

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 41:8-13, ISRAEL, MY SERVANT, PART 1

Some theologians refer to this as a salvation oracle which “promises divine help and the defeat of the enemies of God’s people. A salvation oracle typically: (a) begins with a direct address to the audience (but ‘you’), (b) promises salvation and encourages the audience not to fear, (c) gives a reason for trusting God based on his power to deliver them (the substantiation of the promise), (d) states the consequences, and (e) concludes with God’s intended purpose (giving glory to God)” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 132].

The concept of the servant is introduced at this point in the book of Isaiah. Sometimes the servant is referred to as Israel or Jacob, as he is here, and at other times as the One we refer to as the Messiah. The nation of Israel itself cannot act as the Savior of the world, yet it has a relationship to and with the Savior of the world. The nation could not be, and still is not, living for Yahweh, but is instead in a state of rebellion. How then can the rebellious nation be Yahweh’s servant? In order to understand this situation, we have to understand that there is national Israelite servanthood, and there is an individual Israelite Servant who will lead the nation into its servanthood role once the nation accepts the fact of and believes in the Messiah Servant. He will be what the nation refused to be when God called it to be, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6), but He, the Messiah, will also lead the nation into fulfilling its God-given destiny.

Isaiah 41:8–9 ⁸“But you, Israel, My servant [עַבְדִּי], Jacob whom I have chosen [בְּחַרְתִּי], Descendant [זַרְעִי] of Abraham My friend [אֶחָי], ⁹You whom I have taken [הִטַּקְתִּי] from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected [מָאַסְתִּי] you.

“But you” presents a contrast with the preceding paragraph which ended with the particulars of crafting a worthless idol that is so lifeless it must be fastened to a support with nails lest it topple over. The contrast is with the Israelites who serve the God of Abraham.

In these verses, the servant is Israel or Jacob and not the individual Servant we know as the Messiah. The words in this pericope should be very encouraging to the Israelites if they are willing to accept them. Part of the problem is, of course, that Israel has been in rebellion against God and is therefore experiencing temporal discipline. It is hard for them to believe that God has a plan and a purpose for them after nearly 3,000 years of Israelite stubborn resistance, disobedience, and rebellion to His plans concerning them that have resulted in the disciplinary measures that they experience to this day. As the result of their rebellion and due to the imposition of divine discipline, it is hard for them because they are deaf and blind to the truth (Is. 6:9-10), and they have a veil over their hearts and minds that dulls their capacity to believe (2 Cor. 3:12-16). Due to progressive revelation, we know that they will eventually realize the promises that Isaiah is revealing here, but that is still in the future.

Servant, עֶבֶד, means a slave or a servant, but it may also refer to a minister, adviser, or official. The emphasis here is on the position Israel holds in relation to Yahweh; it is a position of service to the God who created them to be a nation. This is a privileged position, but they never fulfilled their destiny and, in fact rebelled against fulfilling their destiny. The word may refer to a slave denoting a person without position and without any rights. After all, in verse 14, Yahweh refers to Israel as a “worm” which is not exactly a term denoting a responsible position. Referring to Israel in this way is particularly noteworthy when you consider that the word may refer to insect larvae such as maggots; it is not a very pleasant term when used this way. However, the servant is very likely a reference more to what Israel will one day become when they do fulfill the role in which they were created to serve. The word appointed— “chosen” in the NASB—is in the perfect verb form which is a reference to completed action; therefore, it is quite possible this is looking ahead in history to the time when Israel will finally turn to their God in repentance and faith and therefore fulfill the destiny for which they were created. When that happens, the term “servant” will represent an exalted, honorable position. It could have been that way from the beginning if only Israel had been the obedient nation they were created to be.

Chosen, בָּחַר, means to choose, to test or prove, or choice, but it may also mean best, finest, and choice pertaining to that which is the best of a class or kind. Olson correctly interprets the word in these verses to refer to an appointment to service rather than as a divine choosing of Israel over other nations. “Isaiah had highlighted the central theme of Israel’s being God’s appointed servant, even in exile, ‘But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen (*bachar* = appointed), descendant of Abraham My friend ... You are My servant, I have chosen (*bachar* [= appointed]) you and not rejected you” [C. Gordon Olson, *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, 3rd ed., 348].

Most people want to read into the word “chosen” the definition of elect that refers to God choosing the Israelites before the foundation of the world to be the people and the nation He specifically calls His own. That cannot be correct. God did not “choose” Israel in that sense. God created mankind who, by means of procreation after their own kind, populated the earth. Those people engaged in a rebellion against God at the Tower of Babel which resulted in their separation from one another into people groups with a common language and into geographical areas with boundaries that we call nations.

Israel was not a part of this; Israel was created and formed into a nation after the incident at the Tower of Babel. The nation Israel did not exist at that time and therefore could not have been set apart from among the various nations as God’s people. Israel was not picked out of the roster of nations for God’s special treatment because Israel did not exist at Babel. Instead, God specifically created Israel to be His nation and to be His people appointed to His service (Ex. 19:5-6). That they did not perform that service well is another issue altogether. Israel has never been, nor will the nation ever be, counted as a nation among the rest of the nations of the world.

Numbers 23:9 ⁹“As I [Balaam] see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people [Israel] who dwells apart, And will not be reckoned among the nations.

The Israelites are a supernaturally created people and nation. Sarah was barren and beyond child-bearing years when Isaac was conceived.

Genesis 11:30 ³⁰Sarai was barren [עָקָרָה]; she had no child.

Barren, עָקָרָה, means barren specifically referring to being infertile and therefore being unable to produce offspring and having no descendants. Sarai had passed the point where she could physically produce children based on her own biological capabilities. It seems likely that Sarai was barren her entire life, but she certainly could not naturally conceive at the advanced age she was when she conceived Isaac making that a supernatural conception. Yet, Yahweh promised Abram and Sarai descendants which was only a situation He could bring about.

Genesis 17:7 ⁷"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

Genesis 18:13–14 ¹³And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a *child*, when I am so old?' ¹⁴"Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Genesis 21:1–2 ¹Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. ²So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.

Rebekah was also barren, and Isaac had to pray to God to open her womb.

Genesis 25:21 ²¹Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren [עָקָרָה]; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.

God supernaturally created the Jewish people, and He supernaturally created the nation in Egypt. God arranged for Joseph to be sold into slavery in Egypt so that the family would follow and there be formed into the nation (Gen. 50:20). He providentially protected Moses (Ex. 2:1-10) and used him to lead the people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. He revealed Himself to the Israelites by means of signs, wonders, and miracles both in Egypt and in the wilderness. He defeated their enemies before them and placed them, as a national entity composed of the twelve tribes, in the land of Canaan.

The point is that it is somewhat of a misnomer to refer to Israel and the Israelites as God's chosen people. They are God's choice, preferred people, specifically created by Him and formed into a nation who were appointed to His service as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). "Jacob whom I have chosen" is more accurately translated, "Jacob whom I have appointed." The reference is to God's choice people appointed to His service. That is the correct understanding of election, and that is the way we should understand the word "chosen" as it is used in these verses in Isaiah. [For an in-depth discussion of these issues, see C. Gordon Olson, *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, 3rd ed. Lynchburg, VA: Global Gospel

Publishers, 2012, and Ken Wilson, *The Foundation of Augustinian-Calvinism*. Regula Fidei Press, 2019.]

In terms of application to Christianity, we become God's choice, preferred, and appointed to service people by means of faith in Christ Jesus. The Israelites were God's choice, preferred, appointed people who were and still are members of the Abrahamic Covenant community by means of circumcision which was the sign of the covenant. Therefore, Israelite believers and unbelievers are both still God's preferred people appointed to His service. In the national sense, it is a corporate appointment to service and not an individual appointment.

Since most commentaries are written by Calvinists, you have to understand that the way they understand God's choosing and the doctrine of election is incorrect. In their thinking, Abraham was chosen in eternity past to be a believing man of God, and who, therefore, must love God and do His will otherwise he could never have been chosen in the first place. According to that theology, as such an august elect, chosen figure, Abraham could do nothing else. We cannot discount God's foreknowledge in these matters either. Augustinian theology developed and inserted into Christianity a misguided understanding of God's sovereignty that resulted in their faulty understanding of election and predestination. We become God's choice people, His elect, the moment we believe, and, at the same time, we are predestined to be adopted into the family of God (Eph. 1:5) and to be conformed, based on foreknowledge, to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).

The reference to "Abraham, My friend" is an acknowledgement not only of Abraham's relationship to Yahweh, but of the Abrahamic Covenant and the nation's relationship to Yahweh through it. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this Covenant in terms of God's plan for history.

Friend, אָהֵב, means to love or to breathe after which is a reference to longing. The sense is one of loving or caring in terms of having a great affection for, care for, or loyalty towards the object of love. This could have been translated as "beloved," but no one has done that. Young's Literal Translation translated the word as "My lover," but that translation seems a bit unseemly to me even though it is a perfectly legitimate use of the word.

The nation of Israel is described here as the descendant of Abraham. Descendant, זָרַע, means seed, offspring, and descendants which, in this context, is a reference to a person's posterity. The mention of Abraham and Jacob is a reminder of the great lineage from which the nation has come. Israel also has a very special relationship with the Abrahamic Covenant. Due to the special relationship Israel has with Yahweh, they remain His special people despite their rebellion; they are still His servants, and they are still His beloved. That can never change; Yahweh promised that Israel would always be a nation before Him.

Jeremiah 31:35–37 ³⁵Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: ³⁶"If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares

the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever." ³⁷Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD.

We know that Abraham had other descendants, who are not Israelites, but we also know that God's program was going to be worked out through Jacob, or Israel, as he later became known, and not through any other descendant of Abraham.

Genesis 25:23 ²³The LORD said to her [Rebekah], "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

Malachi 1:1–3 ¹The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. ²"I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob; ³but I have hated Esau ...

The reference to taking and calling, in this context, probably refers to Abraham's call out of Ur and to Jacob's sojourn and return from what we might call familial exile. I can't help but think that this is possibly also a reference to the formation of the nation in Egypt and the liberation of that nation by taking them out of Egypt as Yahweh's son.

Hosea 11:1 ¹When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

This "is speaking of a literal historical event, which was the Exodus. The background of Hosea 11:1 is Exodus 4:22-23. Israel, as a nation, is the son of God: *Israel is my son, my firstborn*. When God brought Israel out of Egypt, it is pictured by Hosea 11:1 as God bringing His son out of the land of Egypt. That is the *literal* meaning of Hosea 11:1. It is an historical verse dealing with an historical event, the Exodus" [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, "How the New Testament Quotes the Old Testament" in *Messianic Christology: A Study of Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah*, 146].

We also have to consider the periods of exile out of the land that Israel has experienced. The Northern Kingdom was permanently removed from the land by Assyria. Judah was taken out of the land by Babylon, but returned 70 years later. Israel was exiled out of the land after the Roman destruction of the nation in AD 70, but they have now been called back into the land in unbelief. They will be exiled once again at the midpoint of the Tribulation, but called back at the Second Coming. From the standpoint of an eschatological meaning of these Scriptures, it is not hyperbole to understand the return of the Jews to the land from "the ends of the earth" and "its remotest parts." They have been returning to Israel in unbelief from all over the world at the present time, and at the end of the Tribulation, they will be regathered "from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Mt. 24:31).

For Israel to be out of the land for any reason, but especially as a result of God's divine disciplinary dealings with the nation, is a disgraceful matter. The only reason they have been out of the land for any reason is due solely to their rebellion. God's promise is that one day, after they have expressed national repentance and turned to the Lord in faith,

they will possess the land to the extent promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. They will finally, for the final time, be returned to the land from the four corners of the earth.

Mark 13:27 ²⁷“And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

This refers to a worldwide regathering of Israel. We know this will only happen twice in history. First, the nation will be regathered in unbelief for the purpose of judgment which is taking place at this time in history (Ezek. 20:33-38), and at the end of history, Israel will be regathered back into the land in belief to inherit their covenant promises and to enjoy the Messianic Kingdom (Is. 11:11; Mt. 24:31; Mark 13:27).

Taken, *קָיָה*, means to strengthen, to tie fast, to overpower. “At that time, God ‘strengthened you,’ or ‘firmly grasped you,’ an act of divine grace that coincided with the call of Abram. That strong’ seizing, strengthening’ of Abram was designed to make him God’s servant. God’s decision was to choose [appoint] this one man so that through him God could raise up a mighty nation that would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 134].

As noted earlier, God will never finally reject Israel; replacement theology is an unbiblical lie.

Reject, *רָצָה*, means to reject, to despise, to condemn, or to refuse. It has the sense of rejection combined with condemnation.

Reject is a perfect verb referring to completed action which indicates that God is never going to reject Israel because the verb was negated. That promise should provide comfort to the Jews throughout history, but it really has not because of their unbelief and the fact that they have never stopped rebelling against Him.

God continued to offer words of comfort and of assurance that He would not reject Israel—ever! Safety guaranteed by the God of Israel is the subject in verse 10.

Isaiah 41:10 ¹⁰‘Do not fear [*יִרָא*], for I am with you; Do not anxiously [*שָׁעָה*] look about you, for I am your God [*אֱלֹהֶיךָ*]. I will strengthen [*אֶמְצֵן*] you, surely [*אֲרֵךְ*] I will help [*עֲזֹר*] you, Surely I will uphold [*תִּמְצֵד*] you with My righteous [*צְדִיק*] right hand.’

Two synonyms, fear and anxious, are used here to counsel the Israelites to be unafraid.

Fear, *יִרָא*, means to fear, to be afraid or scared of, or to be frightened.

Anxious, *שָׁעָה*, means to gaze, but it may also mean to be in fear or to be afraid.

The English word “anxious” is a little mild, because we generally don’t associate a high degree of fear with it. To contemporary English-speaking people, anxious relates more to worry, unease, or nervousness rather than to fear. Some translations use the words “fear” and “afraid” respectively (HCSB, LEB), or “afraid” and “frightened” (NET Bible) either of

which are better in the sense of representing the Hebrew context. One translation acknowledges the concept of gazing or looking around: “Be not afraid, for with thee I am, Look not around, for I am thy God ... (YLT). When translated in this manner, it refers to those who are continually looking around to see whether or not anyone or anything is about to harm them, but God is informing the Israelites that they have no need to do that. He is their Protector, and no harm will befall them. The element of fear seems to be the predominate thought in this verse.

Because He is the God of Israel and He protects them with a righteous right hand, the Israelites should not fear and they should not be afraid. Here, Yahweh is called “your God” [אֱלֹהֶיךָ]. In the Old Testament, God is called the “God of Israel” 201 times in 199 verses. It is usually in the form of “[the] LORD [the] God of Israel” [יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל].

The three verbs used here, each one in the perfect tense representing, in this context, not only completed action, but a state of being which indicates that God has been strengthening, helping, and securing Israel, and He will continue to do so. Whether or not this appears to be so at any particular point in history is beside the point; God has been with Israel since the beginning. Without His presence in the life of the nation, Israel and the Jewish people would have permanently ceased to exist long ago. Israel’s existence throughout history despite the *diaspora* and the worldwide persecution the Israelites have suffered is truly a miracle. The personal pronoun “you, which is connected with each of these verbs, is a reference to the Israelites; He is their God.

Strengthen, אָמַץ, means to be stout, strong, bold, and alert. It points to being brave and strong. In the verb form, it means to make strong which is the context here. Israel has experienced prolonged periods of weakness, but that has been part of her temporal disciplinary program. The nation could have been strong all along and Israel will certainly be strong once again when the unconditional covenants are fulfilled. Even now, in our time, Israel has fought some wars against seemingly insurmountable odds and prevailed.

Help, עָזַר, means to help, to aid, to assist.

Uphold, תָּמַךְ, means to grasp, to support, to take hold of referring to keeping or maintaining in unaltered condition; to cause to remain or last. This is a promise in a long list of promises that Israel will continue to exist. Replacement theology is a lie; God has not abandoned Israel and replaced the nation with the church.

In terms of the verb forms used here for these words, better translations are: “... I strengthen you— yes, I help you— yes, I uphold you ...” (NET Bible). “... I strengthen you and I help you, I uphold you ...” (TANAKH). The “I will” translation the NASB uses, represents a future perfect action, but it seems more appropriate to view God’s protective care for Israel to be something that began long ago, hence a completed action that will continue to the completion of God’s plan for history involving the nation.

Other theologians do think these are prophetic perfects and only pertain to God’s future work in restoring Israel and fulfilling the covenant promises made to their forefathers. However, it seems that God has been providentially caring for Israel since their formation as a nation, even though it does not seem like it to them since they have been

experiencing His divine disciplinary program for many centuries. It seems likely that their miraculous preservation as a distinct people is solely due to God's protective hand throughout generations of Israelites just as God has promised to uphold them all along. Many of the theologians who hold to the future aspect of these verbs nonetheless admit that this promise has been kept by God throughout the nation's history.

The promise made to the Israelites in Isaiah's time frame to be present with them is the same promise He made to the forefathers. "This is their own God who is still present with them and available to care for them. God will empower his people by 'strengthening you, helping you, and upholding you.' This is God's firm promise to his fearful people based on his powerful and 'victorious' right hand that brings salvation in times of war. Because of God's power and love, people in the past and today can face the trials of life with courage, for God's promise to be with his people has not changed. All power still rests in his hands" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 135].

There is a sense that this word, translated "righteous right hand," means "victorious right hand" in this Isaiah context which does have some lexical support [cf. Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "צדק," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, vol. 3, 752]. "[T]his context is not about the justice of God's actions, but about God's power to deliver and uphold his people in a time when enemies were at war with them; thus, 'my victorious' right hand seems more appropriate ..." [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 135, n. 173]. I think the context is much broader than that, and I am skeptical that this suggestion is correct. "It is common in some of the modern translations to translate *ṣĕdĕq* with 'victorious.' This is an attempt to convey the recognition that *ṣĕdĕq* connotes more than ethical behavior—it connotes 'right' action in all circumstances. Thus God's great power ('right hand') will do the right thing for his suffering people and deliver them. But 'victorious' seems to go too far, because it has no relation to standards at all" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 92].

The promises revealed in the use of these verbs is emphasized by the twice used word *אָרְ*, which means also, yea, indeed, or even, translated as "surely" in the NASB text. This is a very strong affirmation that God will do what He says He will do in relation to His people and their nation. In this context, it denotes emphasis. The use of the word "indeed" in the Lexham English Bible highlights the nuance of emphasis. Other translations recognize the sense of grasping that this word means. God has a hold on Israel, which presumably is an act that represents the fact that Israel cannot be removed from His grasp; therefore, it represents security. "I will hold on to you" (HCSB), or "I will take hold of you" (LEB) are translations that reveal this truth.

The right hand is a metaphor for God's strength, power, authority, and for His ability to protect. Numerous Scriptures use that imagery.

Exodus 15:6 ⁶"Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.

Psalms 17:7 ⁷Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up *against them*.

1 Chronicles 29:12 ¹²“... and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

God's hand is, of course, a righteous hand; everything about Him is righteous. “[T]he *hand* is the organ of personal action; the ‘right hand of my righteousness’ is the Lord's personal action implementing his righteous promises and purposes” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 254].

Righteous, *צדק*, means a right relation to an ethical or moral standard relating to rightness, justice and righteousness. God's righteousness can do nothing other than fulfill the promise He made to uphold Israel. “Righteousness has to do with law, morality, and justice. In relation to Himself, God is righteous; i.e., there is no law, either within His own being or of His own making, that is violated by anything in His nature. In relation to His creatures He is also righteous; i.e., there is no action He takes that violates any code of morality or justice” [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 48].

Obviously, that ethical standard is set by God in accordance with His character and nature. God's righteous right hand that upholds Israel should be of great comfort to the Israelites, but for the duration of their history, they have generally been oblivious to His gracious provision for them. God's righteous character guarantees that He will uphold His promises to Israel, and, ultimately, they will turn to Him in faith and realize the fulfillment of all the promises Yahweh made to them.

We often do not connect the concept of righteousness as a doctrine that is applicable to those in rebellion against God, but it is. God's justice is applicable to all. “This is a right hand that works by means of *righteousness*, manifested in God's providential dealings. To Israel this righteousness will be a blessing; but to the nations who know Him not, the righteousness will appear in the punitive and retributive justice meted out for their wickedness” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:85]. “The other perfects [verbs] affirm what Jehovah has ever done, and still continues to do. In the expression ‘by the right hand of my righteousness,’ the justice or righteousness is regarded pre-eminently on its brighter side, the side turned towards Israel; but it is also regarded on its fiery side, or the side turned towards the enemies of Israel. It is the righteousness which aids the oppressed congregation against its oppressors” [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:407].

The enemies of Israel will be put to shame, and no one will overcome the Israelites despite how dangerous and desperate things may appear before the inauguration of the Kingdom. It will be as though the nation's enemies do not even exist.

Isaiah 41:11–12 ¹¹“Behold, all those who are angered [*תִּרְדוּ*] at you will be shamed [*בוֹשָׁה*] and dishonored [*קָלָם*]; Those who contend with you will be as nothing [*אֵינִי*] and will perish [*אָבָדוּ*]. ¹²“You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent.

Behold, הִנֵּה, is an interjection designed to grab attention. Given all the hostile attacks, warfare, and persecution Israel has endured throughout the years, God's promise that the nation's wars would end (Is. 40:2) and that all her enemies would become as nothing and perish is something that should get the attention of the Israelites. Unfortunately, Israel has shown a tendency to doubt God in this regard, and the centuries that have elapsed without the fulfillment of this promise have facilitated doubt. The one thing that has happened is that the restoration of the nation in the ancient homeland has given them hope that they can finally become a nation of the world that lives in peace amongst all the other nations of the world. After the Holocaust, many Jewish people realized the only way they could ever even hope to have peace with the world was from the security of their own borders in their own land. That situation has come about, and they still have to endure the hatred of a hostile world system that wants nothing more than their destruction. It will take the arrival of the Messiah to finally and permanently put their fears to rest and establish the safety and security of the Messianic Kingdom.

Angered, הִקְרָה, means to burn, to be kindled, or to become hot. Figuratively, it is used to indicate anger or rage. One lexicon defines the word as being angry, aroused, to burn with anger, to have a temper, i.e., to have a strong feeling of displeasure with a focus of an action to follow [s.v. הִקְרָה, James A. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*]. This is a perfect description of the anger the world expresses towards Israel and the Jewish people.

The obvious question must be, why is the world so angry with Israel? In the grand scheme of world history and events, Israel is a tiny, seemingly insignificant nation, yet that nation is universally hated by the world. First and foremost, is the fact that God specifically created Israel to be a nation and a people set apart for His purposes including the defeat of Satan and the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom. That has resulted in the hatred of a Satan dominated world system being directed at Israel. The world hates the people and the nation. Why all this hatred and murderous intent? The answer is really quite simple, but it is an answer that is spiritually discerned, which is something the world at large is incapable of doing. Early in the history of the formation of Israel, Satan tried to destroy the Jewish people through intermarriage with Canaanite women, and, failing that, to kill the Jews in Egypt in order to prevent the Messiah from being born (Ex. 1:16). He tried to use Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome to either kill all the Jews or cause them to assimilate into the world's population and thereby lose their Jewish distinctives as a people group. Once the Messiah was born, Satan used Herod to try and kill all the male children in Nazareth thinking that he would kill the baby who was the Messiah (Mt. 2:16). Satan also knows that the Messiah will not return to earth to defeat him unless and until the Jews cry out to the Messiah to return and save them from annihilation at the hands of Satan and his armies of the world (Mt. 23:39). If he can kill all the Jews, then there will be no Jews left to call for the Messiah's return. His efforts have continued on throughout history by means of persecution at the hands of the Europeans, the Russians, Hitler and the Germans, and the Muslims. In the final analysis, Satan has manipulated the people and the nations of the world into hating the Jews so that those people and those nations can do his dirty work by destroying the Jews, which, in Satan's insane mind, means that He has defeated God. We know that cannot and will not happen, but that does not keep the delusional archenemy of God from trying to accomplish his evil

mission. The only Person or thing that will stop the world from trying to destroy the Jews is God Himself, and, of course, that is exactly what He will do.

These two verses are very emphatic concerning the end of Israel's persecution and the destruction of those who themselves have been and will continually be trying to destroy the nation and the Israelites. The satanic enemies of God and Israel will be shamed, dishonored, come to nothing, perish, disappear, and become non-existent. Seems like the anti-Semitic world does not have a chance does it? That is precisely the point; the world has no chance to destroy Israel and her people and along with them the plan of God for history. That simply cannot happen. Most of these words are imperfect verbs which refers to incomplete action; therefore, we know that these things have yet to take place. Israel will be persecuted right up until the end of history as we know it, and only then will the people and the nation experience the kind of safety these verses indicate will take place.

Shamed, בּוֹשׁ, means to be ashamed or put to shame, and to fail in hope and expectation resulting in feelings of shame, guilt, and embarrassment.

Dishonored, נִלְמָה, means to wound, to harm someone, or to humiliate, to put to shame, and to disgrace. It has the sense of being characterized by feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, or remorse as the result of an act that humiliates someone.

Nothing, אֵין, means nothing, emptiness, and non-existence referring to a verb of negation or non-existence meaning no, none, nothing.

Perish, אָבַד, means to perish, to be lost, or to cease to exist as a sentient entity. In a causative sense, it means to destroy. This word is often used to represent God's destruction of evil, which is the context here.

The picture being presented here represents the return of Christ at which time the satanic world system will be defeated by the Messiah when He returns to earth to save the Jewish people. As He returns and the unsaved world realizes they are doomed, shame and dishonor will characterize their emotions—certainly accompanied by sheer terror at what is about to befall them—and then they will come to nothing by means of death at the "sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse" (Rev. 19:21), or the survivors of that event will be thrown into the lake of fire at the conclusion of the sheep and goat's judgment (Mt. 25:31-46).

Once all this happens, not only will the Jews be free from persecution and danger, they will be dwelling in perpetual safety in the land enjoying the fulfillment of the promises Yahweh made to them in the unconditional covenants. There will be no one on planet earth who will cause them trouble and put their lives in danger.

Many theologians try to make this Scripture about Assyria's attack on Jerusalem in 701 BC or to the Babylonian destruction of the city in 586 BC, but the results of God's intervention resulting in the nation's secure status in the land has never been completely fulfilled. God has always sovereignly kept Israel from being entirely destroyed, but the nation has never experienced the safety and security these verses identify. This degree

of security will be unavailable to the nation until the Messiah returns to assume His throne and inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom.

As the word “for” indicates at the beginning of verse 13, Yahweh continues this line of thought by revealing Himself to them as the God of Israel. He is the One who will work wonders among them to protect them and preserve them, to restore them and bless them, to establish them in the land and fulfill His covenant promises to them.

Isaiah 41:13 ¹³“For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’”

In verse 10, Yahweh exhorted the Israelites not to fear because He would uphold them with His righteous right hand resulting in the destruction of those who contend with Israel (v. 11) and further resulting in the fact that Israel will never even be able to find another enemy (v. 12). In verse 13, He made the promise to uphold them and help them. His promises guarantee Israel's ultimate deliverance from her enemies and national restoration in peace and safety at some point in the future. In terms of dispensational distinctions, it is important to note that Israel is now, at this point in history, subject to Yahweh's divine disciplinary program for disobedience and rebellion which does allow Israel's enemies to attack them and persecute them. The point is that these promises of complete safety and security have yet to be fully realized. God is preventing the complete destruction of Israel and the Israelites now, but all of these future promises of safety and security notwithstanding, He is allowing them to experience divine discipline at the hands of their enemies.

Israel will not deliver themselves. Yahweh will be their strength and their help. It should be obvious that when He is one's strength and help, there is nothing any enemy can do to harm them.