

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 44

Theme: Retrospect -- creation, redemption, preservation of Israel; & Prospect -- future judgment, deliverance, redemption of Israel;

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Chapter 44

Theme: Retrospect -- creation, redemption, preservation of Israel; & Prospect -- future judgment, deliverance, redemption of Israel;

Israel has no peace today because they have departed from the living and true God.

This is not, however, their final state.

Chapter 44 continues the theme of chapter 43. However, the last chapter closes with the dark mention of coming judgment. This chapter moves into the light of the coming Kingdom and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

There is in this chapter a brilliant and bitterly devastating satire against idolatry. This is the recurring theme of this particular section. The human heart has a way of turning from God to some idol. Today, we do not go after graven images, but anything to which a person gives himself instead of the true God is an idol. It can be a career, the making of money, seeking for fame, pleasure, sex, alcohol, self-adoration, or business. These are our idols, O America! The high point of the prophet's polemic against idolatry will come in chapter 46. There we shall have occasion to consider this subject further and to examine the real distinction between God and an idol.¹

The Jews have messed up, but God still loves them. Just because He needs to judge them doesn't mean that His good plans for them have changed. They are His people, so He gives them promises that they can hang on to.

Are you one of God's people? If so, your past failures have not affected God's love for you. He's just waiting for you to turn back to Him and put yourself in a place where He can shower His blessings on you once again.²

The Lord has made several mentions of false gods in this section of the book of Isaiah. In the passage before us this evening, He's going to reiterate some of the statements He's made, and ultimately give us an illustrations that clearly demonstrates the folly of idolatry.

¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

² <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4301.php>

¹Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Jacob and Israel, two names used antithetically. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Generally, once changed it stays changed (e.g., Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah). However, Jacob is an exception, the name "Jacob" is used when he is being carnal, and "Israel" when he is being spiritual (faith, the one of the promise). The same with the nation Israel. Here Isaiah uses both terms. Not two people, but two sides of the same nature. "Jacob" means supplanter. (And even Jacob is justified, Rom 8:30.)³

Eight Predictions -- Unfulfilled:

1. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty (Isa. 44:3).
2. I will pour water upon the dry ground.
3. I will pour My Spirit upon your seed.
4. I will pour My blessing upon your offspring.
5. Your offspring shall spring up like grass and willows by the water courses (Isa. 44:4).
6. Profession of religion will become common -- I am the Lord's (Isa. 44:5).
7. It will be popular to acknowledge Jacob or the Jews.
8. Many will call themselves Israelites and subscribe by hand of Jehovah.⁴

[Jacob] Isaiah showed no difference between Jacob, Israel, and Judah (Isa. 44:1-2,5,6,21,23,26). **[servant]** Israel as a nation is the servant here. See note b, Isa. 42:1.⁵

1-2 Again the prophet emphasized God's choosing (see comments on 41:8-9) and forming (cf. 43:1, 7, 21; 44:24) Israel. (On the word listen, see comments on 46:3.) Since God promised to help her, she need not be afraid (cf. 41:10, 14; 43:5; 44:8; 54:4). (On Jacob as God's servant see comments on 41:8.) Jeshurun, meaning "the upright one," is a poetic synonym for Israel, used elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26.⁶

The Lord again summoned His chosen servant Israel to pay attention to what He was about to say (cf. 43:1). Judgment was not Yahweh's final word to His people. This new word would be good news in contrast to what had immediately preceded (cf. 43:28).⁷

"Now listen, Ya'akov my servant." Rashi teaches that Ya'akov was being called to return to the Torah of Adonai, to make t'shuvah (repentance) and thus return to the one "who made you" (cf. Deut. 32:6). "Adonai, who...formed you [Isra'el] in the womb" is a metaphor for the time of the Nation's birth.⁸

³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁴ Blue Letter Bible

⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁷ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁸ Complete Jewish Study Bible

²Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Jeshurun - poetical name for Israel (Deut 32:15; 33:5, 26). Means "the upright ones."⁹

The name Jeshurun means "the upright one." It is used here as a contrast to the name Jacob, even as Israel is sometimes used as a contrast to Jacob.

Jeshurun: From "yashar" plus an affectionate diminutive ending meaning "straight" or upright. The passive participle as a name means that she has been made straight, i.e. "having been straightened." It implies that she had been crooked previously. Thus it speaks of the condition of Israel at any time including in Isaiah's day and looks forward to the future when God will have completed his will with his people Israel. The word used as a term of affection by YHWH for Israel is also found in Deut 32:15, 33:5, 33:26¹⁰

Yet hear now: Though Isaiah 43 ended with a warning of judgment, it does not mean God takes back His promise of hope and restoration. Israel can still know the goodness of the LORD, if they will only turn back to Him.

Thus says the LORD who made you: This reminds us that God is still active in and responsible for creation. He didn't just create Adam and Eve and then let the whole thing go. There is a sense in which God has made each one of us, so we each have a personal obligation to Him as our Creator.

The name Jeshurun means "the upright one." It is used here as a contrast to the name Jacob, even as Israel is sometimes used as a contrast to Jacob.

"The name Jeshurun appears only three more times in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5, 26; and in all cases it is used of Israel ... this word bespeaks a wonder of grace, for He calls His deeply sinful people His beloved, His upright one." (Bultema)

Fear not ... For I will pour water on him ... I will pour My Spirit on your descendants: This is a glorious promise to a humble, returning Israel. God will not simply give them His Spirit; He will pour out His Spirit on them as if water was poured over them.

[that made thee, and formed thee from the womb] Three things God has done regarding Jews:

1. He made them.
2. He formed them from the womb.
3. He chose them (Isa. 44:1-2).

[Fear not, O Jacob, my servant] After accusing Israel of sin and revealing they were cursed (Isa. 43:23-28), God now assured them of mercy and restoration to His favor, introducing this message with: Yet now hear (Isa. 44:1-5).

[Jesurun] Jesurun, the upright one. Called Jeshurun (see note, Dt. 32:15).¹¹

Holy Spirit, Hope—Renewal will come to God's people. Israel tried to make God the servant rather than the Master (43:24), letting Him carry their burdens. The result was the Exile of 586 b.c.. Judgment was not God's final word. He wanted to restore proper relationships with His

⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

¹⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

¹¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

servant, Israel. He wanted to renew the people as water renews parched earth. Renewal for humans comes through God's Spirit. God's Spirit makes us proud of our identity as God's people.¹²

Thus says the Lord: This emphatic statement emphasizes that God authored the prophecy and thus it is certain to come to pass (43:1). made ... formed: The Lord demands an audience with Israel because He is their Creator, see 43:1, 7. Fear not: Since the Lord is the all-powerful One, Israel had nothing to fear. This same encouragement not to worry is found in 43:5. Jeshurun, meaning "Upright One," is a poetic word for the nation of Israel (Deut. 32:15).¹³

Yahweh, the covenant God who formed Israel into a nation, would help her. Therefore His chosen servant should not fear (cf. 41:10, 14; 43:1) even though Israel had fallen far short of God's desires for her. The endearing name "Jeshurun" means "upright one" (cf. Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26). Even though Israel had stumbled badly, she was still upright because God had held her up. "Jacob" (deceiver) may represent what Israel was in the past and "Jeshurun" (upright) what she would be in the future.¹⁴

³For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

"Pour my Spirit" - Joel 2:28, 29. Happened at Pentecost, and is yet to happen to Israel.¹⁵

[pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground] The first half of Isa. 44:3 could refer to the literal restoration of desert lands and waters springing forth in the wilderness, as predicted in Isa. 35:1-6; 41:17-20. The last half is definitely a reference to a spiritual outpouring. In the future tribulation period there will be a great outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:16-21; Zech. 12:10 -- Zech. 13:1) as well as in the Millennium (Isa. 44:3; 32:15).

[thine offspring] That children will be born in the Millennium and in all eternity in the New Earth is clearly taught in Scripture (Isa. 9:6-7; 59:20-21; 65:20-25; Ezek. 43:7; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 18, 27; Zech. 8:1-8; 14:16-21; Lk. 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15; 20:4-10; etc.). There is no statement even hinting that children will not be born in all eternity. Everything points to the fact that God's original plan for the human race will continue then, in the restitution of all things, as if man had never fallen.¹⁶

This, I believe, is a reference to the pouring out of the Spirit, which corresponds to Joel 2:28-32. If you read Joel's prophecy very carefully, you will find that it was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. When Peter quoted from it, he did two things. First, he said, "this is that" -- he did not say it was a fulfillment (see Acts 2:16). The crowd there in Jerusalem was ridiculing the disciples because they were speaking in different languages of the "...wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). The people were accusing them of being "...full of new wine" (Acts 2:13), instead of the

¹² Disciples Study Bible

¹³ Nelsons Study Bible

¹⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

¹⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

Holy Spirit. So Peter says in substance, "This should not amaze you, because this is similar to what will take place in the last days." Now how do we know it wasn't fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost? There are several reasons: (1) Joel said, "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood..." (Joel 2:30-31). This did not take place on the Day of Pentecost. (2) The record in Acts tells us that the Spirit was not poured out on all people, but Joel said: "...I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh..." (Joel 2:28). In Acts there were first 120 disciples, then 3,000 believers -- not ever "all," and after nineteen hundred years it still is not all. There were probably a half million to a million people in Jerusalem at that time, but by no stretch of the imagination can anyone say that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at that time. But the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is coming in the future. This is the reason I continually say that the greatest days for God are in the future.¹⁷

3-5 The Lord will revive Israel physically and spiritually. He will pour water on the... land, making it well watered (cf. 35:6-7; 41:18; 43:19-20) and He will pour His Holy Spirit (cf. 32:15) on their descendants. This outpouring of the Spirit will occur when the people have returned in belief to the land (cf. Ezek. 36:24, 27; Joel 2:25-29) just after the Messiah's second coming to establish the Millennium. Redeemed Israel will prosper numerically like grass and poplar trees, and they will want to be known as righteous individuals (Isa. 44:5), unashamed of Him and their nation.¹⁸

Pour water may refer either to miracles during the exiles' journey home (43:19–21) or to blessings on those who had returned to the Promised Land (41:17; 55:1). pour My spirit: Moses prayed for the Lord's Spirit to come on all Israel (Num. 11:29); the prophets foretold it (Joel 2:28–32), and Christ fulfilled it (32:15; Acts 2:14–36).¹⁹

The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on the Israelites in the future. This gift would have the same effect for the nation as pouring water on dry ground would have for the landscape. It would bring refreshment and new life, indeed, a whole new spiritual attitude (cf. 32:15; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; 37:7-10; Joel 2:28-29). Blessing would come to the descendants of Isaiah's audience. Isaiah in this verse may have meant that God would bring both physical and spiritual refreshment. Other passages reveal that He will send physical refreshment (cf. 35:6-7; 41:18).

Since this is a promise specifically to the Israelites, they would be the special recipients of this outpouring. Thus it must still be future. The giving of the Spirit in the apostolic age, first on the day of Pentecost and then on several subsequent occasions, was not a gift to Israel but to the church, not to Jews uniquely but to Jews and Gentiles equally (cf. Acts 11:15). Both outpourings have the result of making the recipients witnesses.²⁰

¹⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

¹⁹ Nelsons Study Bible

²⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴And they shall spring up *as* among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

Children born in the Millennium and eternity will grow in grace and in health like grass in well-watered fields, and willows by the watercourses.²¹

Then the Israelites would grow like flowers among the grass and like poplars planted beside streams of water (cf. Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8). The Old Testament writers often regarded numerous progeny as a sign of divine blessing (cf. Gen. 15:5; Ps. 127:3-5).²²

In the land of Israel, plants wither and remain brown for long periods until they are revived by rainfall. Israel in exile resembles these plants, which had looked dead but in fact were merely dormant.²³

⁵One shall say, *I am* the LORD'S; and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe *with his hand* unto the LORD, and surname *himself* by the name of Israel.

The recognition that Israel represents God's way of life for His people will be common in the days of the Messiah.²⁴

The time will come when Israel will be proud of belonging to God. If we are truly God's, we should be unashamed and delighted to let everyone know about our relationship with him (44:8).²⁵

The imagery in v. 4 is explained as one enthusiastic conversion to the Lord after another. The Lord's decisive grace (43:25) bears fruit in many new believers' decisive faith (cf. Psalm 87). The Lord's . . . Israel. Identification with the Lord entails identification with his people.²⁶

Possibly a reference to non-Jews who would adopt Jewish beliefs, practices, and ethnicity, which in fact did occur during the exilic and postexilic periods. This phenomenon is one of Isaiah's particular concerns.

⁶Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; *I am* the first, and *I am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

“The Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer” - sounds like two!

“First and the Last” - Isa 41:4; 48:12; Rev 1:8, 17; 22:13.²⁷

²¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²³ Jewish Study Bible Notes

²⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁵ Life Application Study Bible.

²⁶ ESV Study Bible

²⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

Twelve Declarations of the Existence of God

1. Thus saith the Lord (Isa. 44:6). If He can thus speak, He is a living God,
2. I am the King of Israel,
3. I am the Redeemer of Israel,
4. I am the Lord of Hosts,
5. I am the first and the last,
6. Beside Me there is no God,
7. He can command future events to happen as He wills them to be (Isa. 44:7),
8. He can declare them with every degree of certainty,
9. He can set them in order -- arrange future events as to time and order,
10. He can show things that shall come to pass,
11. I have done all these things since I appointed Israel; and you are My witnesses to the fact that this is true (Isa. 44:7-8),
12. There is no God beside Me (Isa. 44:8),²⁸

[the King of Israel] Isaiah referred to God as King four times (Isa. 44:6; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; cp. Mt. 2:2; 27:11,42).

[redeemer] Of the 18 times the word Redeemer is used in Scripture it is found 13 times in Isaiah (Isa. 44:6,24; 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:20; 60:16; 63:16; cp. Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; Prov. 23:11; Jer. 50:34).

[I am the first, and I am the last] Quoted in Rev. 1:17.²⁹

[beside me there is no God]

No God Beside Me

The contention that there is no other God beside the God of Israel is peculiar to Isaiah.

Seven Uses of "Beside Me" in Isaiah:

1. Beside Me there is no Savior (Isa. 43:11).
2. Beside Me there is no God (Isa. 44:6).
3. Is there a God beside Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any (Isa. 44:8).
4. There is no God beside Me (Isa. 45:5).
5. There is none beside Me (Isa. 45:6).
6. There is no God else beside Me (Isa. 45:21).
7. There is none beside Me (Isa. 45:21).

Four Similar Expressions Elsewhere:

1. He is God; there is none else beside Him (Dt. 4:35; cp. Dt. 32:39).
2. There is none beside Thee (1Sam. 2:2).
3. There is none like Thee, neither is there any God but Thee (2Sam. 7:22; 1Chr. 17:20).
4. There is no Savior beside Me (Hos. 13:4).³⁰

6-8 Several titles stress God's sovereignty: Israel's King (cf. 43:15), Redeemer (cf. 43:14; see comments on 41:14), the Lord Almighty God, and the First and the Last (i.e., the eternal One; cf. 48:12; Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). The Lord argued for His uniqueness (apart from Me there is no God; cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:6; 46:9) by challenging anyone to tell of the past and the future (44:7; cf.

²⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

41:22-23). Since His knowledge of the future (from long ago) proves His uniqueness, His people should not be afraid (cf. 41:10, 14; 43:5; 44:2; 54:4). They themselves are witnesses (cf. 43:10, 12) to His uniqueness, strength, and stability (Rock; cf. 17:10; 26:4; 30:29).³¹

6-23 This passage describes another fact-finding trial like the one in 41:1–42:17; 43:8–13. Between the command not to fear (v. 8) and the command to remember (v. 21) and return (v. 22), there is an extended, biting satire on idolatry (vv. 9–20). An exhortation to nature to praise Israel's redeeming Lord concludes the oracle (v. 23), which contains many allusions to the Song of Moses (Deut. 31:30–32:43).³²

With the titles he chose, the Lord highlighted His special relationship with Israel, His intentions for the nation, and His ability to fulfill those intentions. As Israel's near kinsman, He would not allow her to perish. He is incomparable; there is no one like Him. The gods are not God. The same terminology used in this verse describes Jesus Christ later in Scripture (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13).³³

⁷And who, as I, shall call, and shall 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 unto them.

[as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me] God claimed the power to call or command events to happen, to declare them before they happen, and to decide their time and order of fulfillment. He also made it clear that He had been revealing things to Israel from the time He chose and appointed them as His witnesses (Isa. 44:7-8).

[ancient] `Owlam -- Everlasting

Hebrew: `owlam (HSN-<H5769>), time out of mind; eternity; everlasting; always; perpetual; time without end. It is translated "ancient" (Isa. 44:7; Ps. 77:5; Prov. 22:28; Jer. 5:15; 18:15; Ezek. 36:2); "for ever" 246 times (Gen. 3:22; 13:15; Ex. 3:15 etc.); "perpetual" (Gen. 9:12; Ex. 29:9; 31:16; Lev. 3:17; 24:9; 25:34; Ps. 78:66; Jer. 18:16; 23:40; 25:34; 49:13; 50:5; 51:39,57; Ezek. 35:5,9; 46:14; Hab. 3:6; Zeph. 2:9); "always" (Gen. 6:3; 1Chr. 16:16; Jer. 20:17); of old (Gen. 6:4; Dt. 32:7; Josh. 24:2 1Sam. 27:8; Job 22:15; 30:2; Ps. 25:6; Eccl. 1:10; Isa. 46:9; 51:9; 57:11; 58:12; 61:4; 63:9,11; Jer. 2:20; 6:16; 28:8; Lam. 3:6; Ezek. 25:15; 26:20; Amos 9:11; Mic. 7:14; Mal. 3:4); "everlasting" (Gen. 9:16; 17:7-8,13,19; 21:33; 48:4; 49:26; Ex. 40:15; Lev. 16:34; 24:8; Num. 25:13; Dt. 33:27; 2Sam. 23:5; 1Chr. 16:17; Ps. 24:7,9; 41:13; 90:2; 93:2; 100:5; 103:17; 105:10; 106:48; 112:6; 119:142,144; 139:24; 145:13; Prov. 8:23; 10:25; Isa. 24:5; 26:4; 33:14; 35:10; 40:28; 45:17; 51:11; 54:8; 55:3,13; 56:5; 60:19-20; 61:7-8; 63:12,16; Jer. 10:10; 20:11; 23:40; 31:3; 32:40; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Dan. 9:24; 12:2; Mic. 5:2; Hab. 3:6); "for ever and ever" (Ex. 15:18; 1Chr. 29:10; Ps. 9:5; 10:16; 21:4; 45:17; 148:6; Dan. 12:3); "at any time" (Lev. 25:32); "lasting" (Dt. 33:15); "never" (2Sam. 12:10; Ps. 30:6; 31:1); "evermore" (2Sam. 22:15; 1Chr. 17:14; Ps. 18:50; 37:27; 86:12; 89:28,52; 92:8; 106:31; 133:3); "alway" (Job 7:16; Ps. 119:112); "ever" (Ps. 5:11); "ever of old" (Ps. 25:6); "the world" (Ps. 73:12; Eccl. 3:11); "long" (Eccl. 12:5); and "eternal" (Isa. 60:15). See note b, Ex. 12:14.

³¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

³² Nelsons Study Bible

³³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

Eleven Everlasting Things in Isaiah:

1. Father (Isa. 9:6)
2. Strength (Isa. 26:4)
3. Burnings (Isa. 33:14)
4. Joy (Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 61:7)
5. God (Isa. 40:28)
6. Salvation (Isa. 45:17)
7. Kindness (Isa. 54:8)
8. Sign (Isa. 55:13)
9. Name (Isa. 56:5; 63:12)
10. Light (Isa. 60:19-20)
11. Covenant (Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8)³⁴

The proof of God's uniqueness is His ability to foretell the future and then bring it to pass. Anyone who claims to be able to do this must prove to God that he has done it. God's creation of Israel and His revelation of the future to and through her is the great proof of His deity.³⁵

If there are any who disagree with the statement that there are no other gods, the Lord invites anyone to disprove Him. Let someone - anyone - stand and say that He is equivalent to God.

It's as if God is saying, "Well, anyone who is like Me would certainly be able to tell me the entire story of how I established things in ancient times, as well as being able to say what things are going to happen in the future."³⁶

⁸Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it*? ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is no God*; I know not *any*.

[I know not any] If the all-wise and all-knowing God of the universe knows of no god beside Himself, then there is none.³⁷

8-9 The manufactured idols were guilty of false advertising. They made big promises, but they were worthless and helpless. In contrast, God fulfills his claims and delivers on all his promises. God challenges us to be his witnesses. When we share our faith with those who can find no meaning in life or have no hope of eternal life, we are not proclaiming anything shoddy or unreliable. God is real and life with him is best. Pray for boldness in your life to share your faith in Christ with friends, relatives, and neighbors.³⁸

The Israelites should not fear even though they were heading for captivity. God had told them that they would return from captivity as well as go into it. When they did return, they would be

³⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³⁶ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4406.php>

³⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³⁸ Life Application Study Bible.

able to witness to the world that the Lord had predicted and performed both events. In the meantime they could seek refuge in their Rock, their only support and protector.³⁹

Not only is God the only god, He is also the only "Rock." He is the Rock of our salvation (Deut. 32:15), the Rock in Whom we take refuge (2Sam 22:2-3), and the Rock of Israel (2Sam 23:3).

Again, we're faced with a Bible discrepancy if Jesus is not God. For, Paul said,

1Cor. 10:4 ...the rock was Christ.

So, as the psalmist asked,

Psa. 18:31 ...who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

I love how God asks, "Is there any other Rock? I know of none." It's such an ironic statement, because God is omniscient. He knows all things (1John 3:20)

Heb. 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

So, if God doesn't know about any other gods, it's because there aren't any!⁴⁰

⁹They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

Fourfold Stupidity of Idolaters

1. The makers of idols as well as the idol themselves are vanity (Isa. 44:9).

2. Their delectable things (desirable images) shall not profit, and who but a senseless man will thus labor without profit?

3. Idolaters themselves bear witness of the stupidity of their own acts in making and trusting in gods that cannot see or know anything.

4. Those who make idols and those who worship them are alike -- stupid to accept such as god when they are ashamed of them, realizing that they know nothing, see nothing, and are absolutely and completely unprofitable (Isa. 44:9-11).

[delectable] Hebrew: chamad (HSN-<H2530>), delight; beauty; greatly loved; covet; desire; precious.⁴¹

In verses 9-20 we have a brilliant polemic against idolatry. The way the prophet deals with the subject is devastating. Those who make images are witnesses to the senseless character of their gods. An image does not even have the five senses of a human being. An idol can't hear, see, talk, smell, or feel. Paul called them "nothings," and that is what they are. They cannot help anyone.⁴²

9-20 Here Isaiah describes how people make their own gods. How absurd to make a god from the same tree that gives firewood. What are the gods we make—money, fame, or power? We deceive ourselves if we expect them to empower our life.

Today's Idolatry

³⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴⁰ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4406.php>

⁴¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁴² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Isaiah tells us, "Who but a fool would make his own god—an idol that cannot help him one bit?" (44:10). We think of idols as statues of wood or stone, but in reality an idol is anything natural that is given sacred value and power. If your answer to any of the following questions is anything or anyone other than God, you may need to check out who or what you are worshipping.

Who created me?

Whom do I ultimately trust?

Whom do I look to for ultimate truth?

Whom do I look to for security and happiness?

Who is in charge of my future?⁴³

Idol-worship does nothing for those who practice it; it only shows them up as being spiritually blind and ignorant. Pagans view their worship of idols as meritorious, but it will ultimately bring them shame (cf. v. 11; 42:17; 45:16).⁴⁴

The prophet began by stating his premise. Idol makers engage in futile (Heb. *tohu*) activity because the idols they make do not profit people. Those who promote idol worship do not see the folly of idolatry themselves, and they will be ashamed by the failure of their gods.⁴⁵

A graven image is an idol, a representation of someone's god. The concept in and of itself is inherently foolish. After all, if God could be represented by a statue, then He wouldn't be much of a god, would He?

The people who create likenesses of their gods are futile. The word "futile" in Hebrew is *TO-hoo*. It means to be without form. So, it's really an ironic statement: "Those who form gods are themselves actually formless."

And their emptiness spreads, because they use valuable metals and materials to create their gods. So, they take something preciously valuable, and turn it into something that is of absolutely no value.⁴⁶

¹⁰Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that is profitable for nothing?*

Cf. Jer 10 (idol worship).

The prophet asks the question, "Why do you spend all of your time making a god? You ought to be ashamed. You have everything mixed up. You don't make a god; God made you!"⁴⁷

10-14 People who make idols will experience shame (cf. v. 9) and disrepute. The fact that craftsmen are nothing but men (cf. 40:19) epitomizes the foolishness of idol-worship. A blacksmith who gets hungry while making an idol from metal, and a carpenter who has to outline

⁴³ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁴⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴⁶ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4406.php>

⁴⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

his idol on wood, do not inspire confidence in their idols. The gods themselves have no life for they are made from metals or from trees which ironically the true God made.⁴⁸

This rhetorical question means, who would be so foolish as to fashion an idol when it does not profit anyone? The whole idea of making idols seemed ridiculous to Isaiah (cf. 40:18; 43:7, 10). Isaiah points to the mere humanity of the craftsmen (10-11), their frailty (12) and the man-dominated conceptions governing their theology (13).⁴⁹

10-11 It's interesting to me that idols have no practical value, which makes the fact that they're formed out of valuable materials pretty silly. But there is a profit, at least for the guy who makes and sells them.

But he and all of the subcontractors who make those gods will be put to shame. Why? Because they are MEN making GODS. Think about it: the craftsmen are mere men... how can they possibly make a god?

This reminds me of when Paul was preaching in Ephesus. So many people were getting saved and renouncing their idolatry, that the idolmakers were losing business.

This turned into a mob that dragged some Christians into a dangerous and unlawful assembly. These human men made a profit by creating gods. And one day, men like this will have to give an account before the real God. And they will be put to shame.⁵⁰

¹¹Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

[all his fellows shall be ashamed] The makers of graven and molten images with all their fellows will be ashamed together when they see the utter helplessness of their gods in the day of trouble and judgment (Isa. 44:9-11).⁵¹

All the companions of the craftsman who makes an idol, other idolaters, will be put to shame, namely, idol worshippers as well as idol makers. The reason is that the makers of these gods are mere men. Rather than God creating man, man creates gods (cf. Rom. 1:23). This makes man superior to his gods. The fact that there are many people in this group of idol makers and worshippers does not change the fact that all of them will be ashamed by the impotence of their gods.⁵²

⁴⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁴⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4406.php>

⁵¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

12^rThe smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

Works on an idol and gets thirsty, yet idol does not provide water.⁵³

Tenfold Proof of the Vanity of Idolatry

1. The smith heats the metal in the fire (Isa. 44:12).
2. He fashions it with a hammer.
3. He makes it with the strength of his arms until he is famished.
4. He does not allow himself to eat and drink while he makes his god.
5. The carpenter measures it (Isa. 44:13).
6. He draws a sketch of it.
7. He shapes it with planes, chisels, and carving tools.
8. He makes it after the figure and beauty of a man.
9. He hews down cedars, cypresses, oaks, and ash trees which God planted and nourished to be fuel for man (Isa. 44:14); but he uses only part of the trees to warm himself and cook his food (Isa. 44:15-16); the rest he uses to make his god (Isa. 44:17).
10. He falls down to it, worships it, and prays to it, knowing that it cannot help him in the least (Isa. 44:7-20).⁵⁴

The artificer of metals works hard in forging a god from some metal, but this labor weakens him and reveals that he is but a man. After all of his labor, talent, time, and money that he puts into making a god, what does he get? Nothing! He gets a beautiful little "nothing."

The origin of a man-made god begins in a forest; yet it is God who made the tree to begin with! Only God can make a tree.⁵⁵

The man who would make a god has to expend a great deal of effort on it. Some English translations give the impression that in this verse the blacksmith is fashioning a tool with which to make an idol, but the idol itself is really in view. Making an idol is a laborious and exhausting process. God, of course, did not grow weary making man; He made him with a word. Furthermore, because God made the Israelites, they did not need to grow weary (40:28-31). Because He carried them (45:20; 46:3), they did not need to become hungry and thirsty (43:19-20).⁵⁶

⁵³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁵⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁶ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

13¹³The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

Idol-making is a complex process involving many steps and requiring much activity and some human skill. The whole idea is to create a god in the closest possible likeness to man, supposedly the highest form of life, complete with man's needs. Here a carpenter rather than a blacksmith is the craftsman. The type of craftsman really does not matter since any human will do. One idol may be in view in verses 12 and 13, first carved out of wood and then adorned with metal, or Isaiah may have had in mind two different idols, one metal and the other wood. We have not progressed beyond that today. The doctrine called humanism is only an abstract form of this age-old effort. We will be God, and God will be us.⁵⁷

14¹⁴He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*.

[**cypress**] The cypress is mentioned only here.⁵⁸

As shepherds raised some sheep for sacrifice, so the idol craftsman, here a forester, planted a tree with a view to making a god out of it one day "for himself." He wanted wood that would not rot, but the type of wood itself really does not matter. The god is perfectly passive and dependent on its human creator throughout the whole process. How can such a creation possibly help people?⁵⁹

15¹⁵Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

[**graven image**] This description is mainly of a graven image covered with metal -- not solid metal, for it was carved out of a tree. The word molten (Isa. 44:10) refers primarily to thin metal plating after the image was carved from wood. It is true that many images were of solid metal and others of hollow metal, but here the reference seems to be to one of wood covered with thin metal plates (Isa. 44:10-20). Some of the hollow images were filled with clay, as seen in certain lands today.⁶⁰

The chips and scraps from the production of a god are used to kindle a fire for the man to warm himself and to bake bread. This is the only practical and helpful contribution that comes from the making of a god. In fact, the scraps are helpful, but that idol is no good to you at all. It cannot warm you; it cannot cook your food; it cannot help you; it cannot save you. An idol cannot do anything for you. God is calling Israel's attention to how absurd idolatry really is.

⁵⁷ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁵⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

My friend, many of us give ourselves to those things that take us away from God. They don't help us, they don't lift us up, they don't bring us joy, and it is a fact that they can never save us.⁶¹

15-20 From the same piece of wood a workman makes an idol and bakes bread. What folly to bow down to wood, part of which is used to cook one's food and to keep himself... warm! People who pray that an idol—mere wood—would save them (v. 17) are ignorant and have no spiritual sight or comprehension (v. 18; cf. 6:10). Having their eyes... plastered over may refer to a religious rite in which mud was applied to worshipers' eyes. Idolaters do not think of the incongruity of using part of a piece of wood for fuel for baking and roasting and making an idol (sarcastically called by Isaiah a detestable thing) from what is left. To worship wood is to feed on ashes (cf. Ps. 102:9), that is, to trust in something totally worthless, something that deceives.⁶²

The craftsman uses one piece of wood to make an idol, and another piece out of the same tree—as fuel—to warm and feed himself. Actually, the piece he burns does him more good than the piece he worships. The piece burned serves man and delivers him from the cold and hunger, but the piece not burned demands human service and only promises deliverance (cf. Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 8:4-8). Instead of thanking the Creator for the wood, the idolater uses what the Creator has made to make a god in his own image that he thanks (cf. Rom. 1:18-23).⁶³

¹⁶He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

This is my favorite passage in the Bible for pointing out the idiocy of idolatry. What a great illustration, as the man chops down a tree, and cuts it into halves. He cooks his dinner over one half, and bows down in front of the other half, saying, "Deliver me!" For goodness' sake! The tree couldn't save itself from his axe!⁶⁴

¹⁷And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god.

The leftover piece becomes the idol. How can what is the result of human effort and care, an idol, put forth any effort and care for its builder? Worshipping and praying to a graven image is absurd (cf. Matt. 6:7-8). Diagoras of Melos, a pupil of Democritus, once threw a wooden standing figure of Hercules into the fire, and said jocularly, 'Come now, Hercules, perform thy thirteenth labor, and help me to cook the turnips. John Knox, in decrying the idolatry of the Mass, parodied this passage with devastating effect: 'With part of the flour you make bread to eat, with the residue you fashion a god to fall down before'.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶² The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁶³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶⁴ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4406.php>

⁶⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁸They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Eight Facts -- Stupidity of Idolaters

1. They are willingly lacking in knowledge and understanding (Isa. 44:18).
2. They have shut their own eyes that they cannot see (Isa. 44:18; Mt. 13:14-15).
3. They have closed their own hearts that they might not understand (Isa. 44:18; 6:9-11; Mt. 13:14-15).
4. They do not consider in their hearts their stupid acts (Isa. 44:19).
5. They are so senseless they do not recognize that they have burned part of their god in the fire, baked bread upon the coals of it, roasted flesh on it, and then worshiped the residue, making it an abomination.
6. The worship of idols feeds their souls no more than feeding on ashes would nourish their bodies (Isa. 44:20).
7. Their deceived heart has turned them aside from God.
8. They live a lie when they think that their idols can cleanse from sin.

[shut] Hebrew: *tuwach* (HSN-<H2902>), to spread over; daub; besmear; plaster. Here it means something smeared over the eyes to close them; it refers to willful blindness to truth.⁶⁶

Pagans do not see the folly of idol-worship because God has blinded their minds (cf. 6:9-10; 29:14). Having chosen to refuse the revelation of God that He has given them in nature, He makes it impossible for them to see the truth (cf. Rom. 1:18-24; 2 Thess. 2:10-11). If this were not the case, they would understand and abandon their practices, since it is so clear that man-made gods are not deity.

Modern man is in the same position as his ancient counterpart. Westerners do not cut down trees and fashion blocks of wood into idols that we put on shelves in our houses and bow down to. But we work long hours to be able to purchase some man-made object (of clothing, jewelry, transportation, communication, entertainment, etc.) that we then hope will provide us with what only God can provide. Tragically, we do not even view this as idolatry because we, too, are blind.⁶⁷

¹⁹And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baken bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

²⁰He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?

“Is there not a lie in my right hand?” - Cf. Zech 11:17 (contrast to “good shepherd”).⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶⁷ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

[lie in my right hand] An idol is a lie because it is false and deceptive. That which Israel made to rely upon was deceptive and could not save them. Any false religion is a lie, and all that sinners rely upon to save them, apart from God, is a lie.⁶⁹

Pursuing idols is like feeding on ashes. No satisfaction, but instead eventual disgust and death, follow. The idol is good for nothing but burning (v. 15), and the person who worships an idol will finally find himself with nothing but ashes instead of an idol. The person who pursues this path to satisfaction has been deceived by his own heart. He cannot deliver himself out of such a trap. He has become addicted. He must cry out for deliverance to Another—who has the power to enlighten the blind.⁷⁰

²¹Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

[Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant ...]

Four predictions -- unfulfilled:

1. You will be My servant, O Israel, and will not be forgotten by Me (Isa. 44:21).
2. All your sins and transgressions I will blot out as a thick cloud (Isa. 44:22).
3. Return to Me, for I will redeem you.
4. The Lord will redeem Jacob and glorify Himself in Israel (Isa. 44:23).

Isaiah spoke as if these things were already accomplished, but they will actually come to pass at the second coming of Christ, when all Israel will be saved (Isa. 66:7-8; Zech. 12:10 -- Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:25-29).

[these] Remember these things which are said of idols and idolaters.

[Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant] Isaiah was holding to his main theme -- predicting events that would happen to all the tribes of Israel.⁷¹

God said that we should serve our Creator (17:7; 40:28; 43:15; 45:9). Idolaters do the opposite—serving or worshiping what they have made rather than the one who made them. Our Creator paid the price to set us free from our sins against him. By contrast, no idol ever created anybody, and no idol can redeem us from our sins.⁷²

21-23 The contrast between Israel and deluded people who make and worship idols (vv. 9-20) is striking. Believers in Israel were redeemed but idol-makers were deceived. Israel was to remember that God can foretell the future (vv. 6-8) and that idols are really nothing (vv. 9-20). Therefore she should worship the Lord who has forgiven her sins (cf. 43:25) and redeemed her. Some, however, think these things refer to what follows and that Israel was to remember she had been redeemed. In either case the nation was to sing. In fact all nature is personified as being asked to sing (cf. the mountains in 49:13) about Him who redeemed Jacob and who displays His

⁶⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁷¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷² Life Application Study Bible.

glory in Israel (cf. 43:7). In contrast with the other nations' spiritual darkness, Israel will live in the light of God's glory.⁷³

This chiasmic verse reiterates a theme from Deuteronomy, namely, remembering what God has revealed (cf. Deut. 8:2, 11, 18; 9:7). God called His people to remember the truths about Himself that this section of the book emphasizes: He is the only God who foretells and then creates history, and the idols of the nations are nothing. Bearing these truths in mind would enable Israel to fulfill her purpose in the world, namely, to be the Lord's servant. The nation had not yet fulfilled that purpose, and the Lord would not forget her but would enable her to fulfill it. He would not cast her off.

Within the immediate context the call to 'remember' (21) forges a link with what has preceded: (i) the idolater has been busy 'fashioning' (9-10, 12) his idol, but Israel has been 'fashioned' (21; NIV made) by the Lord; (ii) the idolater is bound to his idol (18-20), but Israel is the Lord's bondman (servant; 21); (iii) the idolater prayed pathetically Save me (17), but to Israel the Lord says I have redeemed you (22-23); (iv) the idolater bowed to a block of wood/'tree stump' (bul 'es; 19), but now every tree (kol 'es) is summoned to rejoice in the Lord (23).⁷⁴

²²I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

[cloud] Sins being blotted out is like the passing of a thick cloud.

[as a cloud, thy sins] Twenty Things about Confessed Sins

1. They are blotted out (Isa. 44:22; Acts 3:19).
2. They are forgiven (Ex. 34:7; 1Jn. 1:9; 2:12).
3. They are remitted (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4).
4. They are made white as snow (Isa. 1:18).
5. They are made as wool (Isa. 1:18).
6. They are cast behind God's back (Isa. 38:17).
7. They are forgotten (Isa. 43:25; Heb. 8:12; 10:17).
8. They are purged away (Ps. 79:9; Heb. 1:3).
9. They are covered (Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:7).
10. They are put away (2Sam. 12:13; Heb. 9:22).
11. They are removed as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12).
12. They are cast into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19).
13. They are washed away (Rev. 1:5).
14. They are taken away (1Jn. 3:5).
15. They are put off (Col. 2:11).
16. One is saved from them (Mt. 1:21).
17. One is freed from them (Rom. 6:7,16-23; 8:2).
18. One is cleansed from them (1Jn. 1:7,9).
19. One becomes dead to them (Col. 2:13; 1Pet. 2:24).
20. One is quickened from death in them (Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 2:13).

⁷³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁷⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

Twenty Things Unconfessed Sins Do:

1. They cause death (Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 33:8-13; Rom. 8:12-13).
2. They hinder prayers (Ps. 66:18).
3. They provoke God to anger (1Ki. 16:2).
4. They weary God (Isa. 43:24).
5. They separate from God (Isa. 59:2).
6. They testify against us (Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:7).
7. They cause God to remember them (Ps. 25:7).
8. They expose guilt (Ps. 69:5).
9. They cause God to visit (Hos. 8:13; 9:9).
10. They load down (2Tim. 3:6).
11. They cause to pine away (Ezek. 33:10; Lev. 26:39).
12. They cause to be consumed (Isa. 64:7; Ezek. 4:17).
13. They take men away (Isa. 64:6).
14. They bring punishment (Amos 3:2).
15. They damn the soul (2Th. 2:12; Mt. 16:16).
16. They cause one to be of Satan (1Jn. 3:8).
17. They cause hardening of heart (Heb. 3:13).
18. They make servants of sin (Rom. 6:7-23; Jn. 8:34).
19. They bring reproach (Prov. 14:34).
20. They cause national judgment (Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6; 3:14).

[return unto me] Israel will return to God at the second coming of Christ (Isa. 10:21-22; 35:10; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 5:3; Zech. 12:10 -- Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:25-29).⁷⁵

What Israel needed above all was forgiveness and cleansing from her sins (cf. 43:25). The Lord had taken the initiative to provide this for His people. He would blow their sin away as quickly and as easily as a wind blows a cloud or mist away.

The clouds intervene between heaven and earth as sin and transgressions intervene between God and His people.

Jehovah has blotted out Israel's sin, inasmuch as He does not impute it any more, and thus has redeemed Israel.

Yet God's people must respond to His initiative by returning to Him. He had provided redemption in the Exodus, but it was only the first of several redemptions that He would provide. He would redeem them from captivity by using His servant Cyrus (v. 28), and He would redeem them from sin by using His Servant Messiah at His first advent. He would also redeem them from captivity in the Tribulation by using His Servant Messiah at His second advent.⁷⁶

The Lord tells them that He will blot out their transgressions. It's such a sure promise that it is spoken in the past tense.

Notice that their sin will be blotted out by being obscured, as with a thick cloud or heavy mist. In the Old Testament, when God made atonement for sin, the word used was "kaw-FAR," which means "to cover over."

⁷⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷⁶ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

It is a great thing to have God throw a blanket over your sin! However, under the New Testament covenant, we don't get atonement, we get forgiveness, which is a total dismissal. So, our sin isn't just covered - it's completely erased!⁷⁷

²³Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Four realms to rejoice and sing:

1. Sing, you heavens.
2. Shout, you lower parts of the earth.
3. Break forth into singing, you mountains.
4. Break forth into singing, you forest and all the trees therein.⁷⁸

This verse concludes the thought expressed in the preceding one, thus many translations and commentators regard it as the end of the preceding section. However, it is a hymnic call to praise similar to the one in 42:10-13, and it seems to introduce what follows, as that earlier call to praise did.

The content of the praise also points ahead to what follows, rather than backward to what has preceded. It provides a very smooth transition. Isaiah again called on all the elements of the created universe to witness something. Earlier they witnessed Israel's rebellion (cf. 1:2), but now they witness Israel's salvation. As in the previous verse (44:22), redemption is spoken of as already complete. This is the translation of the Hebrew prophetic perfect tense verb that speaks of things in the future as though they had already happened in the past—because they are certain to occur.

A future redemption is in view that will manifest Yahweh's glory. This becomes clear in the verses that follow.⁷⁹

God's redemption of the Jews is cause for all creation to rejoice.

It is interesting to me that the praise of God is so frequently tied in to shouting. It does seem to be basic human nature to shout about the things that excite us. We'll shout at sporting events and concerts without thinking twice about it. But when it comes to praising God, we're very subdued. I wonder why that is?

- Does it seem wrong to shout to God? Like it's sacrilegious or something?

- Or can we just not muster enough excitement to shout to Him?

Psa. 71:23 My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to You...

Psa. 118:15 The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous...

Psa. 33:1-3 Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4421.php>

⁷⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁸⁰ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4421.php>

24^rThus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

[Redeemer] Four great names of God:

1. Redeemer (Isa. 44:6,24; 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; Prov. 23:11; Jer. 50:34)
2. Creator (Isa. 44:24; 40:28; 43:15; Eccl. 12:1; Rom. 1:25; 1Pet. 4:19)
3. Maker (Isa. 44:24; 17:7; 45:9,11; 51:13; 54:4; Job 4:17; 32:22; 35:10; 36:3; Ps. 95:6; Prov. 14:31; 17:5; 22:2; Jer. 33:2; Hos. 8:14; Heb. 11:10)
4. Jehovah (Isa. 44:24-28; 45:1-5)

Four great works of God in the past:

1. He formed Israel from the womb.
2. He made all things.
3. He stretched out the heavens.
4. He spread abroad the earth.⁸¹

The fact that God predicted more than 150 years in advance that a man named Cyrus would release the Jewish exiles points to God's uniqueness. To approach the Bible with an antisupernaturalistic bias and say that the references to Cyrus were added later, after he released the captives, causes the passage, as stated earlier, to lose its emphasis on God's uniqueness in predicting the future. This would mean that God is no different from idols—the very point Isaiah is disproving!⁸²

The Lord prefaced His stunning prediction with a reminder of who was making it. He was Yahweh, Israel's covenant God who had redeemed her and would yet redeem her. He had brought her into existence by Himself, as He had created all things including the heavens and the earth (cf. 40:12-14, 21-22). The often repeated phrase "Thus says the LORD" in this part of Isaiah engenders confidence in the promises of redemption that follow (cf. 45:1, 11, 14, 18).⁸³

24-28 The Lord, Israel's Redeemer (see comments on 43:14), who formed her (cf. 43:1, 7, 21; 44:2), is the Creator of all things including the heavens and the earth (cf. 42:5; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:13, 16) and the One who makes false prophets... diviners, and supposedly wise people look foolish. Those who said God could not release His people from Babylon would be proved false when God's predictions were fulfilled. Through the prophets, His messengers, He said Jerusalem would again have people living in it. Cyrus would allow the exiles to go back and rebuild their capital city Jerusalem (cf. 45:13) and the temple. In 586 b.c. Nebuchadnezzar and his forces broke through Jerusalem's walls, burned the houses and the temple, and carried many captives into exile. Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, first came to the throne of Anshan in Eastern Elam in 559. In 549 he conquered the Medes and became the ruler of the combined Persian and Median Empire. In 539 he conquered Babylon (Dan. 5:30) and the very next year issued a decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). In doing this Cyrus was serving God's purposes as if he were God's shepherd. Those returnees

⁸¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁸² The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁸³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

built the temple, completing it in 515 b.c., and years later (in 444 b.c.) Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls (see comments on Neh. 1-2; and comments on Dan. 9:25).⁸⁴

24-27 God reminds Israel just Who it is that redeemed them:

- He is the one Who formed them from the womb.
- He is the one who is the Creator all all things - the heavens and the earth.
- He is the One who directs the path of the future, often purposefully making sure that the predictions of psychics don't come true, just to ruin their reputations.
- He is the One Who insures that the words of His prophets comes true.

Knowing that He is such an all-powerful and all-knowing God should reassure the Jews that when God promises to bring them back to Jerusalem, they can trust it will happen.⁸⁵

25^{That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;}

“Tokens” - prognostications or forecasts of the seers.

1 Cor 1:20-25, 18.⁸⁶

Six present works of God with man:

1. He frustrates the signs of liars.
2. He makes diviners mad.
3. He turns the wise men backward.
4. He makes their knowledge foolish.
5. He confirms word of His servants (Isa. 44:26).
6. He performs counsel of His messengers.

[frustrateth] Hebrew: *parar* (HSN-<H6565>), to break up; violate; frustrate; break asunder; cast off; cause to cease; disannul; disappoint; dissolve; divide; make of no effect; fail; bring to nought; make void. God would do thus to the diviners, necromancers, or false prophets and deceivers in Israel who were trying to lead His people astray.

[tokens] Supernatural Signs

Hebrew: *owth* (HSN-<H226>), signal; flag; beacon; monument; omen; sign (translated sign 60 times); token; evidence; miracle. The meaning here is signs that the diviners and soothsayers relied upon; the tricks and cunning sleight-of-hand performances which they used to make it appear that there was a supernatural manifestation, or that their demonstrations were under divine influence (Isa. 44:25; Job 21:29; Ps. 65:8; 135:9). The word shows that even pagan religion depended upon (imitation) signs in their deceptions to attract converts. God has used signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Spirit in all ages to attract men to Himself and confirm truth, so it is no marvel that Satan's agents seek to imitate this program.

[liars] Deceivers, conjurers, and false prophets of the heathen who used signs and omens to further their cause. They are also called "diviners" and "wise men" here. They pretended to have

⁸⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁸⁵ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4421.php>

⁸⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

divine insight into the future. God promised here to make their signs, tokens, wisdom and predictions to fail so that they would be proved false and foolish.⁸⁷

25-26 False prophets were people who claimed to bring messages from the gods. Because God is truth, he is the standard for all teachings. We can always trust his Word as absolute truth. His Word is completely accurate, and against it we can measure all other teachings. If you are unsure about a teaching, test it against God's Word. God condemned the false prophets because they gave advice opposite to his.⁸⁸

Word Focus diviners (Heb. qasam) (44:25; 1 Sam. 6:2; Ezek. 21:23) H7080: This term refers to people who attempt to foretell the future through occult practices. Diviners are often mentioned along with other practitioners of the occult—all of whom were forbidden in Israel (Deut. 18:10–22). False prophets, such as Balaam, practiced divination, and the penalty was death (Josh. 13:22; Jer. 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 22:28). Diviners brought judgment on themselves but on their nations as well (Deut. 18:10; 2 Kin. 17:17, 18; Mic. 3:6, 7). Divining was practiced by several methods: calling up the spirits of the dead, casting arrows as lots, consulting images, looking at the organs of a dead animal, or interpreting dreams and visions (1 Sam. 28:8; Ezek. 13:23; 21:21, 29; 22:28; Mic. 3:6, 7; Zech. 10:2). Diviners charged fees for their services.⁸⁹

God embarrasses astrologers, diviners, and fortunetellers by controlling history in ways that deviate from past patterns. Ancient and modern prognosticators usually base their predictions on the belief that things will work out in the future as they have in the past. But Yahweh can move future events in entirely new directions. Archaeologists have discovered many predictions of the future of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires among Babylonian writings, but they are consistently optimistic; none are messages announcing the fall of these kingdoms. He can do things never before done.⁹⁰

26^{That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:}

[confirmeth the word] Confirmed Word

God here promised to confirm the word, His servant, Isaiah and the counsel of all His messengers (the prophets) who had made predictions of these things (Isa. 44:26). The idea is that God always supports the word that He gives to prophets to speak to men, fulfilling their promises and predictions. Repeatedly in O.T. days, He performed miracles to confirm the ministries of His servants; this is amply demonstrated in the record of men and women from Abel to Malachi, and summed up in Heb. 11. Abraham, Moses, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, and many others are examples of the working of signs and wonders among the people. In the N.T. the same program is enlarged upon, and such experiences would be normal today if people would believe the gospel and seek God for power from on high. This is proved by hundreds of promises and many commands to the

⁸⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁸⁸ Life Application Study Bible.

⁸⁹ Nelsons Study Bible

⁹⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

disciples (Mt. 28:20; Lk. 24:49; Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 1:4-8; 1Cor. 12:31; 14:1). A number of simple promises have been made to all believers that certain signs would follow them (Mt. 17:20; 21:22; Mk. 11:22-24; 16:15-20; Jn. 14:12-15; 15:7,16; 16:23-26; Heb. 3:3-4).

Sixteen Predictions -- Fulfilled:

1. Jerusalem will be inhabited (Isa. 44:26).
2. The cities of Judah will be built.
3. I will raise up the decayed places.
4. I will dry up your rivers (Isa. 44:27).
5. Cyrus will be My shepherd (Isa. 44:28).
6. He will perform all My pleasure.
7. He will command Jerusalem to be rebuilt and the temple foundation to be laid (Isa. 44:28; Ezra 1:1-4).
8. He will be My anointed (Isa. 45:1).
9. I will hold his right hand.
10. He will subdue nations.
11. He will loose the loins of kings.
12. He will have the two leaved gates open before him.
13. I will go before him and make the crooked places straight (Isa. 45:2).
14. I will break the gates of brass (of Babylon) in pieces, and cut the bars of iron apart.
15. I will give him the treasures of darkness, and the hidden riches of the secret places (of Babylon) that he may know that I, Jehovah, have called him by name, and that I am the God of Israel (Isa. 45:3).
16. For the sake of My people I have called him by name to deliver Israel from captivity, though before this he will not know Me (Isa. 45:4).

[Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof] This prophecy was fulfilled about 200 years after it was given -- when Cyrus, king of Persia, made a decree that Jews could return to their own land and rebuild their city and temple (2Chr. 36:22-23). They were not rebuilt by him, but he made the first command for their rebuilding. See pt. 6, The Seventy Weeks.⁹¹

You shall be inhabited: This is one of those characteristic prophecies of Isaiah. The Seer predicts the rehabilitation of the forsaken city of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the city as well as the towns of Judah. Isaiah thereby implies the destruction of the kingdom of Judah and her cities and the exile by predicting the return of the exiles to the same city which was abandoned as well as the rebuilding of the nation. This was accomplished after the 70 years of Babylonian exile which was ended by Cyrus which Isaiah predicts in the following verses. The purpose of the precision of these predictions, even to calling Cyrus by name in the next verse, is to offer proof that God will perform the good works which are promised for his people and would hardly seem possible during the time of extinction of statehood for Israel and Judah. Who would believe during the exile, with or without these prophetic assurances, that there would be a second commonwealth joining all 12 tribes into one nation and a second temple? Only those who put their faith in the future of "Zion" and did not "look to the earth" for answers and as Isaiah puts it, those who trust

⁹¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

in Zion, would have the confidence in God's purpose. To confirm that YHWH is the only God he calls the name of Cyrus and gives specific descriptions of the things that he will undertake.⁹²

Conversely, Yahweh could bring the predictions that He had revealed to His servant Isaiah (cf. 20:3), and His messengers the prophets, to pass. Here he predicted that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah would be rebuilt, after their destruction by the Babylonians.⁹³

27^{That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:}

Marks next section. Babylon.

[Be dry] This refers to the turning of the river Euphrates out of its regular channel flowing through Babylon, so that Cyrus could get into the city by the river bed and take it by surprise (Dan. 5). Cyrus directed the river into a large lake (40 square miles) which had already been made to carry off excessive waters of the Euphrates.

[thy rivers] These are the many canals and artificial streams by which Babylon and the surrounding country were watered from the river Euphrates.⁹⁴

Dry up your rivers: In the context of using Cyrus as His Messiah (see note under 45:1 below) and of describing the things that Cyrus would do (next verse) Cyrus is said to "dry up rivers." Herodotus tells how Cyrus, upon losing his favorite steed when attempting to cross the torrent of a tributary of the Tigris punished the river with his troops by spending the whole summer digging 360 separate channels (I:190) to divert the waters of the river and make it so "a woman could get over without difficulty." Cyrus also redivided the Euphrates in a number of channels to subdue it and rediverted the river into an old lake bed which works had been done in previous generations before the fall of Nineveh. (See Herod 1:179-185) Diverting the river into the lake bed that had been previously dug by Nitocris (Herod 1:185) so that his army could go under the walls of Babylon in the dry river bed in water no deeper "than a man's thighs" is recorded in Herod. (1:190-192).⁹⁵

God is the one who dried up the Red Sea during the Exodus. He could likewise dry up rivers in the future to bring His will to pass (cf. 48:21). Herodotus wrote that Cyrus overthrew Babylon by diverting the Euphrates River that ran under its walls. He then used the riverbed to storm the city. Young claimed that cuneiform records from the region have shown that Herodotus' account was in error. God's promises covered both the rebuilding of Judah's cities (vv. 26, 28) and the exiles' return home.⁹⁶

⁹² <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

⁹³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁹⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁹⁵ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

⁹⁶ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²⁸That saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Keep in mind that this verse really belongs in the next chapter. This is a remarkable prophecy concerning Cyrus. He is named here about two centuries before his birth. He is designated as "my shepherd." This is the only instance where a pagan potentate is given such a title. We shall develop this in the next chapter.⁹⁷

[Cyrus] The first mention of Cyrus in Scripture, chronologically speaking. He was named by God over 150 years before he was born, or about 200 years before he made the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isa. 45:1; 2Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-8; 3:7; 4:3-5; 5:13-17; 6:3,14; Dan. 1:21; 6:28; 10:1).

Five things Cyrus was to do for God:

1. To be a shepherd of God's people (Isa. 44:28).
2. To perform God's pleasure in liberating the Jews (Isa. 44:28; 45:13).
3. To decree the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
4. To decree the rebuilding of the temple of God at Jerusalem (Isa. 44:28).
5. To subdue nations (Isa. 45:1).

[shepherd] Cyrus was to be God's shepherd in permitting the Jews to go back to their own land to restore their nation and rebuild their temple and cities (Isa. 44:28 -- Isa. 45:1,13).

God's fivefold pleasure:

1. To raise up a man to be the shepherd of His people (Isa. 41:1-3; 44:28; 45:13)
2. The rebuilding of Jerusalem (Isa. 44:28)
3. The rebuilding of the temple
4. Punishment of the nations that had taken His people captive (Isa. 45:1; Jer. 25:11-12)
5. To prove to Israel and the heathen that He was God (Isa. 45:3-6)⁹⁸

Isaiah, who prophesied from about 740-681 B.C., called Cyrus by name almost 150 years before he ruled (559-530 B.C.)! Later historians said that Cyrus read this prophecy and was so moved that he carried it out. Isaiah also predicted that Jerusalem would fall more than 100 years before it happened (586 B.C.) and that the Temple would be rebuilt about 200 years before it happened. It is clear these prophecies came from God, who knows the future.⁹⁹

Cyrus was the Medo-Persian king who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. where the Jews had been exiled. He also allowed the exiles to return to Jerusalem. Isaiah predicted his name and actions 150 years before his birth. Note that God calls Cyrus "my shepherd" and "my anointed" (Isa. 45:1), terms which are also used of Jesus. The Hebrew word for "anointed" is the root from which the term "Messiah" is derived. Consequently, there were some Jews who lived during the time of Christ that thought these words about Cyrus actually meant that the Messiah would come as a mighty conqueror.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁹⁹ Life Application Study Bible.

¹⁰⁰ The Complete Word Study Bible

Who says of Cyrus: The record of the decree to rebuild the Temple can be found in 2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1, 2 with several other references in Ezra. The precision of the prediction made by Isaiah about 720 BC concerning events following 536 B,C more than, 184 years later is illustrated here and by the subsequent history. Cyrus reversed the policy of moving and resettling captive nations in unfamiliar places to keep them submissive, which policy had been started by the Assyrians and improved on by the Chaldeans. Ending this period, Cyrus declared the policy of restoring the captive nations to their homelands where possible.

There is a well preserved cylinder seal in the Yale University Library from Cyrus which contains his commands to resettle the captive nations. Cyrus died within 5 years of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and thus he served YHWH exactly as the prophecy says. Cyrus commanded the return and rebuilding and that the Temple be "founded." He did not live to see the Temple built nor the structure to rise above the foundations. So precise is the prophecy!¹⁰¹

God announced that Cyrus would be the person who would allow Jerusalem to be rebuilt and the temple foundations relaid. The mention of his name climaxes this prophecy (vv. 24-28). Cyrus would be the Lord's shepherd, the one who would lead the Israelites back into their land by permitting its restoration. He would carry out all God's desire (cf. 41:2-3, 25).

The title "My Shepherd" was one that God used of the Davidic kings (cf. 2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezek. 34:23). The fact that He used it here of a pagan monarch shows that God would use pagans to fulfill His wishes—since the Davidic kings had proved unreliable (cf. 7:13; 39:7). This was indeed a new thing that God had not done before (cf. 43:19).

In a wonderfully ingenious way, just as the foreigner, Ruth, became an ancestress of David (Ruth 4:13-22), the foreigner Cyrus typifies the Davidic Messiah (Isa. 53:10; Zech. 11:4; 13:7; John 8:29; 10:11).

Cyrus (559-530 B.C.) issued his decree to allow the Jewish exiles to return and rebuild Jerusalem in 538 B.C.⁵⁰⁶ This happened about 190 years after Isaiah announced this prophecy. Josephus recorded that Cyrus read Isaiah's prophecy predicting that he himself—Cyrus—would send the Israelites back to Palestine to rebuild the temple, and that he desired to fulfill this very prediction.⁵⁰⁷ Josephus also dated Isaiah's prophecy 140 years before the destruction of the temple, namely, about 726 B.C. The Persian monarch had not even been born at this time. When Isaiah made this prophecy his hearers probably said to one another: "Who did he say would do this? Who is Cyrus?" This prophecy is the primary reason that critics on the unity of Isaiah have insisted that Isaiah of Jerusalem could not possibly have written this prediction. It must have been written, they say, sometime after Cyrus issued his decree.⁵⁰⁸ However, the point that Yahweh was making throughout this book was that He alone could predict and create the future. For a similar prophecy involving Josiah, who had not yet been born, see 1 Kings 13:2.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

¹⁰² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

Motyer noted parallels between 44:24—48:22 and 49:1—53:12.⁵⁰⁹ These sections provide the solutions to Israel's double need: national bondage (cf. 42:18—43:21) and spiritual sinfulness (cf. 43:22—44:22).

The work of Cyrus (44:24—48:22)	The work of the Servant (49:1—53:12)
The task stated and the agent named (44:24-28)	The task stated and the agent named (49:1-6)
The task confirmed: to Israel and the world (45:1-7)	The task confirmed: to Israel and the world (49:7-12)
The response: prayer (45:8)	The response: praise (49:13)
Israel's disquiet (45:9-25)	Israel's despondency (49:14—50:11)
• The Lord's purpose affirmed (45:9-13)	• The Lord's love affirmed (49:14-16)
• Israel and Gentiles (45:14-22)	• Israel and Gentiles (49:17-26)
• Those who find righteousness and strength in the supreme Lord and those who oppose Him (45:23-25)	• The Servant, the exemplar of those who find strength and vindication in the Almighty Lord (50:1-11)
The Lord's care for Israel - from the beginning through to the coming salvation (46:1-13)	The Lord's care for Israel - from the beginning through to the coming salvation (51:1-16)
Babylon: from the throne to the dust (47:1-15)	Zion: from the dust to the throne (51:17—52:12)
Redemption from Babylon (48:1-22)	Redemption from sin (52:13—53:12)