

ISAIAH 46

THE LORD CARRIES AND DELIVERS!

Since the Lord had revealed to His people by His prophet that He intended to deliver them out of their Babylonian captivity that would come upon them, He prepared them for that deliverance by instilling in them a detestation of idols, and a believing confidence in their own God. They did not need to be afraid of the idols of Babylon, as if they could in any way obstruct their deliverance; for these idols themselves would be defaced and carried away (verses 1-2). On the contrary, they were to trust in that same God Who had often delivered them, and Who would do so yet again (verses 3-4). They must not think to make images of their own to represent the God of Israel, so that they might pretend to worship Him by them, as the Babylonians worshiped the images of their false deities (verses 5-7). To do so would reveal great folly that was very unbecoming of men (verse 8); for God must be seen spiritually in His written Word, and not in an image. The promises and predictions of that Word must be depended upon, for He is powerful to accomplish them all (verses 9-11). And although some choose to not believe that Word, that does not make it of no effect (verses 12-13).

In the opening verses of this chapter, which give a prophetic illustration of the disgrace of the gods of Babylon, we are invited to consider a description of Jehovah – a completely opposite picture that stands out in clear contrast against the idols. The Lord Himself speaks to the house of Jacob, and to the remnant of His people, as children whom He had carried from the time of their birth, and from their earliest childhood. Their God did not need to be carried, as did the Babylonian deities, Bel and Nebo. On the contrary, He Himself is the Carrier of His people from their infancy! And as He has been in the past, so shall He continue to be. He does not change. He will still carry His people, even to old age.

Let us consider some of the burdens which our God carries. The lives of most of us are heavily weighted. We began our race unencumbered; but as the years have passed, they have only added burdens and responsibilities. We run heavily and we walk with difficulty, for we carry great weights with us. For one thing, there is the burden of sin. The word used for “bear” or “carry” is the same word that Isaiah uses in reference to the Great Sin-bearer, Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree (chapter 53:4). Although the atmosphere presses upon us at the rate of several pounds for every square inch of bodily surface, we are yet unconscious of its weight. In the same way, until Jesus came, mankind hard-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The heathen idols could not save their worshipers, but the Lord always saves His people and even carries them – verses 1-4*
- ❖ *God's people are hereby warned of the folly of making or worshiping any “god” besides the Lord alone – verses 5-13*

ly realized the full extent of the burden of sin. But as His pure image has passed from land to land, and from age to age, it has convinced people of the awful burden of sin. This is the reason why they are weary and heavy-laden, and this is why their spirits lack joy and happiness.

There is also the burden of responsibility for others. Our life is so closely entwined with that of others that we cannot live long without becoming weighted with care for them! The young man cares for his mother and sisters. The bridegroom is linked in imperishable bonds to the twin-soul which is dearer than himself, and whose sorrows and anxieties mean more than his own. Then there are the promising sons and sweet daughters who come into our lives, with their simple trust and confidence. There is also the charge of our loved ones who are drawing close to their dying breath. Not to mention the care of employees, lonely ones, or tempted and persecuted ones! Ah, it is impossible for us to move as quickly as we did in the years of our youth!

Let us not forget the burden of our life's work, either! We have been sent by the Lord to do a job that no one else can do; we have talents entrusted to us, of which we must give an account; we are called to cultivate one patch in the King's vineyard, and to build one section in the wall. This makes us remember keenly the importance and urgency of life. It is not possible to realize the amount of blessing or sorrow that our life may mean to others, without feeling the solemn weight of responsibility upon our shoulders!

In all these things, are we doomed to bear these burdens in solitude? Alas! Each man and woman in our circle is similarly weighted. Each of our brothers and sisters have as much hill-climbing, burden-bearing, and fighting as they can manage. None can share any of his oil of strength or courage. We can give sympathy to each other, but that is all. So must every human soul bear his or her own burden of sin, responsibility, and work? No! It is here that our Lord Jesus steps in! He does not distinguish between our burdens and ourselves; but rather, He takes both us and them into His Almighty arms, and He carries us with no sense of fatigue or fear of failure. We are a heavy weight indeed, but it matters nothing to Him! He carries us all the days of our life; He daily bears our burdens. He will carry us until He sets us down in the land where no burdens can enter, in the city through whose gates burdens are never brought in, and in the world where the heavy-laden and weary are at rest!

O Lord, we ascribe all praises to You as the Bearer, Carrier, and Deliverer of Your people, from the time of our infancy, even to the years of old age! Amen.

