

Review

After having offered comfort to the nation of Israel, God directs his attention back to the nations and their false gods...

41:21 Present Your Case

At the beginning of this chapter, the Lord had challenged the nations,

Is. 41:1 " ...Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let us come together for judgment."

Now, God is allowing them to present their case.

What case do they need to make? The case that their gods are superior to the God of Israel. That they are following the truth, not a lie.

41:22-23 Declare What Is Going To Take Place

God had claimed to be in charge of the world. He claimed to be the one who raised up the world's conquerors (Isa. 41:2). But realistically, any of the nations could make the claim that it was their gods - their idols - who were doing such things.

So, is the trial at a standstill? Is it just one person's word against another? Is God forever stuck in a "Did not. Did too. Did not. Did too." argument?

No. The Lord has come up with a very simple test. The real test of true deity will go beyond simple claims of sovereignty and guiding human events. The test will be who can foretelling the future!

God says, "Okay..."

Is. 41:22 "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place..."

In other words, "So that we can know you are gods, go ahead and tell us what's going to happen in the future. If you're the ones in control of man's destiny, then tell us what's coming next in the course of human events."

Sounds like a pretty simple test for a god, doesn't it? All created things are stuck inside the limits of time. But an all-powerful god will be

outside of time, and is therefore not limited to waiting in order to see the future. So, the test is brilliant:

Is. 41:23 "Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods..."

Knowing that the false gods will not be able to pass the test, God gets a little sarcastic:

Is. 41:23 "Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together."

God is essentially saying, "And hey, if you have difficulty with the action of telling the future, then how about doing any action at all? Do SOMETHING god-like, for goodness' sake!"

41:24 An Abomination

Of course, the false gods do not - cannot - answer. And when they don't, God says they are nothing. They are of no account, they can't do anything.

Having successfully proven this, he looks beyond the false gods and points the finger at the people of the nations who follow them.

Is. 41:24 ...He who chooses you is an abomination.

Choosing false gods over the real God is sure to turn the real God against you. God calls them "an abomination."

That word abomination (Heb.: "to-ay-BAW") means to be a disgusting, loathsome thing. Those who choose to follow idols are repugnant to God.

41:25 One From The North

Since the false gods can't foretell the future, it's the real God's turn. He describes how He will raise up a powerful man who will tread upon the rulers of the earth. In a few chapters, we will be discussing Cyrus of Persia, who arose and conquered the Babylonian Empire. God will show that He did not just randomly guess that a conqueror was coming, but that he actually named him about 150 years before Cyrus arose to the throne.

He would also come to call upon the name of the Lord. His spirit would be stirred up (2Chron. 36:22) and acknowledge that the true God had given him all the kingdoms of the earth ((2Chron. 26:33).

41:26-29 There Is No One

Consistently accurate predictive prophecy is conclusive proof of a true God. I can picture the Lord waving His hands in front of a massive courtroom filled with idols, asking, "Which of these false gods has declared the end from the beginning? Not one of them! Their prophets prophesied inconsistently and inaccurately. Not one of these idols can even answer a simple question! They are just wood and stone and metal!"

Saints, this is why we must have a working knowledge of prophecy. Because even today, the world is presenting a lot of substitute gods. Are you able to differentiate between the god of the Mormons, the god of the Muslims, and the God of the Christians? Fulfilled prophecy will do that.

I myself am a living testimony to the convincing power of prophecy. In my teens and early 20's, I was a die-hard atheist. I "knew for a fact" that God did not exist.

But a series of miracles brought me to Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa one evening in 1988. Pastor Chuck Smith had been teaching through the book of Daniel, and "happened" to be in chapter nine that night.

He read the passage, and covered the world events that came afterwards. An angel told the prophet Daniel,

Dan. 9:25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks..."

Pastor Chuck explained the concept of weeks - groups of seven. 69 weeks of years was 483 years. He also explained the Babylonian calendar, whose years were 360 days. From the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, it would be 173,880 days until the Messiah came to Jerusalem.

He told us the history: King Artaxerxes issued this decree on March 14, 445BC. He calculated the days, and ended up on the first Palm Sunday - the day Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem!

Because Pastor Chuck was a student of prophecy, I was converted from an atheist who insisted that there was no God to a man that believes the Bible and knows the God Who wrote it.

How many people are there that you could affect with a basic knowledge of God's predictive prophecies?