

## Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 259 – Keep Silence Through They Are All Vanity (Isaiah 41:1-29)

1. What did God call for from the islands as He awaited the people to speak to Him?

Keep silence: *“Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment”* (Isaiah 41:1).

- Have you ever told a child (or stubborn adults), “shut up and listen”? This is the basic principle here. Keep silence (**Psalms 46:10** and **Zechariah 2:13**).
- Job was of the mind to come and make his case before God (**Job 23:1-4**). Once it happened though, boy it was not as Job thought (**Job 40:1-14**).

2. Who raised up the righteous man from the east?

The Lord: *“Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he”* (Isaiah 41:2-4).

- From the east (**Ezekiel 43:2-3**). This could be in reference to Assyria (**Hosea 13:15-16**; cf. **II Kings 17:13-24** and **Isaiah 8:4**).
- The power God gave him whom He called from the east (**Isaiah 46:11**).
- However, Abraham even fits this (**Genesis 12:1-3**). Especially with the term “righteous” (**Romans 4:11-22**, **Galatians 3:6**, and **James 2:23**).
- The point is true regardless of whom the Lord is specifically talking about. God wrought it when he sent anyone to do anything (**Deuteronomy 32:7-13**, **Isaiah 46:9-10**, and **Romans 9:15-18**).
- They needed to see and understand these things (**Isaiah 43:10-12**).
- Passed safely for a reason (cf. **Psalms 78:51-55**).
- The Lord is the first and the last (**Isaiah 48:12-13** and **Revelation 1:11-18**).

3. In what way did people help each other when the man from the east rose up?

By encouraging one another and seemingly falsely so through idols: *“The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved”* (Isaiah 41:5-7).

- Islands see and fear (**Ezekiel 26:6-16**). God wanted the earth to witness His judgments (**Isaiah 34:1-2**).
- The reference to the carpenter and goldsmith could very well mean they were making idols to trust in (**Isaiah 40:19**, **Isaiah 44:12-18**, and **Jeremiah 10:3-9**). This certainly fits into the conclusion of the chapter.

4. When all the nations were in fear, what advantage did Israel have?

God, He was their comforter and strength: *“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:8-10).*

- Israel, chosen (**Deuteronomy 7:1-8, Deuteronomy 10:15-17, I Chronicles 16:13, Psalms 33:12, Psalms 105:6-7, Psalms 135:4, and Isaiah 44:1**).
- Seed of Abraham then carnal (**Genesis 26:24**), now spiritual (**Matthew 3:9 and Galatians 3:26-29**).
- Taken from ends of earth (**Joshua 24:1-11 and Psalms 107:1-3**).
- Fear not, for God was with them (**Deuteronomy 20:1, Deuteronomy 31:6, II Chronicles 20:1-17, and Psalms 46:1**).
- Be mindful that under the Old Law these things meant physical protection. For us, we have a spiritual relationship with our Father. His not forsaking us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**) is about spiritual blessings (**Romans 8:28-39**). Physically speaking, Christians are very vulnerable to attack (**Matthew 5:10-12, Acts 12:1-2, Acts 14:22, Acts 16:23-25, and II Timothy 3:12**).
- Remember, the seed of Abraham had to remain alive to bring Christ into this world (**Genesis 22:18**).

5. Did Israel have to fear those who were incensed against them?

No: *“Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 41:11-16).*

- We’ve basically covered all of this in verses 8-10. Fear not, God would help them (**Exodus 23:22 and Zechariah 12:1-3**).
- Their enemies would be ashamed and confounded (**Psalms 70:1-5, Psalms 71:24, and Isaiah 45:23-25**).
- Those that contended with Israel perished, gone (**Exodus 15:10-19, Psalms 37:20, and Psalms 37:35-36**).
- God holding their hand (**Psalms 73:22-24**).
- Thou worm, Jacob, is no compliment (**Psalms 22:6**).

6. What did the Lord seek to accomplish by helping the poor and needy?

For them to see He did not forsake them and to consider that God had done the good things to help them: *“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it” (Isaiah 41:17-20).*

- Good would hear the poor and needy (**Psalms 68:9-10, Psalms 72:12-13, Psalms 102:16-17**). An example of this type of prayer: **Psalms 86:1-17**
- Open up and providing sources of water (**Acts 14:17** and **Hebrews 6:7**).
- God’s works testify of Him that man may know (**Isaiah 44:23**).

7. In what way did God challenge Israel?

To make their case that they are as powerful as He is/was, that they were gods, as implied they acted like they were such: *“Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together” (Isaiah 41:21-23).*

- Similar to verse 1, make your argument is what God says here. The point of all of this, man is not comparable to God (**Romans 9:20** and **I Corinthians 1:19-21**).
- Man gets too big for his own pants (**Isaiah 47:10**).
- Understand that arguing with God is stupid (**Job 42:1-6**).
- God’s challenge went so far as to ask them to foretell the future (**Isaiah 43:9-11**).

8. What message did God deliver to Israel when comparing His might to theirs?

That they are nothing and their works are nothing: *“Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words. The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them,*

*could answer a word. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion” (Isaiah 41:24-29).*

- Ye are of nothing is a humbling statement against man that should be considered regularly (**Psalms 39:4-6**, **Jeremiah 51:17-18**, and **Luke 17:7-10**).
- Idols are nothing (**Isaiah 44:10** and **I Corinthians 8:4**).
- From the north (**Jeremiah 4:6-7** and **Jeremiah 6:22-23**) came the Medo-Persian Empire against Babylon to save Judah (**Isaiah 13:1; 17**, **Jeremiah 50:9**, **Jeremiah 51:11**, and **Daniel 5:28-31**). They were given kingdoms from God (**Ezra 1:2**).
- Cyrus would be God’s chosen vessel (**Isaiah 45:1-4**).
- Who else could foretell of such things (**Isaiah 44:7**)? Not their idols (**Habakkuk 2:18-20**).
- Cyrus would bring good tidings (**Isaiah 44:28**).
- When God beheld, there was none that counseled or gave answer. Consider where that puts a people (**Proverbs 11:14**).
- The reason none gave answer, they had no source in their idols (**Psalms 115:3-8**). Their messengers, without true message, become wind (**Jeremiah 5:12-13**).