6**:

<sup>6</sup>They lavish gold out of the bag,  
And weigh silver on the scales;  
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;  
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.

The fashioning of an idol began with a man who had saved a little money. He hired someone to do the work. After completed, they then both bow down to it. The absurdity of the matter is apparent.

But modern man does the same thing, does he not? He gets a little money and then he in effect says, "I think I will fashion myself a god." He goes to a salesman and lays out some money for some new toy that he serves with his time and treasure. He devotes himself to that thing wholly.

The New Testament speaks much to Christians regarding the sin of idolatry. John the Apostle admonished Christians, "Keep yourself from idols" (1 John 5:21). The Apostle Paul wrote that covetousness is idolatry. "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Paul had become convinced of God's election of the Christians Thessalonians for when they had heard the Gospel they had turned from serving idols to serve the living God. He wrote:

<sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup>*knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.* <sup>5</sup>For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake... Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how *you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,* <sup>10</sup>and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.* (1 Thess. 1:2-5, 8-10)

We should recognize the futility of thinking that our idols will save us in our times of trouble. Just as they failed to deliver these Babylonians in the day of their trouble, idols fail to deliver anyone.

The manner in which God would overthrow Babylon would demonstrate the futility of their trust in idols. We read in **verse 7**:

<sup>7</sup>They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it  
And set it in its place, and it stands;  
From its place it shall not move.  
Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer  
Nor save him out of his trouble.

After the idol is made, it is set in its place in the temple and there it is prayed to and worshipped, but again, it is powerless to effect deliverance. But in contrast to idols, the Israelites are to call to mind their true God:

<sup>8</sup>"Remember this, and show yourselves men;  
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.

God calls for them to remember what a great God He was to them. But while doing so He also reminded them of what great sinners they were for having forsaken Him. They had violated His laws.

<sup>9</sup>Remember the former things of old,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like Me,

They are called upon to recall God's past dealings with them. When measured against any other so-called god, they are revealed for what they are in reality--nothing. There is only one true God, and that is the God of Israel, but these people had turned from Him to serve gods that were no gods.

God is shown to be the Sovereign Determiner and Ruler of history in **verse 10**:

<sup>10</sup>Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,  
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,  
And I will do all My pleasure,'

The point they were called to remember was that their God had decreed long beforehand what He would do. Had He not indicated to them quite clearly and accurately what He would do if they forsook Him? Did He not declare that He would judge them severely and remove them from His land? Notice, He does not simply foresee what would transpire, but He purposed what things would transpire. His purpose will be established and all His good pleasure will be accomplished because He wills it so and He is sovereign over all forces.

This is the subject of God's decree. When we speak of God's counsel or His decree, we are speaking of what God purposed to do before He had done anything. God's decree was established from eternity. Before the creation, before the onset of history, even in eternity, God determined all things that would come to pass in history. The creation itself was a realizing or performing of His decree to create. And all events of history that have occurred since creation, from the least to the greatest of events, are the unfolding realization of God's decree, that God had determined from eternity. Here is what **Thomas Watson**, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan pastor and writer, said about this matter:

God is unchangeable in his decree. What He has decreed from eternity is unalterable. "My counsel shall stand" (Isa. 46: 10). God's eternal counsel or decree is immutable (that is, unchangeable). If He changed His decree, it must be from some defect of wisdom or foresight, for that is the reason why men change their purposes; they see something after, which they did not see before; but this cannot be the cause why God should alter His decree, because His knowledge is perfect, He sees all things in one entire prospect before Him.

And so, God's decree is unchangeable in His decree. Before creation God decreed all that would come to pass. History is the coming to pass all that God had decreed from eternity.

We then read **verse 11**:

<sup>11</sup>Calling a bird of prey from the east,  
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.  
Indeed I have spoken it;  
I will also bring it to pass.  
I have purposed it;  
I will also do it.

The "bird of prey" is a metaphor of Cyrus, the king of Persia. God called him to swoop down from the east with his forces upon the land of Babylon in order to destroy it, thereby effecting the release of His people. Note, it was not simply something that God foresaw would happen, but God "planned it" to occur in this fashion. It was in God's decree issued as a king would issue his orders from His throne.

We next read **verse 12**:

<sup>12</sup>“Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,  
Who are far from righteousness:

God’s saving action on behalf of His people was not due to anything merited by them. Israel had been stubborn, ignorant, disloyal, defectors. They had not been faithful to their covenant obligations to Him. Nevertheless, God purposed to save them:

<sup>13</sup>I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;  
My salvation shall not linger.  
And I will place salvation in Zion,  
For Israel My glory.

The reason for God delivering them was because God was faithful (righteous) to His promises. Therefore, He will bring salvation (deliverance) to Jerusalem, and for Israel, which He sees as a monument to His glory; He will bring His power to bear in order to secure their deliverance.

Let us now turn our attention to Isaiah 47.

## **P. The Defeat and Humiliation of Babylon Predicted (47:1-15)**

Here is a good description of what is contained in this chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy:

We have before us a poem in the form of a “taunt song,” or “mocking song.” In mood and content it is like the preceding chapter, which told of the overthrow of Babylon’s gods. Where however this type of poem might degenerate into something cheap and trivial and thus quite unworthy of being the utterance of a man of God, that is not the case here. The taunt is the taunt of faith; the mockery is based on the certainty of God’s judgments. God has determined to overthrow a city marked by overwhelming pride; the author of this poem concurs fully in what is determined and sees both the justice and the wisdom of what God has determined... Babylon’s fall is an instance of the absolute control of history by Yahweh (Jehovah), the Lord God Almighty.<sup>1</sup>

In the first four verses we have...

### **A. The Announcement of the Impending and Inevitable Overthrow of Babylon (47:1-5)**

Here we see that the nation of Babylon is personified as a woman. She is depicted as having been beautiful, independent, proud, accustomed to luxury and having her own way. Perhaps she is portrayed as a queen, but due to God’s judgment she has lost her former place of beauty and power. Now she is humbled. She is called to be humbled and humiliated for her former beauty and glory are now gone. She is no longer desirable by anyone. She has become an embarrassment and an eye sore. It is a great fall, from her throne to the dust. Let us read the first 5 verses.

<sup>1</sup>“Come down and sit in the dust,  
O virgin daughter of Babylon;  
Sit on the ground without a throne,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans!  
For you shall no more be called

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<sup>1</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Isaiah*, Vol. 2, chapters 40-66 (Baker Book House, 1971), p. 146.

Tender and delicate.

<sup>2</sup>Take the millstones and grind meal.

Remove your veil,

Take off the skirt,

Uncover the thigh,

Pass through the rivers.

<sup>3</sup>Your nakedness shall be uncovered,

Yes, your shame will be seen;

I will take vengeance,

And I will not arbitrate with a man.”

<sup>4</sup>As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name,

The Holy One of Israel.

<sup>5</sup>“Sit in silence, and go into darkness,

O daughter of the Chaldeans;

For you shall no longer be called

The Lady of Kingdoms.

Babylon being personified as a woman, is declared to be one who would experience humiliation and degradation that she had never known. She is portrayed as being forced to sit in an undignified manner on the ground, even while her clothing no longer can preserve her in modesty. “From being as high as women can rise, she is to be as low as they can descend.”<sup>2</sup> She is made to grind meal, manually pushing the millstone, perhaps the most menial of tasks (v. 2). Her pleasant and luxurious style of living is no longer. She becomes as a common slave girl, which is being deported across the Euphrates River as a slave being taken to another land. What she had done to others, she now has done unto her. She has no more dignity. She is depicted as one who is abused by men, and she was powerless to prevent it from occurring. None care for her. Her shame is magnified, all due to the vengeance of God upon her. Babylon will be in ruins and no longer has power over His people.

This was all due to the judgment of God upon her. God is described as **Redeemer**. He is one who has purchased Israel. She is His possession. She was purchased from slavery. He is “the Lord of hosts.” He is one Who is all-powerful Who accomplishes all His will.

### **B. Babylon’s Overthrow was due to her misunderstanding of Israel’s Overthrow (47:6, 7)**

God had been using Babylon to punish His people for their sin. But Babylon did not see that Israel’s God had enabled them to rise to power for this purpose. Babylon had cruelly abused its captives. And when the time came for God to restore His people, He punished Babylon for its treatment of His people. We read in **verses 6 and 7** of Babylon’s ignorance of God’s sovereign dealings with them. Here God speaks:

<sup>6</sup>I was angry with My people;

I have profaned My inheritance,

And given them into your hand.

You showed them no mercy;

On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.

God declared that Babylon’s dominance over Israel was because God had given them over to her, knowing that she would treat Israel harshly. But although Babylon was an instrument in God’s hands, Babylon did not recognize herself as such. She thought it was her strength and might which accomplished her successes. But God will have no flesh glory in His presence. And so after He completes His purpose

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 148f.

through Babylon, He turns upon her. Her pride had prevented her from seeing her impending judgment. **Verse 7** reads:

<sup>7</sup>And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,'  
So that you did not take these things to heart,  
Nor remember the latter end of them.

### **C. Babylon's Overthrow was due to her Pride (47:8-11)**

The Lord pronounced judgment on Babylon. She was pompous, self-secured, and full of pride. She said, "I am, and there is none beside me." The language she uses to describe herself is the language that God only may use with respect to Himself; and He does (cf. 14:13-15).

<sup>8</sup>"Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures,  
Who dwell securely,  
Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me;  
I shall not sit as a widow,  
Nor shall I know the loss of children';  
<sup>9</sup>But these two things shall come to you  
In a moment, in one day:  
The loss of children, and widowhood.  
They shall come upon you in their fullness  
Because of the multitude of your sorceries,  
For the great abundance of your enchantments.

God will remove from her the very things which caused her to feel secure. She will experience widowhood and loss of children. This would have spelled disaster for a woman in the ancient world. There would be none remaining to provide security for her. The loss would be sudden, in one day. Nothing in which she placed her security would be of help to her. Her many sorceries and spells would be of no value. Babylon was the seat of magical arts-- astrology, magic, spells.

<sup>10</sup>"For you have trusted in your wickedness;  
You have said, 'No one sees me';  
Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you;  
And you have said in your heart,  
'I am, and there is no one else besides me.'  
<sup>11</sup>Therefore evil shall come upon you;  
You shall not know from where it arises.  
And trouble shall fall upon you;  
You will not be able to put it off.  
And desolation shall come upon you suddenly,  
Which you shall not know.

She had thought that she was so wise, but it was the utmost folly to live as though God does not see, and though He will not encounter judgment. Again, her boastful remark is made which places her above God in her estimation: *I am, and there is no one besides me.*

### **D. Babylon's Reliance on Sorcery will be Futile (47:12-15)**

Here God further taunts Babylon regarding what they famously regarded as central to their life and existence. Babylon was noted for its promotion of magic, astrology, and sorcery. God declared their folly in

resorting to such things. Disaster would come, and it would come suddenly. They would be unable to prevent it from occurring. God had pronounced it, it will come to pass.

God taunts Babylon to stand up and fight against Him. “See what you can do with all your spells and sorceries, perhaps you will cause me to tremble!” The taunt continues. God not only defeats, but He does so to correct the error or cause the sin to cease, so with Babylon, He humbles Babylon, stripping her of all causes for pride. Rather than these things providing warmth and security by the light they pretend to shed on things, they will be consumed; none will be able to deliver them. They are on their own. **Verses 12-15** read:

<sup>12</sup>“Stand now with your enchantments  
And the multitude of your sorceries,  
In which you have labored from your youth—  
Perhaps you will be able to profit,  
Perhaps you will prevail.

<sup>13</sup>You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels;  
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers,  
And the monthly prognosticators  
Stand up and save you  
From what shall come upon you.

<sup>14</sup>Behold, they shall be as stubble,  
The fire shall burn them;  
They shall not deliver themselves  
From the power of the flame;  
It shall not be a coal to be warmed by,  
Nor a fire to sit before!

<sup>15</sup>Thus shall they be to you  
With whom you have labored,  
Your merchants from your youth;  
They shall wander each one to his quarter.  
No one shall save you.

We now arrive to the third chapter in this section of Isaiah’s prophecy, Isaiah 48. Here we read that through all of God’s dealings with Israel in exile and in bondage to the Babylonians, God was doing a refining, purifying work with respect to His people.

## **Q. Israel Refined and Redeemed (48:1-22)**

This chapter may be regarded as a summing up of this section of Isaiah’s prophecy in chapters 40-48. We have the promise of the Comfort of God which comes through God’s Servant.

### **A. God Announces the Sinfulness of His people (48:1-11)**

God called upon Israel to sit up and take notice of that which He was about to speak. They are described as ones who are the descendants of Judah, who call upon God, but not in sincerity. They made claim to all the blessings and promises as the people of God, but they assumed none of the responsibilities.

<sup>1</sup>“Hear this, O house of Jacob,  
Who are called by the name of Israel,  
And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah;  
Who swear by the name of the LORD,  
And make mention of the God of Israel,  
But not in truth or in righteousness;  
<sup>2</sup>For they call themselves after the holy city,

And lean on the God of Israel;  
The LORD of hosts is His name:

The people of Israel refer to themselves as citizens of Jerusalem, the holy city, but they have been anything but holy. They had called on God, but it would seem only in times of trouble. It would seem that verse 2 is an expression of sarcasm.

<sup>3</sup>“I have declared the former things from the beginning;  
They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it.  
Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.

God declared that he had prophesied of Israel’s experience beforehand. He had spoken through the prophets beforehand what He would do through the Babylonians. Why did He do so? In recent weeks we have seen in Isaiah’s prophecy that God promised what would occur beforehand in order to give His people hope and lead them to have faith in Him. But this was but one reason for prophesy. Another reason is given here. We read in **verse 4**:

<sup>4</sup>Because I knew that you were obstinate,  
And your neck was an iron sinew,  
And your brow bronze,  
<sup>5</sup>Even from the beginning I have declared it to you;  
Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you,  
Lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them,  
And my carved image and my molded image  
Have commanded them.’

Lest they attribute His working to have been performed by idols, God had announced beforehand what He would do respecting Israel and Babylon. Israel, like Babylon, had been an idolatrous nation. But here God confronts idolatry and reveals it to be the sham religion it was.

But now God would declare “new things.” In **verses 6 and 7** the prophet looks forward to the messianic age.

<sup>6</sup>“You have heard;  
See all this.  
And will you not declare it?  
I have made you hear new things from this time,  
Even hidden things, and you did not know them.  
<sup>7</sup>They are created now and not from the beginning;  
And before this day you have not heard them,  
Lest you should say, ‘Of course I knew them.’

Israel had been rebellious from the beginning of its national existence. God had not given them full information respecting His dealings with them until here and now, for they would have only misused it. We read in **verse 8**:

<sup>8</sup>Surely you did not hear,  
Surely you did not know;  
Surely from long ago your ear was not opened.  
For I knew that you would deal very treacherously,  
And were called a transgressor from the womb.

But in spite of their rebellious past, God had purposed to deal graciously with them, because of the sake of His name. It was not due to their merit, but that His purposes in grace might be served. That He might be praised, He will redeem Himself a people. We read in **verses 9 and 10**:

- <sup>9</sup>“For My name’s sake I will defer My anger,  
And for My praise I will restrain it from you,  
So that I do not cut you off.  
<sup>10</sup>Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;  
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.  
<sup>11</sup>For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it;  
For how should My name be profaned?  
And I will not give My glory to another.

God had tested them, but had found they were not pure, as silver is pure. There was no worth in them that moved God to do what He did for them. They had been rebellious from the beginning, but God had dealt with them graciously. God declared that He did it for His own name’s sake. Credit is not to be given to any other cause. God saves His people who are unworthy, sinners deserving of wrath, so that His qualities of mercy, grace, and love, and power might be displayed in His work of redemption.

### **B. God Announced the Salvation of His people (48:12-22)**

In **verses 12 and 13** God declared that He is the Originator of all things. They exist because He calls them into being.

- <sup>12</sup>“Listen to Me, O Jacob,  
And Israel, My called:  
I am He, I am the First,  
I am also the Last.  
<sup>13</sup>Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,  
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;  
When I call to them,  
They stand up together.

He Who called the heavens and earth to stand before Him, summons Israel to stand before Him, and to them God announced His plan to send Cyrus to Babylon to affect their release/salvation.

- <sup>14</sup>“All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear!  
Who among them has declared these things?  
The LORD loves him;  
He shall do His pleasure on Babylon,  
And His arm shall be against the Chaldeans.  
<sup>15</sup>I, even I, have spoken;  
Yes, I have called him,  
I have brought him, and his way will prosper.  
<sup>16</sup>“Come near to Me, hear this:  
I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;  
From the time that it was, I was there.  
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit  
Have sent Me.”

God called them to hear Him in **verses 17 through 19**.

<sup>17</sup>Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,  
 The Holy One of Israel:  
 “I am the LORD your God,  
 Who teaches you to profit,  
 Who leads you by the way you should go.  
<sup>18</sup>Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!  
 Then your peace would have been like a river,  
 And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.  
<sup>19</sup>Your descendants also would have been like the sand,  
 And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand;  
 His name would not have been cut off  
 Nor destroyed from before Me.”

Had they only listened and obeyed God from the beginning, their way would have been prosperous; judgment would not have come. They would have experienced the “peace like a river” and “righteousness” like the waves of the ocean would have just kept coming their way.

We read lastly, **verses 20 through 22:**

<sup>20</sup>Go forth from Babylon!  
 Flee from the Chaldeans!  
 With a voice of singing,  
 Declare, proclaim this,  
 Utter it to the end of the earth;  
 Say, “The LORD has redeemed  
 His servant Jacob!”  
<sup>21</sup>And they did not thirst  
 When He led them through the deserts;  
 He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them;  
 He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.

<sup>22</sup>“There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”

Take note of the Exodus and wilderness “wandering” theme. God will guide them from Babylon as He had guided them from Egypt. A new beginning is being described in order to engender faith and hope. And so, God commanded them to depart from Babylon, to go forth from there with rejoicing, proclaiming God’s goodness who affected your deliverance, declare His name to all who will hear.

In these three chapters we have had set before us the recurring themes of all of Scripture. We will only identify two major ones and then we will close. First, we read of the nature and ways of God in history. He is the Sovereign Ruler of all that transpires in history. But just as Israel and Babylon were both ignorant and blind to God’s nature and ways, so people today fail to see and understand that our God is ruling and accomplishing His purposes in history. He is bringing judgment upon His enemies and He is in the process of saving His people through judgment unto a final and glorious end, eternal life in righteousness and in the presence of God and all of His people.

And then secondly, we may be assured through these passages that God will see His people through whatever befalls them in history. God has good designs on us who have fled to Jesus Christ for salvation from God’s wrath on sin and sinners. We may be encouraged in this most certain prospect:

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
 But the LORD delivers him out of them all” (Psa. 34:19).

We may say as did Paul:

<sup>38</sup>I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38f)

We conclude the section of Isaiah's prophecy which has concerned the comfort of God which comes through His servant who he has sent. In chapters 49-57, we will see that the comfort of God can only come through Him and His Servant who suffers on behalf of His people.

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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)

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|----------------|---|
| 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 | God Commissions the Persian Emperor Cyrus to Deliver His People |
| N. 45:14-25    | The Conversion of the Nations                                   |
| O. 46:1-13     | Worthless Idols vs. the Living God                              |
| P. 47:1-15     | The Defeat and Humiliation of Babylon Predicted                 |
| Q. 48:1-22     | Israel Refined and Redeemed                                     |

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