

Studies in Isaiah - Part 8

by Harry Ironside

The sermon explores God's sovereignty and majesty while warning against the folly of idolatry and calling for faith in Him as the true Savior.

Duration: 47:00

Scripture: Isaiah 44:28 - 45:1, Isaiah 45:3-4, Isaiah 45:22, Isaiah 45:25, Isaiah 46:4-9

Topics: "Expository"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the foolishness of idolatry and contrasts it with the faithfulness and care of God towards Israel. The message emphasizes how God has sustained and provided for Israel throughout history and promises to continue doing so in the future. The sermon then transitions to the downfall of Babylon, with the preacher reading verses from Isaiah 44 and 45 that mention Cyrus as God's chosen instrument. The preacher uses an illustration of a person facing the possibility of losing their home to highlight the despair and hopelessness that can be experienced, but also the potential for unexpected help and provision from an old friend.

Transcript

Embracing chapters 40 through 48, in which we have Jehovah's Controversy with Idols. Throughout this section, he is emphasizing his own power and majesty. Strange the thoughts that run through people's mind.

I remember reading a lecture of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll some years ago, and he dwelt on this. He said, what a boaster this God of the Bible is. How often he talks about himself and what he has done and can do.

Well, one could understand an ungodly man looking at it that way, but who in all the universe has a right to boast, save the God who created it. And why does he set forth his own glory and his own majesty and his own power? Why does he emphasize his own wisdom and his own strength and ability? In order that men may realize the importance of living in touch with him and the folly of turning to anyone else. What folly for the people of Israel, after all God had done for them, to turn aside to dumb idols.

Yet how senseless people are. While we read of different occasions in the Kings and Chronicles, even when the people of Israel or Judah went out against some of their foes, and they overcame them. Then they brought back the gods of the nations that they had overcome, and they set up shrines of gods that

proved powerless to defend their own worshipers.

And yet the people of Israel were so foolish that they took them over. Today men do not worship idols of gold and silver and brass and iron, but every man who turns away from God sets up some kind of an idol in his heart. He either worships himself or he worships folly, pleasure, fame, something of that kind.

I remember how aptly Dr. Philpott spoke when he was being introduced on one occasion. The speaker said to him, I'm happy now to present to you Dr. Peter W. Philpott, a self-made man. And Dr. Philpott said, I'm really sorry that our brother has introduced me in the way he has, though I appreciate his kind thoughts.

But he says, you know, I've noticed that these self-made men all seem to worship their own creator. That is very apt, I thought. If men don't know, do not know the one living and true God, then the first thing you know, they set up the great God self and worship him.

Well, we've already considered, then, the first part of this section in which God is telling Israel of what he has in store for them, of the Redeemer that's yet to come, of the forerunner who will announce his coming, of the comfort that he has for those who believe his word, who put their trust in him. And then just as we can, and of the, and how he has foreseen the dangers and the sorrows that Israel must pass through, the deep waters through which they'll have to go. But he has promised that where there's real faith in their part, he'll be with them in all their sorrows and all their troubles.

And then, in the very closing words of the 44th chapter, there's an abrupt change, and he speaks of one who is yet to come to be the deliverer of Israel from the power of the Chaldean, calls him by name, though he has not known him, that is Cyrus, king of Persia. Now, remember that Isaiah wrote about, well, I suppose these words were written somewhere around the end of the 8th century before Christ, about 710, 720, somewhere in there. And the Babylonian captivity was not until about 600, so that over a century was to elapse before Cyrus.

Oh, more than that, the Babylonian captivity was to go on for 70 years, so that nearly two centuries would elapse before Cyrus himself was to appear. And yet God foretold to the people of his day that this man would arise, so that when he did come, they would know it was the hour of Jehovah's deliverance. I think I mentioned here, or was it in some other place where I was preaching lately, I don't recall, but I mentioned that sometimes the divisions in the chapters and verses come in the wrong places.

We all know that it wasn't a question of inspiration dividing the Bible into chapters and verses, it was simply a matter of accommodation on the part of human editors who thought it would help us to separate the subjects and to find certain passages. And I suppose it has been very, very helpful to have our Bible divided in this way, into chapters and verses. But on the other hand, sometimes it's misleading.

Sometimes it keeps us from getting the full content of a passage if the passage is broken up in the middle. And it seems as though at times the editors have used poor judgment in making the breaks where they have. For instance, take the break between John 7 and 8. The last words of John 7 are, And every man went to his own house.

The opening words of John 8 are, Jesus went to the mount of Olives. They failed to translate one little word which should have been rendered but, and they've broken a sentence right in two. Every man went to his own house, but Jesus went to the mount of Olives.

He had no house to go to. He was the homeless stranger in the world his own hands had made. And when others went off to their comfortable homes that night, he went out to the mountainside, I suppose to the Garden of Gethsemane, and spent the night there, lying upon the bare ground or communing with his Father.

And so these divisions don't always follow right. Now it's very evident here that the last verse of chapter 44 is introducing what you have in chapter 45. And so I'm going to ask my wife to read it together, the last of chapter 44 and the beginning of 45.

Taking the subject of the sentence from verse 24, Thus saith the Lord of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be blessed, and to the temple thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have told them to subdue nations before him. And I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.

I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in thunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that I may know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

For Jacob my servant-slave, and Israel my elect, and have even called thee by thy name, I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. Now this is the passage preeminently that the critics take as proof that the Isaiah who wrote the first part of the book could not have written these words. But as we said this morning, that's simply begging the whole question of inspiration.

If we believe, as every Christian should, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, that the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, there's no more difficulty in understanding that God could foretell the rise of King Cyrus and what he would do for his people than there was in that he could foretell the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world, and the redemption that he would accomplish, his first coming and his second coming, and the effects and result of his rejection, and then the results of his final acceptance by the people of Israel. All this was foretold ahead of time, and so the same way God, through Isaiah, foretold the rising up of Cyrus. It's good for us to remember just who this Cyrus was.

He was the nephew of Syaxares, who at this time was king of Media. Media and Persia were two kingdoms that were, as a rule, very closely related. They sprang from the same stock, and it was through these kingdoms united together under the leadership of Cyrus and Syaxares that eventually, Chaldea was conquered, and Babylon became one of the chief cities of the Persian Empire until its eventual complete destruction.

It's interesting to turn aside to secular history to get fuller information about some of these things. Herodotus has a lot to tell us about it, and there are other ancient records that have come down to us that tell us how Cyrus and Syaxares entered into a combine, as we would say, and marched against Babylon, and eventually took Babylon by turning aside the waters of the Euphrates into another channel, and so came in under the two-leaved gates, under the gates of the river itself. That's what's indicated here.

So God foresaw this. He looks ahead, and he tells us, he tells Cyrus himself, I've called you to this. You see, one thing we need to remember, one reason why Cyrus and the Persians befriended the people of Israel was this, that the Persians, like the Israelites, were monotheists.

They did not believe in idolatry. They did not worship idols. They abhorred idols.

They worshipped God under the symbol of the sun. And they also believed in a great power they called Orimen. Orimod was the name for God.

Orimen was the name for the power of darkness. And some people think of them as dualists, as though they believed in two great gods, the god of light and the god of darkness. But it seems more likely that what they really believed was in one true and living God, but with a great adversary, just as we believe in Satan, an adversary seeking to impede in every possible way the carrying out of God's counsels.

Well, then naturally a people believing in one God, who was symbolized by the sun, didn't actually worship the sun as some have thought, but it was symbolized by the sun, would look with favor upon Israel when they found that they did not worship idols. It was because of idolatry they were sent down to Babylon. But Babylon cured them of idolatry.

The seventy years that they dwelt in Babylon gave them such a sickener of idolatry that no matter what other sins the Jewish people have fallen into since, they've never, as a people, been characterized by idolatry. Undoubtedly here and there there have been Jews who have been idolaters because of ignorance and because of being brought up among an idolatrous people. But the nation as such learned to abhor idolatry from what they saw in Babylon.

It was as though God said, well, you will worship idols, you will turn away from me, you will follow after these false gods. I'll give you idolatry for breakfast, dinner, and supper. Let you see how you like it.

And so down they went to Babylon, and there they suffered for seventy years under the awful conditions of that idolatrous kingdom. And when they came back to the land of Palestine, they were through with idolatry. But never again in an idolatrous people.

They to this day abhor idols of every description. And that's one reason why the Christian church in the medieval church and that which came out of it, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic and the Greek Orthodox and other branches of the Catholic church have had such difficulty in impressing the Jew. Because if the Jew even looked inside one of their churches to him, it was just a heathen temple.

Here were all kinds of icons and images and people burning incense to them and burning candles in front of them and bowing down to the Jew that is perfectly abhorrent. That's idolatry. And he hates and detests everything of the kind.

It's only when a pure Christianity, apart from all that, is presented in loving kindness to the Jew that one is likely to make any impression upon it. Of course, I do know this, that all down through the centuries there have been Jews who have been converted to Romanism. But very frequently that conversion has been just a pretense in order to escape persecution, as in the case of the Jews of Spain and so on, who outwardly conformed to the Church of Rome and yet had their hidden services when they carried on the synagogue worship as they had done of old.

But where there's a real new birth and the Jew becomes a true Christian, he turns away from all this idolatry because it's something that is very soul-abhorrent. Well, God foretold that the rise of King Cyrus, he was to open the way for the remnant to return to Jerusalem. But of course, this was just to be a partial return.

There are those who insist that all the prophecies connected with the return of Israel have been fulfilled already, and that therefore we're not to look for any future fulfillment of them. But God says in this very book of Isaiah, I will set my hand the second time to recover my people. And that's what he's already beginning to do and what he will do shortly when he'll gather them back as a people to their home land.

Well now, following this revelation, this prophecy in regard to King Cyrus, God comes back to the subject that had occupied him before, emphasizing man's littleness and man's frailty and man's lack of merit, and emphasizing his own majesty and power and glory in contrast to the idols to which the people had turned. I'll ask my wife, Philippe, to read another portion. Yes, verse 5, I am the Lord, and there is none else.

There is no God beside me. I greet thee, though thou hast not known me, that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.

That's very striking right there, in connection with what I said a moment ago. Some people have thought of the Persians as dualists because in their sacred writings, the Zend-Evesta, for instance, they give the primary place to Ormus, the God of light, the one true and living God. And then Arimin occupies a very large place as the supernatural foe of God.

He's the spirit, the power of darkness. And according to their thought in the Zend-Evesta, which I can't give you detail, for I was only 14 years old when I read it through, and I've forgotten it since, but I do remember, I read it that time, and I do remember this, that in the Zend-Evesta, God is presented as in constant conflict with Arimin, Ormus and Arimin, in constant conflict. One is the God of light, and the other is the evil spirit of darkness.

One is the God of peace, and the other is the spirit of conflict, and so on. One is the God of goodness, and the other is the evil, is the spirit of evil. And so here, in answer to this, God is now addressing King Cyrus.

He says, now I'm the one true and living God. Beside me there's no other. I, I create peace, and I create evil.

I create light, and I create darkness. There's no other power, there's no other power that can share omnipotence with me. I create peace, and I create evil.

What does that mean? You know, some of our friends, extreme high Calvinists, generally known as super lapsarians, that's a nice big mouthful, they insist that God has foreordained everything that takes place on the earth, and therefore that it's God himself foreordained that man should sin in order that he might have opportunity to display his redemptive grace. But that's, that's not what's involved in this. When he says, I create peace, and I create evil, it's evil in the sense of calamity.

In other words, if there's a, if there's a thunderstorm and great damage is done, God says, I take full responsibility for it. If everything is fair and beautiful as today, God says, you get it from me. If there's a great earthquake, God is behind that.

Whatever it is, I, the Lord, create peace, I create evil. And so in another scripture we read, in one of the minor prophets, shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it. God takes the responsibility for everything that occurs.

God has used such simple terms in order to show people how easily they may come into direct contact with him through grace. And yet people make difficulty out of the word believe. And they make difficulty out of the word look.

I've had people say, well, I just don't get it. How can I look to one that I haven't seen? If you stood up there and said, look unto me, I can look to you. I understand what you're talking about.

But when it says, when an unseen God says, look unto me and be ye saved, I can't understand it. I generally use an illustration like this. I say, well, suppose, for instance, here's a family and they're buying a home.

And they have a mortgage on the home. And they've been able up to a certain time to keep up their payments. And then they find themselves unable.

And finally, the one who holds the mortgage, the note against them, serves notice that if everything is not cleared up by a certain date, he's going to foreclose on them. And the homeowner goes round from bank to bank and home loan agency to another and tries to get a loan. Maybe goes to the tribe to get a GI loan if he's been in the service or something.

But he fails at every point. And he doesn't know what to do. And the wife and the little children are utterly broken hearts to think they're going to have to lose their home.

And then one day, perhaps when it's just a day or two, maybe we'll say that the note has to be taken up on Monday and this is Saturday afternoon. He's going down the street, utterly melancholy and sad and discouraged to think that he's going to lose everything. And when he meets an old friend of his, a man who knew him well and they were chums perhaps in years gone by, but this old friend has prospered financially in a way he hasn't.

And his friend meets him and he calls him by name. I don't know what name we'll give him, any name will do. He says to him, why George, what makes you look so blue? Something troubling you? He says, yes, something is troubling me.

He says, you know, I'm afraid on Monday I'm going to lose my home. I've struggled so hard, but I couldn't keep up the payments and the note is going to be called and I can't pay it. Well, have you tried to get somebody else to take it up? Oh, yes, I've been to bank after bank and nobody will do anything.

And he says, well, look here, George, you know me, you know I'm well able to look after that. So I want you just to look to me. When does it have to be paid? Well, they demand that I pay it, that I meet them at the bank at two o'clock on Monday and settle the thing and if not, they want to foreclose.

All right, George, don't worry, look to me. Now, what does look to me mean? That's all. He goes, the other goes home, you know, and he comes in and his step is different, his face is bright.

Oh, the wife says, have you got the money? No, he says, I haven't got a cent. Oh, I thought to look at you that you were going to tell me that you had the money to pay the loan. That's all right, it's all going to be tended to, but I haven't got a cent.

Well, what do you mean? Well, I met so-and-so and you know, he's well able to tell me, he told me to look to him and not to worry about it anymore. She begins to cry and she says, oh, dear, I thought at first there

was something to it, but how on earth can I look to one that I can't see? I don't understand. Do you think any woman would be fool enough to talk like that? Yet people talk that way in regard to eternal things.

But they would both understand that look to me meant trust in me. I'll be glad to meet the note when it comes due. And God says to poor, lost sinners who are utterly bankrupt, look unto me and be ye saved, for I'm God and there's none else.

I'm a just God and a Savior. What a wonderful gospel message in the Old Testament that is. Well, with that we've come, haven't we, to the end of chapter 45? And so we turn to chapter 46.

They lavish gold out of the bag, and waste silver in the balance, and how goldsmiths, and ye make it that are God's. They fall down, yea, they worship, they bow him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he's standing. From his place shall he not remove? Yea, one shall crown him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble? Remember this, and show yourself to men.

Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old. For I am God, and there is none else.

I am God, and there is none like me. Notice both the irony here, and the wonderfully precious promise that's brought before us. God now is still contrasting himself with idols.

And he says in the beginning of the chapter, these idols, they'll bow down, meeple stupid. They can't do anything to save themselves. Well, at last Cyrus was to attack Babylon, and the city was to fall.

The gods of Babylon couldn't save themselves. What did happen? Why, the priests of Babylon got busy, and they loaded their gods upon carts in order to wheel them away and set them up somewhere else. Gods who couldn't deliver their own people had to be delivered by the people from absolute destruction.

And God says, I'm altogether different to that. These gods had to be carried by their makers. I undertake to carry you.

I've brought you hitherto, and I'll continue to carry you through. Even down to old age will I carry you. When hoar heads adorn your brow, when you come down to gray hairs, I'll be there to carry you and sustain you and see you through.

Then he goes on to ridicule, just as he had done before in connection with the making gods out of the trees of the forest. He goes on to ridicule those who make gods out of the various metals, the goldsmith and so on. Takes a piece of metal and he fashions it and works over it, and then he sets it up and says, this is a god.

But when he sets it up, it's immovable. It can't walk, it can't see, it can't hear, it can't do anything. And in time of danger, it needs somebody to protect it.

What a god. But God says, oh, how different have I acted toward you, Israel. How could you ever turn aside to such senselessness as idolatry when you've known how wonderfully I've sustained and cared for you through the centuries? Look back over the past and see what I've done.

And I promise to care for you just as wonderfully in the future. I've greater things in store in the future than you've ever known in the past. This really is the message of chapter forty-six.

And so chapter forty-seven brings us to the downfall of Babylon. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit on the ground.

There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate than reading from 12 to the end of the chapter. Stand now with thine enchantments and with the multitude of thy prostrates, wherein thou hast laboured for thy youth. If so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so bidst thou mayst prevail.

Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble.

The fire shall burn them. They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

Thus shall they be able to be with whom God has laboured, even thy merchants from thy youth. They shall wander every one to his quarters. None shall stray from him.

When we were engaged in the first part of this book, we drew attention to the fact that Babylon was the very fountainhead of idolatry. According to the best records that we have, all idolatry began at Babylon. If you want fuller proof as to that, you should never examine a book called *The Two Babylons*.

I would suggest that you read it. There are two or three copies in the library. I know I put a couple of copies there myself, so unless somebody's copped them, they're there still.

And Babylon, by her sorceries, her enchantments, is said to have bewitched the nations. Nation after nation followed her in the practice of idolatry. She herself was recognized as the Lady of Kingdoms.

Her wealth, her riches, her culture and all this surpassed that of any of the nations around. But God, looking far ahead to the time when Cyrus and his army would come up against them, says, I shall no more be called the Lady of Kingdoms. The day was coming when they'd be stripped and made bare, and all their treasures destroyed, everything taken away from them.

And God would prove that their idols had absolutely no power. But his word should stand. He speaks of the folly of their turning for confidence to the stargazers, the astrologers, the monthly prognosticators, and so on.

You know, wherever you get people turning away from the one true and living God and refusing the word of God, they're always ready to turn to other things. It's been a characteristic thing down through the centuries that when men, when leaders, great leaders, gave up confidence in God and his word, then they readily became the prey of all sorts of charlatans. Take even the infamous Hitler, the tyrant whom God destroyed so lately.

He had a special, what do you call it? I'd say magician, but that isn't the word. One who he consulted with constantly, you know, as to lucky days and unlucky days when he was to attack nations and all this kind of thing. Astrologer.

Ah, that's the word I'm trying to get, an astrologer. He went to the, looked into the map of the stars and so on to see what was indicated. Well, all that began at Babylon.

Way back there, centuries ago, they had their astrologers, their stargazers. Of course, there's a great deal of difference between an astrologer and an astronomer. Astronomy isn't exact science.

Astrology is just fraud and a fake. And yet how many people there are that give heed to it. You take our papers today, many of them contain astrologers' reports from month to month, and a lot of people are fools enough to believe that there's a whole lot in it.

In fact, some of the biggest dealers on the market in New York City, Erling Olson told me, never do a thing without consulting an astrologer when it comes to making big deals and so on. Men still believe in these kind of things. They turn away from the word of the living God, but they're turned to the fables.

We were driving along here somewhere the other day, weren't we, when we saw by the roadside a tent and a big sign up that there was a woman in there who would foretell the future and show you how to get riches and so on if you'd only come in and consult her. Somebody remarked, well it doesn't look as though she's made much of a success of it for herself. And there she was in a poor miserable place.

And yet I suppose there wouldn't be a day go by that lots of people would stop and hand their money over to a charlatan like that in order to have her look into the future for them. But thank God the believer doesn't need anything of that kind. He's got something absolutely sure and certain in God's own holy word.

Some of you may be averted to tell a little experience I had years ago. This runs me off the line, but some of you fellas are going to sleep. It'll wake you up.

See, I'm beginning to see better than I was. I was going down in Los Angeles years ago and I was going down one day on the electric line from Los Angeles to Long Beach just to have a little relaxation. I was all worn out with so many meetings and I'd hardly taken my feet when one of these queer looking dames came along with a dress that looked like her dress had been made out of a lot of red bandana handkerchiefs sewed together.

And she had some spangles across her brow and long braids of black hair. She was a Bulgarian gypsy. And she slipped, before I knew what she was doing, she slipped right down beside me and took hold of my hand.

I'm not used to ladies grabbing me like that. I was rather surprised. And then she said to me, Gentlemen, gentlemen, you, you cross my arm with silver.

Put twenty-five cents. I tell you past, present, future. I am seventh daughter of a seventh daughter.

I born with a bail on. I can tell all mysteries. Past, present, and future.

Twenty-five cents, gentlemen. I said, well, really, I'm just trying to clutch around, got a good grip on her. And I said, well, really, it isn't necessary because I've had that all told already.

Well, she said, but I am expert. I know very exact past, present, future. Yes, I said, well, I got it from an expert.

I have it here. I have it here in a little book. And I pulled out of the other hand my New Testament, turned to the second chapter of the epistle of Ephesians.

I said, here, I've got my past, present, and future. Here's the past. You happy quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins.

For in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that now worketh with children of Israel. Oh, I got the wrong man. I got the wrong man.

Let, let, let go. I said, no, I won't let go. I didn't ask you to come down here and take hold of me.

And now that I've got you, you're going to stay here. I'm going to give you rest. And now I'll give you my present.

I give you my present. But God, who is rich in mercy, with his great love, for with him loved us even when we were dead in sins, and quickened us together with Christ. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It's the gift of God. That's my present. Yes, that's all right, sir.

That's all right. I've got enough. Goodbye, sir.

Goodbye. No, I said, wait a minute. I haven't given you it all yet.

I said, now here's my future. That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Yes, here's him.

And I got enough. And she gives it to a fool. She was gone.

And down this car she went, saying, I got the wrong man. But, you know, isn't it amazing the foolishness of people? I heard, I remember reading of a couple, of a gentleman who was riding in a railroad train one day, and he was reading his Bible, as I suppose most of us often do. I find it one of the very best ways to get into contact with people.

And he was sitting, reading his Bible, when a rather dapper-looking gentleman came along, and he looked at him, and he said, oh, reading the Bible? Yes, sir. Well, well, you believe the Bible? Yes, sir. Why? You know, I had an idea that I didn't think that any educated people believed in the Bible anymore.

He said, you look like a cultured man. I'm surprised that you're reading that. He says, you know, I believe the day will soon come when people will no more believe in the Bible than they'll believe in ghosts and witches, like our forefathers did.

And he said, my friend, when people reach the place where they don't believe in the Bible anymore, they'll believe in witches again, and they'll believe in ghosts again. And that's true. Oh, how many people have turned away from the Word of God to go into Spiritism and Theosophy and all these various occult systems that profess to have to do with the dead.

Well, all that's Babylonianism, you see. Come right down through the centuries, and God has judged it all, and He puts it all as it were to one side, says, why do men need this? Here am I, here am I, infinite in wisdom, power, and might, and ready in grace to reveal myself to the man who seeks my face. Now, let's go on.

Now, give me a little more. Verse 10 of chapter 48, Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver. I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Yes, and that covers, really, God's dealings with the nation of Israel. No other nation has suffered as this nation has suffered. And yet it remains intact, a nation to this day, and will to the very end.

When at last they've come through all the afflictions and tribulations and troubles, they'll understand the meaning of this verse. I have refined thee, but not with silver. God will bring that nation out of all its troubles and all its tribulations to be to the praise of His glory, a royal diadem upon His brow throughout the generations to come.

Read the chapters carefully. They tell the story in a wonderful way, Jehovah's conflict with idolatry. Verse 17, Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

O that thou hadst talked unto my commandment, then had thy peace been in the river, and thy righteousness at the waves of the sea. Verse 20, Go ye forth, O Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, for the voice of sin declare ye. Tell this already unto the end of the earth.

Verse 21, Praise the Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob, and they thirsted not when he led them through the desert. He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them. He clothed the rock also, and the waters rushed out.

There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. And so just as in the past God hath undertaken for Israel, so he'll undertake for them in days to come. And those who turn to him in repentance, those who receive the Savior that he has provided, will be brought into fullness of blessing.

But the section ends with the solemn words, There is no peace, saith Jehovah. Now here it's Jehovah. At the end of the next session it's my God.

But there's no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked. Jehovah who stands out in vivid contrast with the idols to whom they have turned for succor and help, and who have failed them utterly.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27913.mp3>

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