

Provision or Pride: You Must Decide

Isaiah 41: 1-10

This is a very interesting passage of Scripture. The Lord has summoned the nations of the earth to come together to stand trial before the righteous Judge. They were to appear in complete silence as God judged their wickedness and rebellion.

This is actually a prophecy concerning the rise of Cyrus, king of Persia, conquering the Babylonian empire and allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. The gentile nations believed that they were invincible and had the power to dominate the world, but the Lord would prove to all that He is God and there is none other beside Him.

In practical application, this passage looks at life from two totally different perspectives. It reveals man's point of view, consumed with pride and arrogance, and it reveals God's divine provision for His own. Our lives are lived according to one of these principles. We are either looking to our own abilities or we are trusting in the Lord's provision. Let's look at the verses in the text as we consider: [Provision or Pride: You Must Decide](#).

I. The Presence of the LORD (4) – [Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.](#) We could not look at this passage properly without taking a moment to consider the presence of our Lord. That was the tragic mistake that the gentile nations made; they never recognized Him. Notice:

A. His Essence – [I the LORD.](#) God reveals one of His preeminent character traits in these words. He isn't a god of many gods or one lord of many lords; He is the LORD. He is Jehovah God; there is none beside Him. He alone is God of all creation. There are none that can rival His essence or power. Many have sought to assume the position of God, but all have failed.

- The name LORD is God's personal name. It is always connected with deliverance. It means Redeemer. It reveals the self-existence of God. He is dependent upon no one to accomplish His will.
- Can you imagine the hope and joy this gave the people of God, just to be reminded of whom it was that they served? We serve the same God. He has not changed. He remains the all powerful, preeminent LORD.

B. His Existence – [I the LORD, the first and with the last.](#) Here God reveals His eternal existence to all who hear His words. He is the first and the last. Before creation existed God was; after all that is gone that we know upon the earth, God will remain. He transcends the boundaries of time. God has no beginning and no ending. He has always been and He will always be.

- Throughout the ages of time man has created and set up idols. Many of these idols no longer exist. They died out as those who worshipped them did. God declares that He will not disappear as many idols have in the past. He was here before man and He will be here with the last of those who worship Him. Our God is not going to grow old and weary, or pass away.

C. His Excellence – God simply and emphatically declares that I am He. He reveals that none compare to Him. There are none that can rival His power. There are none that can limit His will. There are none that can achieve His glory. There are none that can be called God. His character allows Him to be identified simply as the I Am.

- This is the name that God told Moses to refer to Him as before Pharaoh. This is just a confirmation that He is LORD.

- Isn't it good to know that we serve One who stands alone in His position as God? I am not concerned whether I am trusting in the right or best Lord. I am trusting in the only Lord. There are none besides our God. There are none who even come close to all that He is. I have been afforded a personal relationship with Him!

I. The Presence of the LORD (4)

II. The Pride of Men (6-7) – With all that God is, humanity still refuses to embrace or accept Him. They seek their own ways and works. Let's look at what God reveals about man's distorted pride.

A. Their Denial (6) – God has called the nations of the earth before Him. He has pronounced that judgment is coming and yet man refuses to believe. They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. They denied that God would do what He said He would. Most likely never believed in God, much less His power and ability. They looked to one another for help and took courage from each other. They assumed that nothing would ever hinder their progress and prosperity.

- There is nothing wrong with looking to each other for support and encouraging one another as we go through life, but we cannot deny God in the process. We are not here of our own accord. We do not survive through our own strength and ability. This world would have you believe that God doesn't exist, that you don't need religion, but He is our only hope in this lost and dying world.

B. Their Doctrine (7) – 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. Do you see the progression of denial and rebellion?

- The carpenter was convinced that God was not real and that there was no need to heed His word, so he influenced the goldsmith to continue just as he had in the past. The goldsmith soon became so bold in his new way of thinking that he influenced the one who smoothed with the hammer. Sadly, this dismal and defiant philosophy permeated masses of humanity.
- We are far removed from the days of Isaiah, but this false doctrine continues to prosper in our day. We have the humanists that teach life is what we make it. They encourage self promotion and self reliance. Many are led to believe that anything is possible through positive thinking and good karma. They refuse and deny the existence of God and any accountability to Him. There is no concern of life after death; just live large now.

C. Their Deception (7) – So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved. These gentile nations were certain of their future. They refused to believe that anything or anyone could possibly hinder their prosperity. God had sent a solemn warning and they refused to receive it. They were deceived by the life they had enjoyed and their hopes for the future.

- Satan and this world continue to portray a deceptive reality. They want you to believe that all is well. They want society to feel as if it could never fall. They want mankind to believe there is plenty of time, so there is no need for change or alarm. Just keep living for the moment.
- Sadly these nations found their deception brought destruction and I fear that many in our day will come to the same end.

I. The Presence of the LORD (4)

II. The Pride of Men (6-7)

III. The Provision of the LORD (8-10) – God had given a solemn warning, but He also reveals the hope of His provision for His own. This world is headed for certain destruction, but hope is found in Jesus our Lord. Notice the hope that we have in the Lord's provision.

A. He is Mindful (8) – But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Keep in mind that this is actually a prophecy that will be fulfilled after the Babylonian captivity. Much of the world will have looked at Israel as a complete failure, forsaken of their God and facing utter destruction. They would have to endure the chastening hand of God, but even in their judgment, they were not forsaken. God was ever mindful of them and He would again make provision for them.

- I rejoice that our Lord is still mindful of us today. He has chosen us to Himself. The saved are part of the bride of Christ. We belong to Him. We may have to endure a season of judgment here in America, but even then God would remain mindful of us.

- Let me assure you that He is mindful of you. He knows where you are in the journey. He knows the difficulties you face. He knows the help you need. You are not alone; God is mindful and He is there!

B. He is Merciful (9) – 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. Israel had experienced a troubled past. This mighty nation was born of the loins of Abraham, one whom God brought out of the land of Ur, a land of idolatry. They had endured slavery in Egypt. They had wandered 40 years in the wilderness because of rebellion and sin. Now they were facing captivity and judgment due to continued sin. Trouble and affliction lay ahead, but God in His mercy would not cast them aside. He had chosen them a people set apart to serve Him. God was ever merciful, even when it was undeserved.

- Has He not shown that same mercy to each of us? Haven't we all followed the path that Israel took spiritually? We were undeserving of His mercy.

C. He is Mighty (10) – 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. The nations of the earth might reject the Lord, but Israel would turn once again to Him. He would show Himself mighty on their behalf in their season of need. We too can claim the provision of a powerful and mighty God.

1. He offers Courage – Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Life would be hard to bear, but God would be with them. In their moments of fear, He would provide courage.

- We live in a world that often brings fear and uncertainty. God desires that we be take courage in Him and overcome our fears.

2. He offers Comfort – be not dismayed; for I am thy God. Trouble was coming and life would be hard to bear. It would be easy for them to find themselves discouraged and wanting to give up. God promised comfort to those who were weary and needed encouragement. All was not lost, God remained in control.

3. He offers Strength – *I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee.* The journey they faced would be a most difficult one. There would be times when it felt as if they could no longer go on. There would be times when it seemed that defeat was inevitable. In those moments of weakness, God promises that He will provide strength. He would sustain them.

- We all have faced those moments of weakness. We have all felt as if we could no longer go on. You may feel that way today. There is strength in the Lord. He hasn't brought you this far to let you die in the desert.

4. He offers Security – *yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Captivity was coming, but they would not be destroyed. They would not perish at the hands of the enemy. They were secure in the mighty hand of God.

- The saved are sealed and secure in the Lord. We may have to endure a battle while living this life. We may get a few bumps and bruises along the way, but we are secure in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are upheld by His mighty hand!

These verses revealed that God called the nations of the earth to come before Him. We too stand before the LORD God Almighty today. Each of us has a choice to make. Will we accept the provision of God or will we continue in the ways of man, the ways of pride?

Jesus is the only source of hope in this life and the life to come. He alone can secure your eternal destiny. Do you know Him as Savior of your soul?