



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 44

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 44

God predicts restoration, Cyrus will accomplish it. Chapter 44. Summary and Comments

He tells Jacob to listen and calls him His servant - a tie to the first servant song perhaps? Then he even says that He is the one who formed them in the womb. Is this meant as an allusion to the sort of thing God was going to say to Jeremiah in 1. 5: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. . . I dedicated you as a prophet to the nations." God could call them prophets only in that they were destined to preserve the clear knowledge of the true God and eventually to give it to the gentiles. So He says; Do not be afraid. Then he calls Jacob <Jesurun> - a name that also is found in Dt 32:15; 33:5, 26. Meaning is uncertain, probably means <upright>, in contrast to the

seeming etymology of Jacob, which may mean <deceiver>.

So to bring them back, He will pour water on the thirsty land and pour out His Spirit on their offspring, which will flourish like the grass in the meadow. Then verse 5 according to some means that gentiles will accept the God of Israel. The Jews did not at first see that this meant the Gentiles were to be accepted as part of God's people without becoming Jews. Cf. again St. Paul Eph. 3:6.

To try to keep them from going back into idolatry - into which so many had fallen before the exile -- he says: I am the first and the last, there is no God but me. In proof of that: The idols have never done anything, never foretold anything. The true God has done so.

Verse 7 speaks of what has happened since He established "My ancient people." This may refer to the whole human race.

But returning to idolatry,. He tells what is obvious: the craftsman makes an idol - an expensive one from fine wood, a cheaper one from lesser wood. But half of the wood he cut he uses to make a fire to warm himself and to cook food. What an implication of the worth of the idol! Their craftsmen who make them are only human - so they could not make a real god. If the craftsman works long he gets weak. When he has made a god -- out of half the material of which the one half served for cooking --he bows down before it: Save me, my god! What nonsense! Shall anyone bow down to a block of wood? Anyone who does this is like a man who tries to make a meal of ashes.

So Israel should remember these things. God has made Israel, and has redeemed Israel. So the heavens should sing for joy.

The beginning of the actual restoration is God's choice of Cyrus. The Lord who made all things, who makes fools of diviners, called Cyrus, who is called His shepherd, who will do all God wills. Interestingly, the Hebrew form of Cyrus is <Koresh>.

We notice the diviners are called fools. Isaiah is thinking probably of the Babylonian pseudo- science of divination. They even made clay models of livers, and marked on them the significant spots to look for in the liver of sacrificed animals.

But their predictions are haphazard. Only God can predict and make His predictions come true. He will say of Jerusalem: Let it be rebuilt, and of the temple: Let its foundations be laid.

End of Chapter 44