

Do You Not Know? Have You Not Heard?

Isaiah 40:21-31

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I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

Isaiah points the way out of despair toward renewed hope. He prophesied to the Jews who were exiled in Babylon. The Babylonians have defeated them, stripped them of their economic means, and enslaved them. Instead of trusting in God and following His commands, they made treaties with foreign powers to help protect them. God specifically told them not to do this. They still said they worshipped at the Temple but their actions as a nation said something else. They were weary and feeling abandoned by God. Never mind that God had forewarned them time and time again about the consequences of their abandonment of God, their disobedience, and rebellious nature. If they checked the record, God always responded to their cry and call for help not because they deserved it, but He is a covenant keeping God. He is a loving and gracious God.

B. Biblical Context

In Genesis 17:1-8, “When Abram was ninety-nine old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty, walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, as for me, “this is my covenant with you: you will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your

descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

So, we must not only hear the Word of God but also process understanding of it into our doings. Isaiah spoke words of hope amid the disasters the Israelites were going through. God was still in charge. God was still the Creator. God was still faithful. **Did they not know? Have they not heard?** If they are unfaithful, God would remain faithful. Even if the land was taken away, God would keep His promise, and they will dwell in their land.

II. The Lesson: Do You Not Know? Have You Not Heard?

1. v. 21. Nothing New.

Same story as you have heard from the beginning. Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. This charge was directed at rejection of God’s revelation. These rhetorical questions parallel with those in verses 12-14, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him in the path of understanding?”

God is the sole Creator of the universe. He is sovereign over all human powers. God even spoke to Job out of the storm in Job 38:1-4. God asked Job, “who is that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.” Job’s lack of clarity about God reflected a lack of clarity about himself when God asked a series of questions about the natural world. The Lord revealed to

Job how little he actually knows. If we don't understand God's way with nature, how can we understand God's ways with mankind? God accused Job of speaking without knowledge.

2. v 22. Nothing Too Hard for God.

This verse makes it clear that the earth is round and not flat. In addition to this God stretches out the heavens as canopy, and spreads them like a tent to live in. Isaiah is emphasizing that for God it was no greater task to set out the heavens in order than it would for someone to stretch forth a thin veil in the wind. God, the Holy One, is pictured as controlling the heavens on high, as He providently controls the events on earth.

3. vv. 23 & 24. There is no greater Authority than God.

All authority comes from God, the Ruler of the heavens and earth. He can bring down any authoritative positions. There is no earthly authority that exceeds the authority of God. Romans 12:1 states, everyone must submit to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. All human authorities are accountable to God.

4. vv. 25 & 26. To Whom will you Compare God?

To whom will you compare me is similar to the question asked in verses 18-20, "With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. A person too poor to present such an offering select wood that will not rot; they look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple." God created the earth; therefore, there isn't anyone or anything greater than Him. He knows His creation by name. Zillions of stars farther than we can see and yet God knows each of them by name and not one of them is missing. If God knows their names,

how we think that God doesn't know our names? How awesome is our God!

5. vv. 27- 31. Instead of rejoicing, Israel is complaining.

They acted as though God was not aware of their situation or cared about them. How could they think that their ways were hidden from God. God is all knowing. There is nothing done that God doesn't know before it takes place. Why is it God that we think should prove His loyalty and love to us when we selectively ignored Him and His commands? They could not make the journey on their own strength. Their selective memory had caused them to forget just who their God was and all He had done for them. God is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

We all grow weary and tired in our strength, but we serve a God who is never weary, never sleep and never get tired. He can provide the endurance that we need to make on the journey. Not just the elderly but there is strength for the youths and young adults. It may require waiting on Lord but He will give you strength to soar, walk, and run. We need to keep on trusting Him, praying, and hoping for God has never failed us and He never will.