

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY
Part XXIX: God's Salvation From His People's Fear And Doubts Caused By Strong False Religions
(Isaiah 41:1-29)

I. Introduction

- A. If a Christian's faith in God or the Bible has been countered by a group that **strongly** extols another faith or god, he can be tempted to be **intimidated** into **doubting** the **credibility** of the Bible or the Bible's God.
- B. Discouraged Hebrew exiles suffered from such pressure: having been under a dominant, pagan nation in Babylon for 70 years, it was easy for them to wonder if **their God** was **great enough** to counter Babylon and its gods so as to **pull** His people out from Babylon and restore them to Canaan.
- C. Isaiah 41:1-29 is written for these Hebrew exiles, and acts as a strong rebuttal to one who questions the God of Scripture's **credibility** and **superiority** to any **OTHER humanly intimidating god or religion**:

II. God's Salvation From His People's Fear And Doubts Caused By Strong False Religions, Isa. 41:1-29.

- A. [First, we view God's Scripturally **internal** apologetic on the superiority of God and His Word]:
 - 1. In Isaiah 41:1, God summoned the Gentile nations of the world (which nations the Hebrew Babylonian exiles find overwhelming in the form of Babylon) to meet with Him and see His truth and power.
 - 2. At this meeting, God foretells a king would come and conquer all the nations of the Fertile Crescent, Isa. 42:2-4. (Since he would come by a way he had not before traveled, he had to be a non-Babylonian king, and from history we know this must be Cyrus who came 150 years after this prophecy!)
 - 3. God then prophetically mocks how the Gentiles will try to unite to offset Cyrus' invasion, Isa. 41:5-7.
 - 4. God prophetically describes how He will keep His ancient covenant with Israel to use Cyrus to restore Babylon's Hebrew exiles to God's Promised Land of Canaan, Isaiah 41:8-10.
 - 5. God predicts those Gentile nations who choose not to help Israel in this restoration will not be helped by God, but will flounder in weakness, Isaiah 41:11-16.
 - 6. God predicts through Isaiah that, as the Hebrew exiles will return from Babylon, He will provide for their livelihood needs bountifully even though they cross the desert to return to Canaan, Isa. 41:17-20.
 - 7. God then prophetically challenges the Gentile nations to reveal that their false gods cannot compete with His ability to foretell as He does through Isaiah of Cyrus' work [150 beforehand], Isa. 41:21-29!
- B. [Second, we then view the **external** apologetic on the superiority of God and His Word]:
 - 1. Liberal Theology scholars would claim that Isaiah 41 is so precise in describing Cyrus' invasion because this chapter was composed **after** Cyrus' invasion and **NOT** when Isaiah lived 150 years before the event: some would assert Isaiah 1-39 was written by a different author earlier than the alleged second book of Isaiah that contains Isaiah 40-66, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., p. 968, "Introduction To The Book Of Isaiah."
 - 2. However, archaeologists have found a scroll in a cave that belonged to the Qumran community of the Jordan valley that contains all 66 chapters of Isaiah, and the first verse of Isaiah 40 starts on the same page that chapter 39 ends; the scroll is dated 150 B.C., so it was at least a copy and more probably a copy of another copy of a scroll that could readily have come from Isaiah's hand around 700 B.C., cf. Zondervan Pictorial Ency. of the Bible , vol. Three, p. 321; Bible Knowledge Com., O. T., p. 1030.
 - 3. Also, at least 40 different words or sentences appear in both sections of the alleged two books of Isaiah. Though there are major style differences between the first 39 chapters and chapters 40-66 of Isaiah, such major style differences also occur within the works of Shakespeare, Goethe and Milton that could equally be used to discredit their authorship of such literature (Ibid., Ryrie Study Bible, KJV), something secular literary scholars do not press like they often do various books of the Bible!

Lesson: Both internally and externally, God has thrown down the gauntlet to all other religions and gods, challenging them to do what only He has been able to do -- to predict what will occur 150 years in advance and **precisely** fulfill such an oracle! He ALONE is thus to be BELIEVED and TRUSTED for our help amidst all the HUMANLY INTIMIDATING pressures of false religions and their followers!

Application: Let us use the TEST of FULFILLED PROPHECY to trust the Bible and its God and thus overcome our fear or doubt from pressures by other STRONG but FALSE religions! Only the Bible and thus its God can pass this test with a perfect score, so He alone is God, cf. Deuteronomy 18:20-22.