

None Like Our God

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Isaiah chapter 46, a very rich chapter, one that I will attempt to get through all in describing our God. And truly as the title of the message is, there is none like our God. I don't mind at all using that distinction when I hear others describing their god and their profession and I shake my head and say, "There is none like my God." It kind of gets their attention a little bit.

What kind of God do you worship?

The God of the Bible.

Well, I do, too.

Well, it doesn't sound like it from what you are stating. You know, should we be so bold? Well, God is here in this particular chapter. He calls, again, to account these little gods that people worship and shows again the difference, the distinction. I think we are far too nice with people in their idolatry. And the reason is because they are acquaintances, they are family members. We are a little bit afraid to offend. But, you know, in their ignorance, unless God is pleased to turn them around, they are facing a judgment, an eternal judgment with this God and better they know it now. It is not going to necessarily change their end, but at least they can go through this life pondering these things as much as a person on death row. If the sentence has already been given, they just await the day, but nonetheless, they know that the law has spoken.

But here in Isaiah 46 we read:

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

To whom will ye liken me...¹

This is where I got the title.

To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.²

The word “worship” means worth ship. They give worth to something that is nothing but an inanimate object, not to God himself.

They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Remember this, and shew yourselves 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, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.³

This chapter contains a prophecy historically of the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. These gods that are mentioned in verse one much like in Egypt were the gods of Babylon., the ones that they esteemed the most, Bel and Nebo. Some will say that the word Bel refers to the sun, Nebo to the moon, as being what they worshipped, but the whole emphasis here is upon these, the country and therefore their gods being brought low.

The amazing thing about this prophecy, as I have shared with you before, is that Babylon at the time Isaiah spoke this was not even an earthly power. It was the Assyrians, first of all, but over a century Babylon was caused to grow, to strength and power. And, again, the Lord was doing that. He had purposed that this nation come into Israel and take Israel out of its land, what remained of Israel. The 10 tribes were already taken out by the Assyrians. There remained Judah and Benjamin that the Lord preserved and, again, we know why, because it was prophesied that Christ should come from that tribe of Judah. There is no trace of the other 10 tribes even to this day, but the Lord preserved those two because Christ should come from that tribe of Judah. But it wasn't for anything in them.

¹ Isaiah 46:1-5.

² Isaiah 46:5-6.

³ Isaiah 46:7-13.

When they saw their brethren being taken into captivity they boastfully concluded that they were better than their brethren and yet they had the same idolatrous spirit in them and the evil kings that were raised up in Judah over the next century led the children of Israel that remained into captivity. And so the Lord used that captivity to punish them with the very thing that was the cause of their downfall. It was as if the Lord said, “You want idolatry? Here let me bring a king down into your land that... let’s go ahead and wrap this up. Let’s go ahead and destroy this temple.”

And that is what Nebuchadnezzar did.

“And let’s take you all into a land of captivity for 70 years and let you get a feel for what it is like to be in a foreign land, of being in a strange land where they openly worship false gods.”

And so that was Israel’s condition and state. But the Lord never took his eye off of his remnant. You know, the previous chapter we saw in Isaiah 45 and verse 25 that

“In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”⁴

In the end God is going to have every one of his that he has chosen and that Christ has redeemed and the Spirit will call. And it is of that remnant to that remnant that he speaks here in verse three.

“Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel.”⁵

So in taking them into captivity it was never with the purpose to completely destroy them. But much as sifting the wheat from the chaff, this was the Lord’s winnowing, what he was doing with this particular nation. But all the while that he used this wicked and idolatrous nation, it was prophesied that even their day, even their power was limited and that the day would come where the Lord would cause them, as it says here in verse 46, to bow down and to stoop and their idols to be exposed for what they are.

You know, there is a day of reckoning. There is a day of judgment that is coming whereby men will know that their profession and the false gods that they spent their lifetime worshipping—and I am not talking about just sticks and stones. I am talking about giving honor to free will. This is a false god today where you hear people say, “Well, God has left it up to us.” That is an idol to think that somehow I determine my destiny. That flies in the face of a God who determines all things and whose purpose shall stand. You know, it is not going to be by men’s will that they are not saved. I hear people say that all the time. God wants to save you, but unless you let him...

Well, now wait a minute. You mean a sovereign God can be resisted to the point of him willing to save you, but can’t because you won’t let him? That sounds pretty proud to me. That is like putting the cart before the horse.

⁴ Isaiah 45:25.

⁵ Isaiah 46:3.

Or to think that any can take any glory like that little song says, “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.”

Oh, really? So this was your decision? That is why you know him? You know, even there it is exalting man that somehow the key of salvation is in hands. I don't know about you, but when the Lord showed me the error of my ways, that was the first thing I vomited up, got rid of, was any notion of myself having anything to do with my salvation.

And so it is that God says he would expose the idols of that generation. Our God is infinitely above all other so-called gods and here throughout this chapter is how he distinguishes himself as God and that is what I want us to consider during the moments that we have together. How is none like unto God?

Well, first of all, in his being as the Creator of all things. You notice men worship idols that they have taken and made with their hands and then they take and they load up on to their beasts, their beasts of burdens, their donkeys, their horses. They carry these things about with them. But the one thing about them is that they are inanimate objects. And here the Lord is reminding Israel down in verse three why it is they should hearken unto him.

Notice the difference between God and these other gods. An idol is something you have to move. An idol is something you have to carry. You have to motivate. You have to drive. But that is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is one in whom we all live and move and have our being. You know, he is not passive as some men think that we have got to get together in prayer chains and get things done for God because if we don't do it, it won't get done. That is kind of the idea that religion has today and it shows that they worship an idol God to think that.

Notice the contrast here when the Lord says in verse three to the remnant... And, again, a remnant is a people that is left, that has been preserved, you know, preserved by God's grace. Why were these not destroyed with the rest? Because God destroyed them. It pleased him to be gracious to them.

But notice the contrast between verses one and two where their people, the Babylonians carried their idols about with them, the bearing of those upon beasts versus here where God says:

“...which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.”⁶

So what kind of God you have, one that you need to carry along or one that bears you up? That is the difference. If you say to me, “Well, you know, God he is a loving God. He would like to do some things, but he can't do it unless we help him,” then you have got

⁶ Ibid.

an idol god. Your god is no better than the gods of Babylon that they carried about with them.

And some people do. They put little crosses on their mirrors in their cars. They carry these thing with them like a rabbit's foot. They have got these little emblems of blessing that some man has blessed and they feel that there is some grace in it and it could be a sticker on a car. It could be a cross. But even if it is not an animate object, it is the idea.

Remember idolatry comes from the word "idea." It is the idea that they form of God that unless they do something themselves that God can't bless or God can't work. And probably the most horrible expression I have ever heard is preachers begging people to get busy for God. And they will tell you he has no hands, but yours. He has no feet but yours and no mouth to speak but yours. And imagine the millions of people going into condemnation because you won't speak for him, as if men's salvation is determined by whether I say something or not.

You know, it is a privilege to be able to speak for Christ. But whether I speak or not, it is not going to determine the destiny of those I am around. We have been beat up by religion in thinking that people are going to hell because we didn't say anything to them while we are standing next to them.

Obviously if you didn't say anything the Lord didn't give the opportunity, otherwise you could have not resisted. There is times like that. I have wondered when is a good time to speak to somebody that I am working with. And I will go home burdened for him, thinking I was with him again for a half an hour, but the subject wasn't about Christ. There was no interest on their part. You are sitting there talking business. It is business related.

You know, we don't beat ourselves up for that. There is a reason God caused you to be silent. You know, he... but I will tell you this. He will bring you to that point of speaking when it is his time because these lips move as he directs, you know? He is not the idol. I am the one that he bears and, you know, that he carries.

So we see that in distinction with an idol God, but also we see, you know, his faithfulness in verse four.

"And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."⁷

White hairs.

"I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."⁸

Do you see that distinction? You know, this is not us carrying God. This is not us trying to get his work done. This is him working in and through us.

⁷ Isaiah 46:4.

⁸ Ibid.

“To whom will you liken me?”⁹

Let us ever beware not to have idolatrous thoughts of our God. You know, it is in our nature. We are born idolaters. And so we tend to think about God and how it is we re to approach him just like a heathen would. You know, because our nature is that way. How we need this Word to remind us, even now. Who is doing the carrying here? You know? He is carrying me? And to whom will I liken him or make him his equal?

Now this is where men live out their idolatrous thoughts. You know, they take the gold out of the bag. They weigh the silver in the balance. They hire a goldsmith. They make it a god.

My question is: Who made the gold? Who made the silver? Let’s go one step further? Who gave you the gold?

There is people that since they can’t find gold they go out and whittle a stick. And some thing that because their God is made of gold versus yours that is made of a stick or a stone painted, that somehow theirs is better. In reality they are all inanimate objects.

But isn’t that a sign of the depravity of the heart that men will make something that God has given them and fall down before it and worship it? It is in our nature to do, you know, to give glory to the object or give glory to the work of our hand. That is really what this idol is. It is glorifying the work of man’s hand. They give it to a goldsmith. That goldsmith glories in the work of his hand. And they take it and bear it upon their shoulder.

Notice:

“They carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove.”¹⁰

He can’t... this is an inanimate god. But the superstition of men to believe that somehow there is power in that object.

You say, “Why is there... why do they think there is power in that object?”

Because man has made it. Do you see what the nature of this flesh is? It would rather go to hell exalting man than giving the glory to Christ. Why do men stay with their profession, their religion? They would rather glorify just like Cain. It is the same spirit of Cain. The Lord said, “Do good,” which meant go get a sacrifice. Otherwise sin lies at the door.

⁹ Isaiah 46:5.

¹⁰ Isaiah 46:7.

These things that men do in even their forms of worship standing up and bowing, all of this ceremony and pomp and circumstance and religion today is just men making themselves feel better. And yet it doesn't change who they are. They are still idolaters by nature. You know?

They prefer to follow a man and to listen to a man and let that man continue to direct them down a path of condemnation than to consider who it is that they need to worship.

Notice verse seven:

“Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.”¹¹

I think that... I know that God keeps men in their own delusions when they have all night prayer meetings and they throw things up to God, pay God. And things work out the way they want them to, they think God has answered. Well, he has, but it is to their condemnation, you know? He gives them that meat like it says in the Old Testament of Israel that while the meat was yet in their throat he killed them. He sent leanness to their souls.

You know, that is... may God keep us from ever worshipping based upon what we can see with our eyes, you know, and rather than what the Spirit teaches with regard to what is true concerning Christ.

The call here then in verses eight and nine is to remember. Remember this. Who is he speaking to? Well, verse three.

“Hearthen unto me, O house of Jacob.”¹²

Notice he keeps using that word “Jacob,” because even as redeemed sons we are still of nature like Jacob, to scheme. That is what Jacob was, a schemer, you know. And if God had left Jacob to his own way he would have been down the same path as Esau. The only thing that made the difference is what bother Lane read in Romans nine.

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”¹³

It wasn't that Jacob was any better. They were both in the same womb. In fact, by rights, you know, Esau should have been the heir in natural terms. He was the elder. He came out first, but that wasn't God's purpose. But he wasn't blessed because he was any better than Esau. He was blessed because God purposed to bless him.

And so that is what the Lord here reminds any of us that are his. I don't mean in any way to preach this message in a sense of looking down my nose at anybody out there that is an idolater, because I know myself to be an idolater.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Isaiah 46:3.

¹³ Romans 9:13.

And yet the Lord says:

“Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.”¹⁴

If any has a thought... and sometimes you might in your flesh. You look at what is going on around you and think, “Well, maybe they are not so wrong after all.”

Well, again, let’s boil it down. Why is there a difference in how we worship? Why is there a difference in the one we worship? Because the Lord has made the difference. And so:

“Remember the former things of old.”¹⁵

You know, that could be in the sense of how the Lord has judged idolaters. Remember, you know, if you come into a building that has got a big x on it and says “condemned,” don’t go setting up house in it. Even though it is still standing, it is condemned. And the day is coming when if you are in it, you are going to be taken with it, you know?

That is the way it is with religion.

People say, “Well, if God really had ... has condemned it, you know, why ... why is it so prosperous? Why do people still keep joining it?”

Well, they are just like squatters. They are running into a refuge that they feel comfortable with, but if God has put a big old x on it to condemn it, don’t set up house in it. Run. Run.

“Remember the former things of old.”¹⁶

Remember how he has dealt with idolaters in the past, but also remember the former things of old. Remember how he has been pleased to deliver his people of old. It has always been in one way. Go all the way back to the fall.

What was Adam and Eve’s safety? It wasn’t in those fig leaves. But it was in that lamb that he took and he slew and clothed them with the clothes.

“Remember the former things of old.”¹⁷

What I am telling you today is really no different than how God has always instructed his people to worship him, to come to him is through the lamb. Do we have a lamb? Not a physical lamb, why? Because Christ is that lamb. Do we have an altar? Not a physical

¹⁴ Isaiah 46:8.

¹⁵ Isaiah 46:9.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

altar. I think it is abominable when so-called evangelical preachers call people down front to be in front of an altar, come to the altar. What? There is no physical altar at which we worship, but we do have an altar. It is Christ. You know, he is the sacrifice. He is the high priest.

So, in essence, nothing has changed.

“Remember the former things of old.”¹⁸

Remember, how it is that God purposed that he would be worshipped. Go all the way back to the tabernacle, go back to the sacrifices. Go back to the priesthood. Go back to the mercy seat. Go back to the cloud of glory. All of those things are types and pictures and patterns of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now that Christ has come, we don't put confidence in visible things. The simpler we can keep this building the better. At least we know people aren't coming, you know, for it being like any other that they are used to.

I have had people drive by here. This place is... we have been worshipping here since 2000. When I tell them they think, oh, that is right. That is a church building?

Yeah, you haven't seen the sign out front? Just because it doesn't have a steeple, good thing it doesn't. But when you walk in there is no religious symbols hanging on the walls. There is a reason for that. You know, we are not having a women's group making little cross doilies to put in your Bibles and give out to people in hospitals as if this is some sort of little prayer with it, you know? That is all forms of idolatry today that may get caught up with.

What of the true God?

“Remember the former things of old.”¹⁹

How is it that God ordained that he should be worshipped? You can go all the way back to Genesis. It is the same as how he has declared that men should worship him today through a blood sacrifice. Genesis and the fall, after the fall in the garden it was a type. God slaying those animals, innocent victims and clothing Adam and Eve with those skins was a type and a picture of what he would do thousands of years later in offering up his Son. It is simple. And this matter of salvation was laid out in type, picture and prophecy, but fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the way, as Paul said, that men call a sect you know as well as I do they consider us here a cult. I have heard it.

But do you know the word cult it means if the Latin word is worship. Yeah. We do distinguish ourselves in how we worship. You know, the way that men call heresy, you know, it is not that we are doing secret things here and, you know, as you think of some kind of mystery worship. No. It is open. People come in here. We take the Bible. We

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

open it. But the difference is, we have one ambition, that is to worship God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. And every Scripture we read, every song we sing that is the goal, that is the objective.

And if somebody has a problem with that, they have got a problem with the way that God has ordained it to be in simplicity and in truth.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.”²⁰

I have often said if you have got God figured out, then it is a false God. We are not cookie cutting a God. We are not writing books about how, you know, we figured him out. He is God.

Notice here in verse 10:

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.”²¹

See, even here he was predicting the fall of Babylon even before the rise of Babylon. It is just like in the Old Testament he predicted how it was that his Son should die even before there was even such a manner of putting men to death. When it says back there in the Old Testament that:

“Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”²²

That had to have been a mystery for years to people that read that because they didn't hang men on trees. They stoned them to death.

And so you sit there and think, well, what was it that God was declaring? Well, it was when the Roman Empire came into power that they began to hang men on trees, crucify them. And it was in the middle of that culture that God brought forth his son and that manner of dying was one of the most despicable. Even a Roman citizen if he had been the worst murderer was exempt from that form of death. They had the privilege of getting their head lopped off, you know, a quick death versus hanging. That was reserved for the worst of criminals.

“Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”²³

So:

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Isaiah 46:10.

²² Galatians 3:13 (quoting Deuteronomy 21:23)

²³ Ibid.

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.”²⁴

This is the kind of God we worship.

“...saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”²⁵

I tend to believe this Word. You know, people get all caught up with men’s testimonies. I read someone told me recently they wanted me to read a book. I don’t know why they think I am going to be interested in this, but about some nine year old child that evidently died and went to heaven and came back and now he has written a book. It is about this experience in heaven. I don’t need a nine year old child’s testimony. You know, why is it we would believe the testimony of men and not believe this Word right here. I know this. Paul when he was speaking of his own example after having been stoned to death, having been caught up to the third heaven, when he came back he just clearly said he saw things that it was not permitted to speak.

And even as we are studying in Revelation certain things that John saw that the Lord said, “Don’t write.” You know, it is not his purpose that these things be revealed.

But I know this. His counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. People are running around trying to figure out the world is going to end, holding conferences about it as if they are experts. They don’t know. They are just blind fools out there getting a following.

But I know this. Whatever the Lord has purposed shall stand. He will do all his desire.

Is there going to be an end to the world? Absolutely. Is there going to be a judgment? Absolutely. How is that going to take place? Well, read the book of Revelation. Read Revelation 20 and 21. It talks about all creatures great and small standing before him and those whose names are not found written in the Lamb’s book of life, they have got but one end, to be cast into eternal darkness, Satan with them.

What of those whose names are written? Well, the Lord purposed it. That is why their names are written. They are not being written as sinners believe. Their names were written from eternity. God purposed to save them. He gave them to his Son and his Son accomplished their salvation.

Notice in verse 11.

“Calling a ravenous bird from the east.”²⁶

²⁴ Isaiah 46:10.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Isaiah 46:11.

I think of how God fed Elijah there by the brook Cherith with a dirty old bird, a raven. That is amazing. I know a lot of people think, well, it is an impure bird. God wouldn't use it.

He uses a Cyrus. That is who he is speaking of here. He calls him his servant. He raised him up to bring Babylon down. Every creature that lives and moves and breathes, lives and moves and breathes according to what God has purposed.

As David was being chased out of Jerusalem by his son Absalom and there was one of his servants that was running along the other side of the river casting aspersions on David and one of David's loyal servants begged David to let him go across the river and lop the guy's head off. You know, that would be our reaction. Let me go have at him. You know.

And David said, "Leave him alone. It is the Lord."

You know, that is bowing to whatever the God has purposed. We are not trying to change him. God calls a ravenous bird from the east a man that executeth my counsel from a far country. That is what he did in raising up Cyrus.

Who would have thought that Babylon would have ever fallen? And yet he raised up what was considered at that time a pretty puny Persian king who aligned himself with the Medes and they came and dried up the river, did an engineering feat, opened up the little holes under the gates and moved the whole army into Babylon while they partied.

But the Lord purposed it all.

Who gave him the wisdom to even think of that? Without even tearing down a wall they went in and conquered that city. It was the Lord. He said:

"Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."²⁷

This is an important verse here with regard to the relationship between what God purposes and what he does. Because there are some even with regard to our salvation that say, "Well, the moment God purposed it, it was done."

And so in their minds sinners have always been justified before him because he purposed to justify them and so it was done.

Notice the language of Scripture.

"I have purposed it. I will also do it."²⁸

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

You know, he purposed the salvation of sinners through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they were not justified because he purposed it. They were justified when he died. And that is what we saw last time in Isaiah 45 and verse 25.

“In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified.”²⁹

It was forward looking to that work that the Lord would accomplish.

And so he returns again to any who would resist such a God. There are many people that will block their ears and run when they hear of such a God and say, “That is not my God.” They say that in their own... to their own demise. But the Lord says, “Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, stiff hearted.”

Someone tell you, “I don’t believe in a God like that.”

Well, you are stouthearted. That are far from righteousness. They think they have a righteousness, but they don’t, because the righteousness of God is that which he accomplished and worked out in his Son. He said, “I bring near my righteousness.”

He is not dependent on man to work out a righteousness just like some who would carve an idol and bring it before him. Many works of our own are nothing but dirty rags, filthy rags.

He said:

“I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off.”³⁰

What he is saying is all of this alignment, the bringing back of Israel from captivity has a purpose. It wasn’t for Israel’s sake. You know, as far as God was concerned, he could have wiped them all off the face of the earth. But it was for his Son’s sake. The reason he was bringing them back out of captivity to establish... be reestablished in the land and to rebuild that temple. It wasn’t for Israel’s sake, but it was for his Son’s sake that he would bring from that seed that people and that is what he says.

“My salvation shall not tarry.”³¹

All of this was working toward the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. And he says:

“I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”³²

For his true Israel, for those that he has purposed to save.

²⁹ Isaiah 45:25.

³⁰ Isaiah 46:13.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

You know, after reading and hearing of a God like this, it does cause you, as he said:

“To whom will ye liken me?”³³

Men’s natural thoughts of him are far too low. You know:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”³⁴

“To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal?”³⁵

Men tend like an idol. They make it like something they think. Men think God is ever so much like them. And how wrong are they.

“...and compare me, that we may be like?”³⁶

You know, if he has taught you of his Son, if he has showed you a righteousness outside yourself, and caused you to see that you are his, it is only by his grace, that is a mercy. He has given you eyes to see that he has not given others. And that, in itself is his right to do. May we ever give him the glory due his name.

³³ Isaiah 46:5.

³⁴ Isaiah 55:8.

³⁵ Isaiah 46:5.

³⁶ Ibid.