

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 91
November 15, 2020



*Moses & Aaron Change the Nile to Blood by
Bartholomeus Breenbergh cir 1631*

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Ninety-One

THE INCOMPARABILITY OF GOD

November 15, 2020

Daniel E. Woodhead

OUR INCOMPARABLE GOD

Isaiah 40:18–31

¹⁸To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? ¹⁹The image, a workman hath cast it, and the goldsmith overlayeth it with gold, and casteth for it silver chains. ²⁰He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a skilful workman to set up a graven image, that shall not be moved. ²¹Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; ²³that bringeth princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. ²⁴Yea, they have not been planted; yea, they have not been sown; yea, their stock hath not taken root in the earth: moreover he bloweth upon them, and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. ²⁵To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him? saith the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking.

²⁷Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice due to me is passed away from my God? ²⁸Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. ²⁹He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. ³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: ³¹but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint (ASV, 1901).

WHO IS LIKE HIM?

Isaiah 40:18

¹⁸To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him (ASV, 1901)?

This is a summary rhetorical question based upon the previous descriptions of God characteristics. As the Creator, He knows for example how much water is in all the earth, how many stars in the

heavens, and the weight of the mountains. So, who can we compare him to? The simple answer is nobody. So, this means that God is absolutely alone in His creation and maintenance of the world. There is nothing in the whole creation that even comes close to any resemblance to Him, or even He to them. Since all nations are as a drop falling out of a bucket, and are as less than nothing, so, *what likeness will ye compare unto Him?* In what rank can he be placed? To what class of beings can he be likened? What is there that is apt to be named with Him, or compared to Him? The only logical conclusion from the previous declarations regarding His characteristics is that God is One, unique, and that there is no other. Isaiah now proceeds to argue, that it is foolish to compare God even with the most exalted creature. The use of the divine name EL (which references omnipotence) is significant, as a preparation for the next section citing the impotence of idols which some seek to rely upon.

Isaiah 40:19–20

¹⁹The image, a workman hath cast it, and the goldsmith overlayeth it with gold, and casteth for it silver chains. ²⁰He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a skilful workman to set up a graven image, that shall not be moved (ASV, 1901).

This verse follows with a direct answer to the question in the verse before it. Now comes the discussion of an image which an ordinary workman manufactures. It enables us also to see how the Lord wants us to realize that position of idols in our lives seem to be significant to us. In this example the carver has already made the image, and the metal finisher is about to overlay it with gold. He also will adorn it with silver chains. All this for the purpose of making an idol to express an idea of what a god looks like. This is nothing short of idolatry. For those people who are of limited means and cannot afford such lavish idols of precious metals, the prophet explains that they carve a graven image of a better quality of wood such as cedar. Cedar had the property of lasting a long time when exposed to weather and time. It is important to notice that these are offerings (an *oblation*) made to an idol, such as an image was regarded. *That shall not be moved*, is an expression of man's devotion in service to the idol. The phrase, '*shall not be moved*,' does not refer so much to its being fixed in one place, as to its durability and permanency.

GOD IS NOT AN IDOL

Isaiah 40:21–22

²¹Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in (ASV, 1901);

Isaiah now questions his hearers to pay attention to how God has made Himself know to the nation Israel in many instances from the beginning of time. God lives outside of the creation. He is not part of it. He made it and the prideful human creatures *thereof are as grasshoppers* to Him. In fact, He made the Heavens and all that is in them. Early Genesis describing day two of creation expands on this concept of God stretching out the heavens.

Genesis 1:6–8

⁶And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷And God made the firmament, and divided the waters, which were under the firmament from the waters, which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for “*God said*” is *vaiyomer*. In this case it is “*and God said.*” The creation He is about to speak into existence is “the expanse,” also translated as “*firmament.*” We would say the “sky” or “atmosphere.” The important concept for us to grasp in this verse is that God is “speaking” into existence the expanse, or in Hebrew the *rakeeah*. This Hebrew word *rakeeah* means, “to spread out” or “stretch.” Other places in Scripture where this same expression is used are:

- He alone stretches out the heavens (Job 9:8).
- The heavens are stretched out like a tent curtain (Psalm 104:2).
- God stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in (Isaiah 40:22).
- The Lord has stretched out the heavens (Jeremiah 10:12).
- God stretched out the heavens (Zechariah 12:1).

These usages of the Hebrew word for “*stretch*” (*rakeeah*) are not quaint, poetic hyperbole or exaggerations. They describe the properties of the heavens that we cannot see, or fully understand. Space is not an empty vacuum. We have difficulty defining space, and understanding the concept of the properties of space. Scripture gives us some insight as to some of its properties:

- It can be torn (Isaiah 64:1).
- It can be worn out like a garment (Psalm 102:25).
- It can be shaken (Hebrews 12:26; Haggai 2:6; Isaiah 13:13).
- It can be burnt up (II Peter 3:12).
- It can be split apart like a scroll (Revelation 6:14).
- It can be rolled up like a mantle (Hebrews 1:12) or scroll (Isaiah 34:4).

Clearly, God has given us multiple characteristics of what we cannot see.

II Corinthians 4:18

¹⁸while we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things, which are, seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (KJV)

In other words, our hearts and expectations should be on eternity because we will not stay here very long. We must have the heavenly view of life that Christ spoke about (Matthew 18:8; 19:17; Mark 9:43, 45).

The atmospheric heaven is the vault of the heavens. It is the expanse that divided the waters above from the waters below. God called this “*heaven*” for the first time; thus, it is the “first heaven.” This is the earth’s atmosphere, which we breathe. It is the gaseous layer that covers the earth. This is the only day of creation that God does not say “it was good.”

The waters above the firmament (*rakeeah*) probably constituted a vast blanket of water vapor surrounding the earth, above the troposphere and into the ionosphere well into space. There was no rain as yet upon the earth, and there would not be until He caused the worldwide flood to come upon the earth. This vapor canopy sustained life, and provided a uniform temperature on the earth. Weather did not come about until after the flood. Henry Morris of the Institute for Creation Research has given the following characteristics of the canopy:

1. Since water vapor has the ability both to transmit incoming solar radiation and to retain and disperse much of the radiation reflected from the earth’s surface, it would serve as a global greenhouse, maintaining an essentially uniform pleasant warm temperature all over the world.
2. With nearly uniform temperatures, great air-mass movements would be inhibited and windstorms would be unknown.
3. With no global air circulation, the hydrologic cycle of the present world could not be implemented and there could be no rain, except directly over the bodies of water from which it might have evaporated.
4. With no global air circulation, and therefore no turbulence or dust particles transported to the upper atmosphere, the water vapor in the canopy would have been stable and not precipitate itself.
5. The planet would have been maintained not only at uniform temperatures but also at comfortable uniform humidities by means of daily local evaporation and condensation like dew, or ground fog in each day-night cycle.
6. The combination of warm temperature and adequate moisture everywhere would be conducive later to extensive strands of lush vegetation all over the world, with no barren deserts or ice caps.
7. The vapor canopy would also be highly effective in filtering out ultraviolet radiations, cosmic rays, and other destructive energies from outer space. These are known to be the source of both somatic and genetic mutations, which decrease the viability of the individual and the species, respectively. Thus, the canopy would contribute effectively to human and animal health and longevity.¹

Isaiah 40:23–26

²³that bringeth princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. ²⁴Yea, they have not been planted; yea, they have not been sown; yea, their stock hath not taken root in the earth: moreover he bloweth upon them, and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. ²⁵To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him? saith the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by

¹ Morris, Henry, M. *The Genesis Record*, Published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 1976, pg.60

the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (ASV, 1901).

Now God begins to speak directly to the audience of hearers and now readers. He asks the question regarding the great men of the earth, such as kings, rulers, governors, and other nobles. He brings all these to the dust of the earth. They don't live here too long, nobody does. From dust Adam's body was made and to dust all mankind's bodies return after a short period in the earth. God cites all their counsels, schemes, and plans, which all come to nothing. Their positions of power and kingdoms all dissipate in time. We can easily cite the Babylonians, Persians, Greek, and Roman empires, and those great princes that formerly reigned in them. *He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity*; their decrees and decisions are not everlasting, as God is. Now He says to us that we should, *Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these*. Here He cites the heavenly bodies.

God wants us to see Him *through* these stars. He is not in the stars, as some would believe. He created them and He wants us to realize just how powerful He is. God, who cannot be compared to anyone or anything, sustains and knows everything about His creation. In Isaiah chapters 40–66, God is revealed as the Creator and Maker. He does not want us to worship the stars, which is the practice of astrology, rather He wants us to worship Him (Isaiah 47:13–14; Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:2–5; Isaiah 47:13–14). In His strength He created, controls, and sustains millions upon millions of stars, each one He amazingly has named. The psalmist also tells us God knows exactly how many there are. By this, He is clearly demonstrating His sovereign control over His creation:

Psalms 147:4

⁴He counteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. (ASV, 1901)

Since God has created the heavens and the stars as signs pointing to Him, it should not be surprising that Satan has corrupted the interpretation of that part of creation, as he tries to do with everything God created. Satan has corrupted their message for his occultic purposes, which is very far from the original truth. The Hebrew word for the “constellations” is *mazzaroth*. We read the first appearance of the word in Job chapter 38, during God's discussion with Job. God uses the constellations as an example of His power. God had named the constellations. The “Zodiac” of astrology was originally the Mazzeroth of Job chapter 38. The signs of the Mazzeroth are not figures in the sky. They are actually a set of stars with names that represent the figure they describe. Satan, who will use any circumstance to corrupt what God is doing, corrupted the Mazzeroth into the Zodiac. We are not to follow the Zodiac, or its perverse soothsaying, but we are instructed to not be afraid of the genuine message of the stars. We now use Arabic names to identify the different constellations. There is very little data about the original Hebrew names, but the Arabic names help us understand what the original names might have been. They all speak to God's greatest achievement, the redemption of mankind. For example, in the constellation Virgo there are a series of stars that all have ancient names. They do not connect to form an image. Rather their names when linked together provide a message to the earth. They read, The Seed of the Woman; The Desire of Nations; The Man of Double Nature in humiliation; The Exulted Shepherd and Harvester.

WAIT ON GOD DO NOT DESPAIR

Isaiah 40:27–31

27Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice due to me is passed away from my God? 28Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. 29He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. 30Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint (ASV, 1901).

Now comes the complaint of the people and God's response. They feel themselves, forsaken of God. Their "way" seems to be hidden from him. There are other thoughts that seem to satisfy the people's need for immediate relief from the situations experienced here on the earth. We suffer, and God seems indifferent. There is a sense of the injustice of the world, and God does not seem to defend us.

Isaiah knows the fears of the people and begins to assure them that God is there and especially for the nation Israel who have seen many manifestations of the Shecaniah Glory. Look at the seemingly silent heavens with their "goings on;" the march of the seasons; the recurrence of seed-time and harvest; consider the breath which stirs the souls of men to progress in wisdom, culture, peace, and civilization. Contemplate as a whole and in its parts the marvellous mechanism of the human world. He implores us to divert our thoughts from the little self-world to the immense universe. God does not change and for those who know Him and respond to Him *He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength.* When we place our dependence upon Him, He provides us with His safety and comfort. Not as the world gives but the assurance and peace that He provides. When we drink deeply of the Holy Spirit of God, He gives us His fruit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. He gives us His grace as the only One who gives strength. This prescription also includes waiting patiently in the Lord, in prayer. Those who do so will be supernaturally empowered and blessed. When everything in the natural world seems to fail, we trust Him. The text talks about young people in the prime of physical strength and vigorous but still stumbling. But, those who wait for Lord He will renew, and we will gain new strength that is, like-eagles wings. They will run and walk and not get tired, or weary.

Next message: THE GLORY OF GOD CONTINUED

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INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

PRAYER POINT ONE: Expose and hold accountable those who practice the seven things God hates and He says are detestable to Him: According to Proverbs 6:16-17, There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to Him: 1. haughty eyes 2. a lying tongue 3. hands that shed innocent blood 4. a heart that devises wicked plans 5. feet that are quick to rush into evil 6. a false witness who pours out lies 7. a person who stirs up conflict in the community. Heavenly Father, we humbly ask that in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada, please silence every lying tongue and convict the hearts of those who devise wicked plans intended to invalidate and nullify the expressed will of the voters. Stop those who would be quick to rush into evil. Expose and silence every false witness who utters lies and operates in deceit. Thwart the efforts of every person who attempts to stir conflict within their community."

PRAYER POINT TWO: Expose all wickedness intended to steal, kill and destroy the electoral process in these battleground states. Heavenly Father, we humbly ask that in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada that you "reveal deep and hidden things. You know what lies in darkness. Light dwells with You." (Daniel 2:22) Please bring to light and expose every lie, deceit, deception, misrepresentation and illegal act intended to "steal, kill and destroy" the electoral process and the expressed will of the citizens and these states. (John 10:10).

PRAYER POINT THREE: Frustrate those who seek to steal, kill, and destroy electoral integrity and authentic, accurate vote counts in these battleground states. Heavenly Father, please "Frustrate the plotting of the shrewd so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise or attain success." May no weapon formed intended to steal, kill and destroy the authentic, accurate vote count and expressed will of the people in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada be allowed to prosper." (Isaiah 54:17).

PRAYER POINT FOUR: Frustrate and thwart the plans of those who attempt to sabotage the state's election laws and subvert the expressed will of the people. Heavenly Father, please "Capture the wise by their own shrewdness and quickly thwart the advice of the cunning" (Job 5:12) whose intention is to sabotage and subvert state and federal election law and the expressed will of the people in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada. "Hold them guilty O LORD, by their own devices let them fall." (Psalm 5:10)

PRAYER POINT FIVE: Psalm 5 for protection and favor for President Trump: Heavenly Father, please "Give ear to President Trump's words, O LORD, consider President Trump's groaning. Heed the sound of his cry for help, His King and His God. For to You does he pray. In the morning O LORD, you will hear his voice; in the morning he will order his prayer to you and eagerly watch. For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You; You hate all who do iniquity. Destroy those who speak falsehood. You abhor the man of

bloodshed and deceit. But as for President Trump, by Your abundant lovingkindness, he will enter Your house. At your holy temple he will bow in reverence for you. Lord, please lead President Trump in Your righteousness because of his foes. Make his way straight before him. There is nothing reliable in what they say; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Hold them guilty, O God, by their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out for they are rebellious against You. But let President Trump take refuge in You and be glad. Let him ever sing for joy. May you shelter him. May he who loves Your name exult in You. Bless President Trump, O LORD. Surround him with favor as with a shield. Heavenly Father, please give supernatural wisdom, strength and discernment to the President and his advisors regarding how to navigate the road ahead. In the Mighty Name of Jesus! Amen.