

August 5, 2018

## “Apart from Me There is No God”

**Background Chapter: Isaiah 44 (NIV)**

**Focal Passages: Isaiah 44:1-11, 21-28**

Cross References: Joel 2:27-29; Acts 2:16-21, 33; 10:45; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

**Lesson Idea:** We need to recognize God as the only God and praise Him for His grace and greatness.

### BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

July 29 Isaiah 5-8	July 30 Isaiah 9-12
July 31 Isaiah 13-17	Aug 1 Isaiah 18-22
Aug 2 Isaiah 23-27	Aug 3 Isaiah 28-30
Aug 4 Isaiah 31-35	Aug 5 Isaiah 36-41

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

**Key verse to memorize: Isaiah 44:6:**

*This is what the Lord says—*

*Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty:  
I am the first and I am the last;  
apart from me there is no God.*

- There is no other god besides the Lord Almighty.
- God promised to pour out His Spirit on His people... He kept His promise at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to believers in Christ Jesus. He continues to pour out His Spirit into the hearts of those who trust Jesus as Lord.
- We are to be witnesses of the one true God.
- Only God can know and direct the future.
- If we stray, we should return to the Lord, because He has redeemed us.
- We should respond to God’s grace and glory through joyful singing and praise.

### Isaiah 44:1-11 No Other God

1 *“But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.*

2 *This is what the Lord says—  
he who made you, who formed you in the womb,  
and who will help you:*

*Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,  
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.*

3 *For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;*

*I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,  
and my blessing on your descendants.*

4 *They will spring up like grass in a meadow,  
like poplar trees by flowing streams.*

5 *Some will say, ‘I belong to the Lord’;  
others will call themselves by the name of Jacob;  
still others will write on their hand, ‘The Lord’s,’  
and will take the name Israel.*

6 ***“This is what the Lord says—  
Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty:***

***I am the first and I am the last;  
apart from me there is no God.***

7 *Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.  
Let him declare and lay out before me  
what has happened since I established my ancient  
people,*

*and what is yet to come—  
yes, let them foretell what will come.*

8 *Do not tremble, do not be afraid.*

*Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?*

***You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?  
No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”***

9 *All who make idols are nothing,  
and the things they treasure are worthless.  
Those who would speak up for them are blind;  
they are ignorant, to their own shame.*

10 *Who shapes a god and casts an idol,  
which can profit nothing?*

11 *People who do that will be put to shame;  
such craftsmen are only human beings.*

*Let them all come together and take their stand;  
they will be brought down to terror and shame.*

### DISCUSSION:

- v 1-2. What special relationship did the nation of Israel have with God and why? How does that relationship similar to the NT church’s relationship with the Lord?

**NOTE:** from David Guzik, *Enduring Word*

*And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen:* The name Jeshurun means “the upright one.” It is used here as a contrast to the name Jacob, even as Israel is sometimes used as a contrast to Jacob.

“The name Jeshurun appears only three more times in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5, 26; and in all cases it is used of Israel... this word bespeaks a wonder of grace, for He calls His deeply sinful people His beloved, His upright one.” (Bultema)

- v 3-5. What did God promise to provide for His people in the future? When was verse 3 finally fulfilled and how? (see Joel 2:27-29; Acts 2:16-21, 33; 10:45)
- What did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit would do in believers' lives? (see John 14:16-17, 25-27; 15:26-27; 16:7-15)

**NOTE:** Charles Spurgeon, who preached in the 1800's, shared a thought that is still applicable today:  
*"I believe that, at this present moment, God's people ought to cry to him day and night that there may be a fresh baptism into the Holy Ghost. There are many things that are desirable for the Church of Christ, but one thing is absolutely needful; and this is the one thing, the power of the Holy Ghost in the midst of his people."* (Spurgeon, as quoted in Guzik)

- v 6. What do the various names for the Lord in this verse teach about God? Read Revelation 1:8; 21:6 and 22:13. How does being "the Alpha and Omega" demonstrate that Jesus' unity with the one and only God?
- V 7-8. How does God's foreknowledge prove that He is the only God? Who are His witnesses, and what are they expected to do? (see Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15)
- V 9-11. What is true about those who worship idols? What kinds of things do people put their faith in today instead of trusting the Lord alone? Why is this foolish?

**NOTE:** verses 9-20 describe the foolishness involved in the making and worship of idols. It is a brilliant passage that explores the irony of someone using wood to make something to worship. I have included those verses at the end of this lesson from a modern translation (the NLT), because it captures the sarcasm well.

**Isaiah 44:21-28 Return to the Redeemer**

21 *"Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you.*  
 22 *I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.*

**Return to me,  
 for I have redeemed you."**

**23 Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this; shout aloud, you earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel.**

24 *"This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:*

**I am the Lord,  
 the Maker of all things,  
 who stretches out the heavens,  
 who spreads out the earth by myself,  
 25 who foils the signs of false prophets  
 and makes fools of diviners,  
 who overthrows the learning of the wise  
 and turns it into nonsense,  
 26 who carries out the words of his servants  
 and fulfills the predictions of his messengers,**

*who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,'  
 of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt,'  
 and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'  
 27 who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry,  
 and I will dry up your streams,'  
 28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd  
 and will accomplish all that I please;  
 he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt,"  
 and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'"*

**DISCUSSION:**

- v 21. Why does God call Israel His "servant?" What is a servant supposed to do? Why do people today get this backwards (by thinking of God as the One who serves them)?
- V 22. How did God sweep away our offenses and sins? What should that cause us to do?
- V 23. How do you express your gratitude and praise for what God has done? How do you recognize His glory?
- V 24-25. What else is declared about the Lord in these verses? What has He made? What does He do with the wisdom of the world? (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

- V 26. What does God do through His servants?

**NOTE:** In Verses 27-28, Isaiah mentions “Cyrus.” More will be said about him in the chapters to follow, but it is interesting to note that this is a prophecy that highlights God’s ability to foretell the future. Cyrus becomes the king of the Medes and Persians over 200 years after this prophecy. After conquering Babylon, he put an end to Israel’s 70 year captivity and issued a decree allowing them to go home and rebuild their Temple.

According to Guzik:

“Josephus in his Antiquities relates that when Cyrus came across his name mentioned in this place in Isaiah 220 years before he lived, he was seized by a holy desire to fulfill what was written of him.” (Bultema)

**He is My shepherd:** Cyrus was a shepherd in the sense that God used him to do something good and helpful for Israel... The royal proclamations of Cyrus fulfilling this prophecy are found in Ezra 1:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:23...

**Who says to the deep, “Be dry”:** The specific work commissioned by Cyrus is described in detail, including drying up the waters and laying the foundation for the temple (**Your foundation shall be laid**) ... interestingly, as Ezra records (3:10-13; 5:16), in the days of Cyrus the rebuilding of the temple did not progress beyond the laying of the foundations.” (Motyer)

With such amazingly specific claims, it is no wonder that God proves who He is through predicted and fulfilled prophecy. **And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.** (2 Peter 1:19-21)

#### APPLICATION:

- ✓ How will you praise the One True God this week?  
How will you be His witness?
- ✓ What idols in your life are keeping you from a whole-hearted devotion to the Lord? What do you need to do to “return” to the One who has redeemed you?

Lesson by Bro Stan

#### Isaiah 44:9-20 from the New Living Translation:

9 How foolish are those who manufacture idols.

*These prized objects are really worthless.*

*The people who worship idols don't know this, so they are all put to shame.*

10 Who but a fool would make his own god—  
an idol that cannot help him one bit?

11 All who worship idols will be disgraced  
along with all these craftsmen—mere humans—  
who claim they can make a god.

*They may all stand together,  
but they will stand in terror and shame.*

12 The blacksmith stands at his forge to make a sharp tool,  
pounding and shaping it with all his might.

*His work makes him hungry and weak.*

*It makes him thirsty and faint.*

13 Then the wood-carver measures a block of wood  
and draws a pattern on it.

*He works with chisel and plane  
and carves it into a human figure.*

*He gives it human beauty  
and puts it in a little shrine.*

14 He cuts down cedars;  
he selects the cypress and the oak;  
he plants the pine in the forest  
to be nourished by the rain.

15 Then he uses part of the wood to make a fire.  
With it he warms himself and bakes his bread.

*Then—yes, it's true—he takes the rest of it  
and makes himself a god to worship!*

*He makes an idol  
and bows down in front of it!*

16 He burns part of the tree to roast his meat  
and to keep himself warm.

*He says, “Ah, that fire feels good.”*

17 Then he takes what's left  
and makes his god: a carved idol!

*He falls down in front of it,  
worshiping and praying to it.*

*“Rescue me!” he says.*

*“You are my god!”*

18 Such stupidity and ignorance!

*Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see.*

*Their minds are shut, and they cannot think.*

19 The person who made the idol never stops to reflect,  
“Why, it's just a block of wood!

*I burned half of it for heat  
and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat.*

*How can the rest of it be a god?*

*Should I bow down to worship a piece of wood?”*

20 The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes.

*He trusts something that can't help him at all.*

*Yet he cannot bring himself to ask,*

*“Is this idol that I'm holding in my hand a lie?”*