

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 90

Isaiah Chapter 46

Isaiah 46 is a poem with two parts and 5 stanzas.

In **verses 1-2**, Isaiah exposes the impotency of the Babylonian gods and their associated idols. He does so for the benefit of his audience: the people of Israel, not the Babylonians. This is the first part, and the first stanza.

In **verses 3-13**, the LORD addresses His people Israel directly: the remnant of the house of Israel. Though He is unhappy with them, He will grant salvation to Zion. He has spoken, and He will bring it to pass. This is the second part. It consists of four stanzas. Each stanza starts with either a command or a question that the LORD gives to His people.

Here is the outline of the whole chapter:

Verses 1-2	Bel has bowed down	Isaiah is speaking
Verses 3-4	“Listen to Me”	The LORD is speaking
Verses 5-7	“To whom will you liken Me?”	The LORD is speaking
Verses 8-11	“Remember this and be assured”	The LORD is speaking
Verses 12-13	“Listen to Me”	The LORD is speaking

Verse-by-verse (continued)

Verses 3 and 4: This is the second stanza. The LORD is now speaking to His people Israel.

He implores them to listen to Him. He is about to tell them something that they desperately needed to know.

Until now, they had not been listening to Him. They had forgotten about Him and were convinced that they would not hear from Him again.

His words encompass the past, present, and future life of the nation of Israel: from her birth to her old age.

He also speaks to generations and to individuals. His words are emblematic of their 40 years in the desert, during which time many children were born, grew up, grew old, and even died.

These words would sustain the faithful remnant in Babylon during 70 years of captivity, when two generations of children would grow old waiting for the deliverance of the LORD.

Unlike Babylon's false gods, the LORD has always carried and delivered His people, and He always will.

He did so at their birth, see **Exodus 19:4**; and during their childhood, **Deuteronomy 1:30-32; 32:9-12**. He promises to do so in their adulthood and old age also, **Isaiah 40:10-11, 27-31**.

Saying that He will always deliver them implies that they will always need to be delivered from the oppression of powerful Gentile nations. It was so in 700 BC; in 540 BC; in the first century. It remains so to this very day and will continue to be so until the last day.

Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the times of the Gentiles, Gog and Magog, the beast with 10 horns and 7 heads, all the nations.

Daniel 2:36-45; 7:1-8, 15-27; 8:19-22; 9:23-27; Ezekiel 38-39; Luke 21:20-24; Revelation 13:1-10, 17:13-16, 19:11-21; Zechariah 14:1-5.

Refer to *two handouts* on the Gog invasion of Ezekiel 38 & 39.

Verses 5-7: This is the third stanza. Once again, the LORD draws an absolute contrast between Himself and the idols.

This has been a major theme in the past few chapters of Isaiah, and we have studied it in some detail. So this time we will take a different tact. We are going to observe an historical event that drives home the point in a memorable way.

The event in question occurred during the reign of perhaps the most evil king in the history of Israel: Ahab. Ahab married Jezebel. I'm guessing you've heard of her. She built a temple to Baal in Samaria, maintained 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, put God's prophets to death, and abolished the worship of the Lord.

So the LORD raised up the prophet Elijah to eradicate Baalism and restore the hearts of the people of Israel to the LORD. And the LORD performed miracles in answer to Elijah's prayers. For one thing, God gave Elijah power to prevent any rain for 3 ½ years. But even that didn't move the heart of Ahab to repentance.

So the LORD moved to place before the eyes of the nation of Israel a miracle that would convince them that that the LORD was the only true God, and Baal was impotent.

This event is described **1 Kings 18:17-40**.

Pay attention to the people that Elijah sends for in verses 19-20. There is a connection between this passage in Isaiah 41:21-29. Elijah will force the people to decide: will it be the LORD, or will it be Baal?

Verses 8-11: This is the fourth stanza. The LORD continues to address the remnant of the house of Israel. He makes it crystal clear that that they have transgressed His law. And He implores them to recall three things to mind:

1. Remember the former things long past. 2. I am God and there is no other. 3. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass.

1. Remember the former things long past:
 - a. Creation: Isaiah 40:21-22
 - b. The election of Israel: Isaiah 41:9.
 - c. The Passover: Exodus 12:23-27.
 - d. The Promised Land: Deuteronomy 32:6-14.