

Our Sovereign God Protects and Provides for His Church

Please read the 46 chapter of Isaiah. In similar terms throughout Scripture, over and over again God asks this question, *"To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?"* (Isa 46:5) God want us as His people to understand that He and He alone is God. That we have absolutely nothing to fear. It is because of this truth that Paul could write these words, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom 8:35-39) Once again in the Book of Isaiah we hear God proclaiming His absolute authority assuring us that He will protect and provide for His Church both in time and for all eternity. Be encouraged this morning as God once again challenges us to compare Him with the gods of this world, and then hear God proclaim His power and authority over all things **in behalf of the Church**; and then His final assurance that His purpose and plan cannot be thwarted,

A. First, I want us to note that God asks mankind to compare Him with the gods of this world
To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike? Isa 46:5

1. God alone is the absolute Sovereign over all things, to whom will you liken Him
 - a. Who else by the word of His power can speak worlds into existence
 - b. Who else can purpose things yet future and then bring them to pass by His sovereign providence?
 - c. Who else can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure?
2. The gods of this world are but vanity, totally useless, nothing but images of wood and stone
 - a. God asks why would one from the same block of wood use part to make a fire to cook with and then use the rest of it to make a god? (Isa. 44:19)
 - b. Or as in this passage their god could be made of gold but it is still without value and powerless, having to be carried about
3. God describes the gods of this world thus
 - a. Bel bows down, Nebo stoops, like a tottering old man
 - b. Then God points out that they must be carried about becoming a burden to weary beast
 - c. The evidence that they are powerless, is that even though they trusted in them, they were still carried away into captivity, their gods could not deliver them
 - d. We are hereby assured that this materialistic minded world, although it sets itself against the church, is failing and will one day be no more
4. In our day there is not really a great difference
 - a. We may not make gods of wood and precious metals
 - b. But we make material things our gods
 - c. Children that the Bible calls a "heritage of the Lord" are consider a thing to be neglected, aborted and are considered a burden
 - d. Statistics reveal that there are more mothers in the work place now than men
 - e. We live in a world where material gain is everything
5. There is a warning here for us also, for we, as all men are, by nature idolaters at heart
 - a. Mankind prefers something they can see, touch and taste, not some invisible God
 - b. God warns us that covetousness, which is, never being satisfied with what we have, is idolatry
 - c. When material things become more important than things eternal it will turn our hearts away from the Lord
 - d. My prayer is this, may we learn to be satisfied with God, His goodness and His eternal purpose

1 Tim 6:6-9 Now godliness with contentment is great gain

Heb 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

6. This materialistic mindset is affecting the church today
 - a. A successful church is a large wealthy church
 - b. But I do not know of any other way that we can keep the church faithful and strong than to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness
- B. Then God proclaims His power and authority over all things in behalf of the Church by the words, *'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'* (v. 10)
 1. God has a purpose as He rules over all the affairs of mankind
 2. Even ungodly nations are subject to His purpose and sovereign will and God uses the rulers of this world to fulfill His will
 - a. God used Nebuchadnezzar to bring chastening upon Judah and Israel
 - b. Used Cyrus and Darius to return the remnant to the land and to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem
 - c. Used Caesar to put Mary in Bethlehem for the birth of the Messiah
 - d. Used the wickedness of the Jewish rulers and Pilate to fulfill His plan of salvation
 - e. Used the Roman world for the spread of the gospel
 - f. Used several rulers to help bring about the Reformation
- C. God assures us that His plan will not be frustrated. We read, "Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it". Isa 46:11
 1. The power and authority of God is sufficient to secure the execution of all His designs
 - a. He has, does and continue to exert that power in order that all his plans will be accomplished.
 - b. This is the comfort and strength of the Church
 2. If there were any power that could thwart the plan of God, we could find no rest
 - a. The world speaks of chaotic conditions
 - b. Whereas, the Church knows that all things work together for the good of His elect
 - c. All our anxieties vanish in face of **what appears to be** irregularities and disorders in the world, because we know that all things are under the direction of our God
 3. If God was not able to accomplish all His purposes this would give us occasion of doubt and fear
 4. If there were any power that could thwart the purpose of God we could not have comfort both in life and in death
 5. But we do have great comfort for God has said, I will do all My pleasure

In Closing: God is not as concerned about the here and now

But God does have an eternal plan and purpose for you

Fear not little flock it is your Father's **good pleasure** to give you the kingdom

Even though the faithful church is a little flock and is outnumbered God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom will come to pass

God does not stand in need of numbers – Gideon's army

Remember these words of comfort were given to God's remnant just prior to great trial and were no doubt great comfort during the captivity

These words of comfort are just as sure for us today as in that day

The faithful church, the remnant is just as besieged today as any day in history but let us be of good cheer, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom

How do we know that He will bring it to pass?

Isa 46:13 "Listen to Me, you stubborn hearted **who are far from righteousness**: I bring **My righteousness** near, it shall not be far off; **My salvation** shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel My glory.

Do not miss the importance of the underlined words!

Whose righteousness do we hope in?

Whose salvation is our hope this morning?

His righteousness and salvation alone is our righteousness and salvation