

**Reasoning in the Courtroom
God Calls the People of Earth to Court
Isaiah 41:1 – 20**

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At the end of chapter 40, we see a call from the Lord to those who are faithfully following Him to wait on Him. He will indeed fulfill everything He has promised, we simply need to trust that He will do that. YAHWEH sees everything that His people are going through, everything. He gives His people a contrast between those who are not waiting on Him, the nations, versus those who do.

Isaiah 40:27–31

“Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” (NASB95)

As we move from those promises of Isaiah 40, we are taken into a court room setting. Outside of the courtroom God has comforted His people who are waiting for Him to fulfill all the promises that He will provide them strength as they wait.

But those who “hope in the LORD” (Heb. qowe YHWH, “wait for the LORD,” as in Pss. 27:14; 37:7, 34; 130:5–6) do not set out in their own strength. Instead, they keep their hope in the LORD and patiently keep trusting Him for grace and help (cf. Isa. 30:15). Then when He moves they move along with Him. From Him they keep gaining new strength. They soar “on wings like eagles,” mounting over circumstances. They run and do not “grow weary”; they walk and do not become “faint.” God is indeed their complete source of strength—physical, inner, and spiritual. (Horton 2000, 308-309)

For those who are not waiting on Him, for the nations or rather those who are not believers, all they can look forward to is judgement.

The Lord moves to a courtroom setting where He will address all the inhabitants of the earth.

Isaiah 41:1

“Coastlands, listen to Me in silence, And let the peoples gain new strength; Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let us come together for judgment.” (NASB95)

The word we have translated as coastlands or islands in our English version is the Hebrew word יַיִם (iyyim).

This word means a “habitable, or inhabited...maritime land, whether the sea coast of a continent, or an island; ...The plural is very often used generally of maritime and transmarine regions ...and hence of those very far remote, Isa. 24:15; 40:15; 41:1, 5; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5; especially used of the coasts of the Mediterranean sea... (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 36)

YAHWEH is summoning all the inhabited earth to include those who are far away.

The conception of this passage is superb. Jehovah is represented as summoning the earth, as far as the remote isles of the west, to determine once and for ever who is the true God: whether He, or the idols and oracles of which there were myriads worshipped and believed in by every nation under heaven. (Exell n.d., 261)

To do this, He will summon the nations into the courtroom as well as the false gods. The issue before the bar will include the answer to the question as to who is truly in control of history.

To help us understand this, we need to look at how a Jew, Assyrian or Phoenician in 700 BC would perceive history versus how we perceive history today. It is incredibly different and was a direct result of their worldview which is foreign to us.

To someone living in the day of Isaiah, God always has an impact on history. How we deal with the present is impacted by how He had dealt with us and our people in the past. God is in history. This type of historiography is completely foreign to us today.

God is not only addressing the nations of Isaiah’s time, but He is also addressing the nations of today. We have a warped sense of history today. Since the enlightenment, history has removed God from the entire equation and relies wholly on naturalistic and empirical data completely discounting the spiritual side of the equation. For example, we miss the issue of God’s judgement falling on Nazi Germany due to the holocaust. “The result is that the worldview of our contemporary society differs dramatically from the worldview of the ancient historians. While the ancients would not deny the existence of natural cause and effect in history, they were much more interested in the divine role in history. For them, events were understood to have metaphysical as well as empirical aspects to them, and the former were more significant. The reality of events was larger than the observable, empirical shape of them.” (Walton 2018, 192)

In other words, for the Jews and the nations of Isaiah’s time, it was important to know the impact of deity on the flow of history. How does that work?

On August 17, 1987, Rudolf Hess, Adolf Hitler’s former deputy and the last living Nazi official was found in his jail cell in Spandau Prison, dead due to suicide. He had apparently hung himself. In 1987, Germany was still split between east and west.

We would look at it as simply being a coincidence of history that the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989 (the same date in history that Benjamin was born, and Rachael died) and Germany officially reunited on October 3, 1990. Germany was officially reunited on 15 Tishrei, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles in Israel that year.

Genesis 12:1–3

“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”” (ESV)

For someone living in 700BC, nothing about what happened to Nazi Germany would be a coincidence, it is clearly judgement from YAHWEH lasting until the death of the final member of those who were behind the holocaust.

History is not circular, but it is linear and is all about the work of God throughout the eons of time moving His plan forward. “In contemporary Western societies we tend to imagine ourselves on the linear path of time (the pervasive timeline), with the past behind us, striding into the future, which is shrouded in mist. In the ancient Near East, in contrast, terminology indicates that the people viewed themselves positioned at the convergence of fields representing the past and the future. At this convergence they were oriented toward the past—with its ancestors and traditions—while the future was obscured behind them.” (Walton 2018, 194)

They faced the past while we face the future. We tend to individualize events. For example, we are more interested on the impact of an Abraham Lincoln or Ulysses Grant on the history of the civil war than we would be at the larger picture of the spiritual reasons why it all took place to begin with. Even though Abraham Lincoln fully expressed his faith in the Lord repeatedly, that is downplayed by us today as, unimportant. The spiritual side of the equation is totally dismissed.

For a Jew in 700 BC, history is important but what is even more important is what is God telling us through these events for today.

In the ancient Near East visible events on earth were reflections of the activity of the gods. Consequently, rather than providing journalists who could seek out eyewitnesses, they needed experts who could interpret what deity was communicating through events (priests and palace officials) and those who could be part of building the documentation that would serve to elevate and legitimize the king (public relations departments for the palace). In Israel it was the prophets who most commonly provided interpretation of history. What was most important about events could not be seen by any eyewitness. (Walton 2018, 196-197)

Now that God has the nations into the courtroom, He will show His control over history as He points to one from the east. “Judgment is, as commonly in the Old Testament, not ‘condemnation’ or ‘sentence’ but ‘decision’. The nations are invited candidly to argue out the case and then to hear the authoritative decision of the court.” (Motyer 1999, 284)

His intent is to invite the entire Gentile world to share in the blessings of Israel. But as we move through this chapter, we will see that the nations will decide poorly.

Isaiah 41:2–4

“Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow. He pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet. Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’ ” (NAS95)

To show His complete control over the events taking place on earth, the Lord refers to a yet future event. The intent is to show who is in control of history and truly rules the world. This event involves a person, a conqueror, who God will call. We will be introduced further to this person in Isaiah 44 and 45 where God will call him by name. The terms being used are so like the terms used in Isaiah 44 and 45, that this can only be Cyrus being referred to. We will do a deep dive into Cyrus when we get to Isaiah 45, but we do

need to understand that God is the one who called him and enabled him to rule in the manner he did and to build the kingdom he did.

The point of time to which the writer has transported himself is that period of history where Cyrus the Great was beginning to make great conquests and many nations were beginning to be alarmed at his success. (Leupold 1971, 41)

The nations of the middle east were so alarmed at the rise of Cyrus that they aligned themselves with Croesus of Lydia. Here in verse 2, God is pointing out that He is the one who called Cyrus.

Croesus had tried to ensure success of his military endeavors by sending for help from the Spartans, Egyptians, and Babylonians, but to no avail. Sardis was taken in 547 or 546 B.C., and that fateful contact of West versus East that was to come to a mighty climax during the next generation had begun. (Lawrence 1985, 16)

After taking the Lydian Empire, Cyrus continued picking off individual Greek City States and then moved east.

Isaiah 41:3

“He pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.” (NASB95)

Those who he moved to conquer did indeed flee and Cyrus did not do what was normal for the time, thanks to the Assyrians, he did not destroy the conquered. “Cyrus was an unusual conqueror. He destroyed no Mesopotamian cities. He considered himself a deliverer rather than a pillager, as the Assyrians and Babylonians were.” (Horton 2000, 310)

Because it is God who controls history. God is the one who has stirred up the one from the east who is moving swiftly through the nations. Since it is God who controls history, the natural and logical end point from that history is the nations have no control over their future at all. God is in control and their future is His to determine.

Isaiah 41:4 “Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’ ” (NASB95)

What gives particular weight to the Lord’s claim is that Cyrus’s victories are prophesied in advance (41:25–29; 44:6–8; 45:20–21), they are in accord with an overarching plan that is as old as creation itself (41:22–24; 42:1–4; 44:6–8; 45:9–13), and they will result in something radically new: return from exile (42:9–10, 21–25; 43:18–21). How are these possible? the prophet asks. Only if the God responsible for them is a different order of being from the gods of the nations. (Oswalt 1998, 84)

Who is the one who is in control of history – “I am is.”

What is being said here in verse 4 is simple, it is a direct reference back to Exodus 3:14 “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”” (ESV)

God announces to the nations, those who are in rebellion to Him and have opposed Israel, “I YAHWEH, am the first and the last. I am.” He makes it clear who they are dealing with. The creator, the I AM. The use of this term in a courtroom would not be lost on a Jew.

This self-introduction formula claims sovereignty and divine control over history. God is the one who has “acted, worked” (pā‘al), the one who has “done, performed” (‘āšâ) his deeds to direct the course of history from the beginning of time until the last events in history. Therefore, God can be rightly called “the first and the last,” a title that will also appear in later chapters (44:6; 48:12). The two “I am” clauses in 4b

answer the questions in 41:2–4a; they emphasize God’s claim to sovereignty over history. (Smith 2009, 130)

The military history of the world is simply the outworking of God’s sovereign plan. God is the ultimate strategist who controls history. It has always been so, and it will always be so because no other god preceded Yahweh nor will any other succeed Him. (Constable 2003, Is 41:4)

John 8:58 “Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”” (ESV)

Dealing with Gentiles, the nations, Jesus expressed who He is just prior to the cross.

John 18:5–6

“They answered him, “Jesus from Nazareth.” Jesus told them, “I AM.” Judas, the man who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus told them, “I AM,” they backed away and fell to the ground.” (ISV)

And to make sure we are crystal clear as to who this person is, the one who is in control of history, He announces in advance the end goal of history, His return and does so in a way we cannot miss.

Revelation 22:12–13 “See! I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his action. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (ISV)

The one who is announcing this in advance and has called a conqueror from the east is YAHWEH. None other than the God of Israel. “The pronouns I (twice) and He are emphatic. GNB has “I, the LORD” twice in order to draw out the emphasis. The Hebrew adjective rendered first is from the same root as the word for beginning. With the terms first and last Yahweh is claiming to be eternal. These words are frequently used in the context of God’s control of all history.” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1093)

YAHWEH was present at the beginning of history, a beginning which He predates because He is eternal. Tying back to His previous comments in Isaiah 40:12 & 13, all human history begins with Him and His actions as the creator God. No other god has done this. The nations will try and attribute this to some other god or cause, but YAHWEH is the one who did this, He is the only one who can create everything out of nothing.

John 1:1–5

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (ESV)

The other possible way to read these lines is “I Yahweh am first and with the last; I am he.” This reading makes the final words “I am he” an independent, emphatic statement, which means “I am the one who has done this,” not some other so-called god. These words add emphasis to the previous claim of Yahweh as the only God. (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1093)

This statement of “I AM” means only one is truly worthy of worship from the entire world. Only one is truly God. Only one is the only noncontingent being in the universe not relying on anyone or anything else to cause Him to exist.

In light of this simple fact, once again drawing together all that it means as we looked at Isaiah 40, how should the nations react? What should be their response? YAHWEH is the Lord of all to include history.

The future is indeed wrapped up in Him.

Here is their response.

Isaiah 41:5 – 7

“The coastlands have seen and are afraid; The ends of the earth tremble; They have drawn near and have come. Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, “Be strong!” So the craftsman encourages the smelter, And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, “It is good”; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter.” (NASB95)

The first line gives us a sense of hope for the nations, but that hope is rapidly destroyed as it becomes evident that they are engaged in supporting fiction over truth. They have seen what is going on with the one from the east, the conqueror, and they are truly in fear.

Out of that fear, arising out of the realization that they have no control over their future, comes a banding together for mutual support. Haven't we seen this before? The first time we saw this there was nothing threatening the nations, there were only the promises of YAHWEH to never flood the planet again. The nations needed to go out and fill the planet. But they had a better idea and banded together to rebel against the commandment of God at a place called Babel. (Genesis 11).

The decision in verse 5 is consistent with Psalms 2.

Psalms 2:1–2

“Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one.” (NLT)

From the fear of the nations in general we wonder about what is going on with the people in each nation, so God shows us. They are busy propping each other up.

Isaiah 41:6 “Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, “Be strong!”” (NASB95)

The God of the universe stands ready to help them, but the response is pathetic.

They turn into a mutual aid society. To combat the situation presented to them by one the one who controls everything, they have their own solution. Turn to each other for help rather than the Lord. Look to human help rather than help from the creator of the universe. And it gets worse. A spiritual dimension is added.

Isaiah 41:7

“So the craftsman encourages the smelter, And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, “It is good”; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter.” (NASB95)

Really? That's all you've got? Build a really big idol? The nations were commanded by God to listen, and it appears they have had other ideas.

So rather than listen to the Lord and turn to Him, the nations turn to their own solutions which will not even stand up on their own but have to be propped up.

The only solution the nations have universally come up with is...continue to pander to the fallen ones, Worship and rely on what they think they can control. “Out of this emerges the need to have a ‘spiritual’ power on their side (7) but the product cannot exceed its source: human skill (7abc), human approval (7d), human stability (7e). Humankind's ‘gods’ are only projections of humankind's weaknesses.” (Motyer 1999, 285)

Seeing the nations turning towards worship of no-gods, YAHWEH turns to His people who are there in the courtroom as witnesses. HE has made an offer and the response to rely on self has provided the answer. YAHWEH turns to His people, Israel, and encourages them. God tells His people to remember who they were.

Isaiah 41:8–10

“But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’” (NASB95)

The Lord makes use of both names He gave to Jacob but brings emphasis to the new name, Israel as He refers to Israel as His servant for the first time in Isaiah. They need to remember that.

He then compares Israel His servant to Jacob; and because of His choosing Jacob who was the descendant of His friend, Abraham. Israel is indeed the servant of God but by adding in the comparative, God also is reflecting how this is simply Him being consistent with His nature and the covenant He made with Abraham and reconfirmed with Jacob.

The reference to the calling of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, the ends of the earth, also reflects the election of God, which is not reversable. (Romans 11:29)

For Israel, the servant of God, the solution is simple. They are not to freak out like the nations and try and create their own salvation. They are to look to the Lord.

Here in verse 10 Israel is told not to fear and not to be anxious. When this conqueror is busy moving throughout the land, they are not to worry about it. This person, Cyrus, is called by the creator God of the universe.

There are four specific reasons why they are not to fear, and as we look at this, they are also reasons for us not to get freaked out in these last days.

Isaiah 41:10

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (NASB95)

In this verse are promises for the nation and promises for us.

Reasons Not to Worry

1. God is with us, each one of us, personally and individually.
2. Do not freak out with what is going on. The one who is in control of history is our God and see 1.
3. He will personally strengthen each of us.
4. He will help each of us.
5. He will hold us up when we feel like falling and He will do so with His righteous right hand. This implies that through Him and His power we are being maintained as righteous in Him because of Jesus Christ and what was done for us on the cross.

Israel is not alone; we are not alone.

The world around them will go crazy as they think the solution is to build bigger and better idols. Idols, so large that they have to be nailed to the wall to keep from falling over.

How many of our idols are just as flimsy? We rely on our education, but there is always someone who is smarter. We rely on our resources, but they are all fungible. We rely on our jobs, but they are only as good as the current administration. We rely on our church, but they aren't allowed into the hospital. At the end of the day, we need to rely on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the God of Creation.

Isaiah 41:10

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (NASB95)

But the fear addressed here is not simply the anxiety of being in the presence of God; it is the sense that God has abandoned them. For various reasons, because of their sins or in despair over their usefulness to him, they have been well aware of grounds for abandonment. But YHWH insists “עִמָּךְ אֲנִי I am with you.” (Watts 2005, 639)

Deuteronomy 31:8

“And the Lord who is proceeding with you, he will not leave you or forsake you; do not fear or be afraid.” (Lexham Press 2020, Deut 31:8)

Isaiah 41:11–13

“Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’” (NASB95)

God has just spoken blessing to Israel. He has done this because of the reaction of the nations to the realization that He is in control of history. The nations really cannot figure out how to save themselves, it is not even remotely possible.

Here there is more. While the nations are freaked out and turning to their own solutions, God talks about those who are enemies of Israel. They will be humiliated and disgraced by their inability to defeat Israel. The statement that God just made is confirmed by those who have been the enemies of Israel in the past. “He points to Israel’s opponents in all the conflicts of the past. These would include Midianites, Aramaeans, and Assyrians. They were “shamed and confounded,” doomed to extinction.” (Watts 2005, 639)

This is also a promise for Israel in the future. In the Kingdom, the enemies of Israel, those they quarreled with, will simply not be there any longer.

How do we know that this will be the case? “For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’” (Isaiah 41:13, NASB95)

The foundation of Israel’s power, the reason they do not need to be freaking out like the nations is because God’s right hand upholds them, in fact He is holding onto the right hand of Israel. The flow of power is from Him to them.

Isaiah 41:14–16

“Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,” declares the LORD, “and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I have made you a new, sharp threshing sledge with double edges; You will thresh the mountains and pulverize them, And will make the hills like chaff. You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away, And the storm will scatter them; But you will rejoice in the LORD, You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.” (NASB95)

So how strong is Israel? What power do they have, relatively speaking? Worm like. Small and insignificant. Not too powerful when compared to the nations who are freaking out. So, what does God do?

But the men of Israel, that small insignificant country have something the nations do not have, they have the promise of help from God. They have a redeemer, mentioned here first in Isaiah, a goel, an avenger of blood. This is a reference to Jesus Christ. “The Holy One regards Jacob-Israel as a member of the family, and in fulfillment of the commitment that this relationship entails is prepared to expend resources

and energy in defending Jacob-Israel from enemies, protecting them from danger, and restoring them to freedom. That is why Jacob-Israel has no need to fear.” (Goldingay 2012, 234)

Zechariah 12:7–10

“The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” (NASB95)

The text tells us that Israel, the small and insignificant worm, will be made into a new sharp threshing sledge. “Just as a farmer uses a threshing sledge to separate the good grain from the useless stalks and chaff, so God will use Israel to punish its enemies. The sledge is described as new, sharp, and having teeth, which means it is very effective.” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1107)

Israel is going to use this sled to winnow the nations (mountains) as well as thresh them. As they work this sled, the wind carries them away. God’s wind is sending those nations away. All a picture of the end of the age and the final battle.

Ezekiel 38:21–23

“I will summon the sword against you on all the hills of Israel, says the Sovereign LORD. Your men will turn their swords against each other. I will punish you and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! In this way, I will show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD.” (NLT)

Ezekiel 39:10–13

“They won’t need to cut wood from the fields or forests, for these weapons will give them all the fuel they need. They will plunder those who planned to plunder them, and they will rob those who planned to rob them, says the Sovereign LORD. “And I will make a vast graveyard for Gog and his hordes in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the way of those who travel there, and they will change the name of the place to the Valley of Gog’s Hordes. It will take seven months for the people of Israel to bury the bodies and cleanse the land. Everyone in Israel will help, for it will be a glorious victory for Israel when I demonstrate my glory on that day, says the Sovereign LORD.” (NLT)

Micah 4:11–13

“Many nations have now assembled against you. They say, “Jerusalem must be desecrated, so we can gloat over Zion!” But they do not know what the LORD is planning; they do not understand his strategy. He has gathered them like stalks of grain to be threshed at the threshing floor. “Get up and thresh, Daughter Zion! For I will give you iron horns; I will give you bronze hooves, and you will crush many nations.” You will devote to the LORD the spoils you take from them, and dedicate their wealth to the sovereign Ruler of the whole earth.” (NET)

Isaiah 41:16

“You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away, And the storm will scatter them; But you will rejoice in the LORD, You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.” (NASB95)

God will take care of the enemies of Israel. When Jesus Christ returns, the enemies surrounding Israel will be dealt with by a word from the King. They will indeed glory in Him.

The Lord then completes His aside to His people prior to picking the case back up against the nations. He tells how He will care for them at the end of the age.

Isaiah 41:17–20

“The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water. I will put the cedar in the wilderness, The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree; I will place the juniper in the desert Together with the box tree and the cypress, That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.” (NASB95)

Once again we see the picture of the change that will take place in the topography with the beginning of the rule of King Jesus. We also see the care of the King for His people as they return to the land with Him at the head. “Wells in the middle of valleys will be full of water. God will cause the formerly dry desert areas of Palestine to have pools of water available for people to drink. He will cause dry arid lands suddenly to have springs producing water. This abundant production of water is a vivid sign of God’s fulfillment of his great covenant promises (30:25; 44:3–5; Deut 11:14).” (Smith 2009, 140)

In the Millennial day, God will cause the bare places of Palestine to be covered with trees, a symbol of the spiritual clothing with which the Israelites will be clothed in that day. (Gingrich 1993, 48)

The creator God, the one who has challenged the nations to turn to Him, will be the one who personally takes care of His people. As we look at these verses which talk to the provision of the Lord for His people at the beginning of the millennium, we see the following He will do:

- I, the LORD, will answer them Myself.
- I will not forsake them.
- I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys.
- I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water.
- I will put the cedar in the wilderness, The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree.
- I will place the juniper in the desert Together with the box tree and the cypress.

The Lord takes care of His own.

The aside ends with verse 20 and we move back to the courtroom where God calls the false gods to provide testimony.

We will pick up that next time.

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