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Sermon Notes

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The Sovereign Lord Determines and Declares History

Isaiah 41:1-29

More and more, we Christians are in the position of defending our religion in the marketplace of ideas... many non-Christians love to point out the fact that other religions teach essentially the same principles of morality, and that other religions have their attractions... other religions have a holy book, or a holy prophet, or a pattern of superior fasting/behavior or care for the poor and needy. The skeptical world demands of Christians to answer these kinds of questions: "What makes your religion better than all the others? And isn't it arrogant to claim that Christianity is unique when it really isn't?"

Christians are called on to defend our faith in a hostile environment... to be Daniels in a series of lions' dens...

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world"

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have

So... how do we know that Christianity is true? How do we know that the Christian faith is the only true faith? Most importantly, how can we know that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world?

For me, ultimately, this comes down to the uniqueness of the Bible... the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is a completely unique book in all the earth—there is no book like it.

Skeptics may claim that many religions have sacred writings—holy scriptures—that they cling to:

Buddhism has various collected sayings of Buddha called the *Buddhavacana*

Hinduism has the vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita

Islam has the Koran

Shintoism has the kojiki

Scientology has *Dianetics* (the writing of L. Ron Hubbard)

Mormonism has the Book of Mormon, as well as other writings from Joseph Smith

So, how can Christians know that the Bible is unique in this crowded field of spiritual writings—holy books revered by millions of people around the world?

There are many answers to this... the greatest single answer is that only the Bible describes the person and work of Jesus Christ, whose uniqueness in all of human history should be obvious: claiming to be God incarnate, sinless, teaching in ways that no one had ever taught; doing astonishing signs and wonders unlike any other religious leader in history (healing every disease and sickness, opening the eyes of a man born blind; raising dead people; walking on water; stilling a storm with a word, etc.)... especially Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead on the third day—witnessed by over 500 people.

But along with this is the uniqueness of the Bible in this one area: **fulfilled prophecy**

The Bible contains the words of dozens of prophets who spoke with amazing clarity about future events: one scholar has counted over 2000 prophecies covering every nation within 1000 miles of Jerusalem

In Isaiah alone, there are dozens of very specific prophecies about the nations of his day—Israel, Judah, Egypt, the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, etc.

Jeremiah specifically predicted the fall of Babylon to the Medes 70 years before it happened... more than that, he predicted that Babylon would fall when its river was made to dry up and the soldiers who were supposed to be watching on the walls were asleep, drunk in their beds

The Book of Daniel very clearly predicted the rise of the Greek empire under Alexander the Great, his early death, and the division of his empire into four parts among those who were not his descendents

The Book of Ezekiel predicts the destruction of the prosperous city of Tyre by a series of conquests, including Alexander the Great, centuries before it happened; and even more amazingly, that the city of Tyre—a perfectly situated port city—would be finally destroyed and never rebuilt

But the most overwhelming body of prophecy focuses on the person and work of Jesus Christ... he fulfilled over 500 specific prophecies... FIVE HUNDRED!!

By contrast, if you Google “Islamic prophecies”, you may come upon the same website I did which listed about ten of the most vague so-called prophecies (such as the use of fingerprints to catch criminals—but when I looked up the passage in the Koran, it had nothing to do with that). Another website listed some general prophecies made by Muhammad, but they were like this: the increase of literacy, the use of alcoholic beverages in mosques, men wearing garments with silk and gold, women wearing

revealing clothing, the disappearance of true scholars, etc. Vague generalities. Not true prophecies.

Buddhism and Hinduism are not known for making specific prophecies about world events... some websites mention passages in the writings, but they speak of general human sins that have characterized every age: wickedness, greed, lust, selfishness...

The bottom line is this: Only the Bible has this kind of fulfilled prophecy...

God alone can do this... all the idols of the nations cannot:

Isaiah 41:21-24 "Present your case," says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. ²² "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, ²³ tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. ²⁴ But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.

I. The Lord Challenges Idols... and Defeats Them!

A. Context: The Awesome God of Isaiah 40 Moves Out to Save His People

1. The God who comforts His people with the news that their sins have been amply paid for
2. The God who moves out over a desert road for which there is no possible barrier that can stop Him
3. The God who reveals His glory to all mankind... the entire human race able to see the glory of the Lord
4. The God who declares that all flesh is grass and all its glory is like the grass of the field... the God who exalts His Word above all the glory of human achievement
5. The God who proclaims a message of good news to Zion and to the ends of the earth
6. The centerpiece of this proclamation: BEHOLD YOUR GOD
7. The astonishing range of God: tender and gentle with His people like a shepherd with the lambs, but awesome in His immensity—measuring the waters of the ocean in the hollow of his hand and measuring off the cosmos with the breadth of His hand
8. This incredible God rules over the nations of the earth

Isaiah 40:15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

Isaiah 40:17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

Isaiah 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers.

Isaiah 40:23-24 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

9. This God is sovereign over the nations... and His sovereignty is applied specifically to the events surrounding Israel's exile to Babylon

B. Israel's Sin: Idolatry

Isaiah 41:7 The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer spurs on him who strikes the anvil. He says of the welding, "It is good." He nails down the idol so it will not topple.

C. Israel's Punishment: Exile to Babylon

D. God's Remedy: Challenge the Idols, Control History, Save His People

E. God's Contest With Idols

1. This is a major theme in Isaiah 40-49... again and again, God addresses the issue of idols and their non-existence, their weakness, their inability, their worthlessness
2. We see God's jealousy over the affections of His people:

Exodus 20:4-5 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God

Psalms 78:58 They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols.

3. So, the Lord takes on His rivals... He challenges the idols to a contest

F. The Centerpiece: Specific Predictions of the Future

1. Basic facts of nature: a succession of events, the orderly progress of history

Isaiah 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD-- with the first of them and with the last-- I am he."

2. This is the LINEAR VIEW of history... first this, then that, then the other... A, B, C, D... 1, 2, 3, 4

Genesis 1:5 And there was evening, and there was morning-- the first day.

Genesis 1:8 And there was evening, and there was morning-- the second day.

Genesis 1:13 And there was evening, and there was morning-- the third day.

... and it makes sense, the ordering! The events on the first day lay the groundwork for the events on the second day... there is no way to make animals and man from the dust of the earth if there's no dust or earth! There is no way to separate the water above from the water below if there is no sky or earth... there is no way to create fish to swim in the seas if there are no seas to swim in

There is a PERFECT ORDERING of events.

So it is in Redemptive History: The call of Abraham must precede the slavery of Abraham's descendants in Egypt; and that slavery in Egypt must precede the Exodus from Egypt. So it is down to the smallest detail of history

3. God has ordered ALL THE DETAILS of human history before He created the universe
4. God DECREES history in His mind first
5. Then God declares some actions of history through the prophets... just to show He can
6. Then God executes His plan, down to the tiniest detail, to achieve His final ends

G. An Aside: The Astonishing Power of Predictive Prophecy

1. No created being knows the future!!! No human being... and no angel or demon
2. Why? Because God finally decides what will happen!!

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

3. So the ability the prophets have to declare the future shows they are speaking for Almighty God

4. God's ability to predict the future sets Him apart from all the "gods" of the nations
5. So, in this chapter (and in several places in this series of chapters), God highlights His ability to predict future events

Isaiah 41:26-27 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. ²⁷ I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings.

6. AND He exposes the idols for the false gods they are

Isaiah 41:24 But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.

Isaiah 41:29 See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.

7. The specific event that God predicts here is the rise of Cyrus the Great, a ruler from the east who will topple the Babylonian empire and decree that the Jews should return to the Jerusalem and rebuild it

In this chapter, not mentioned by name, but clearly alluded to in vs. 2 **"one from the east"**

But, in Isaiah 44-45, he WILL be mentioned by name:

Isaiah 44:28 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."'

8. It is absolutely STUNNING that God can reveal the identity—the actual name—of a conqueror who would not be born for another 160 years to Isaiah the prophet!
9. This is more stunning evidence of the uniqueness of the Word of God... predictive prophecy; the Koran does not have them, neither does the Baghavad Gita, nor the other religious writings of the world
10. This unique power of the Bible will culminate in the dozens and dozens of clear prophecies pointing to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world

II. The Lord Stirs Up a Conqueror to Do His Bidding (vs. 1-7)

A. The Summons to All the Earth: A Contest Between God and the Idols

Isaiah 41:1 "Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment.

1. God is the Judge of all the earth
2. He summons the distant islands as a symbol of His authority over every square inch of this planet... the distant islands are accountable to the God of Israel...
3. Application: Judgment Day is coming... all individual human beings will be summoned to give God an account

Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

Only Christ can save us from the wrath of God on that day!!

B. God's Claim: He Orchestrates Human History

Isaiah 41:2-4 "Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. ³ He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before. ⁴ Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD-- with the first of them and with the last-- I am he."

1. Much debate over the identity of this individual... this "one from the east" whom God summons to do His bidding
 - a. But the larger context (and how God speaks openly of His summoning Cyrus the Great in Isaiah 44-45) pushes us in this direction
2. God "stirs up" this one from the east... He CALLS HIM IN RIGHTEOUSNESS to serve Him
 - a. God controls human history by controlling human minds and hearts
 - b. God can give a budding leader favor in the eyes of his own people, and raise him up to greatness
 - c. God can put ideas in his mind and give him ambitions and drive and new patterns of warfare by which he will be successful
 - d. Though the individual may not acknowledge God, he is being moved and directed by Him every step of the way... the man's motives may be thoroughly corrupt and wicked, and God will judge him for those motives;

but God's motives and plans are always righteous... everything God does is right and morally pure

3. The "one from the east" is given the gift of military conquest... by his sword and his bow he slaughters people, turning them to dust;
4. Cyrus himself is "unscathed"... not harmed or wounded at all by any of these battles
 - a. Great leaders frequently expose themselves with great boldness and with absolute courage on the battlefield... Alexander the Great did, Napoleon did, George Washington did, Douglas MacArthur did...
 - b. they have a sense of their invincibility, that they cannot die... if they had been cut down early in their careers, we would never have heard of them... but God gives these great leaders that innate sense of invincibility that wins the affections of their men
5. This "one from the east" is given military successes in paths his feet have never trod before... he's never seen those roads—history showed that Cyrus crossed the Tigris River from the east, and so entered the Babylonian Empire; he marched quickly and defeated the wealthy king Croesus of Lydia, conquering his capital Sardis. So he came from BOTH the east and the north

Isaiah 41:25 "I have raised up one from the north, and he has come, one from the east who invokes My name. He will march over rulers as if they were mud, like a potter who treads the clay."

C. God's Activity is Highlighted

1. WHO has done this? Did any of these worthless idols do it? Did Cyrus do it on his own? NO!
2. God's activity is clear: GOD HANDS NATIONS over to him and subdues kings before him

D. The Fear of the Nations

Isaiah 41:5 The islands have seen it and fear; the ends of the earth tremble.

1. The rolling conquests by each new emperor cause reports to fly
2. The news of Cyrus's conquests come even to the ends of the earth... the distant islands hear about what God is doing through Cyrus

E. They Turn to their Idols for Courage

Isaiah 41:5-7 They approach and come forward; ⁶ each helps the other and says to his brother, "Be strong!" ⁷ The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer spurs on him who strikes the anvil. He says of the welding, "It is good." He nails down the idol so it will not topple.

F. Main Lesson: O Israel, Do You Not See How Worthless Idolatry Is?!!

III. The Lord Defeats Israel's Enemies (vs. 8-16)

A. Clear Contrast: Pagan Nations vs. Israel

1. Cyrus is sweeping across one pagan nation after another
2. Those nations will be trusting in their golden idols which cannot help them at all
3. But Israel has the Sovereign God as their King, Defender, and Savior
4. The covenant with Abraham is the basis of their separate status

Isaiah 41:8-9 "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, ⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

5. God's unconditional election of Israel sets them apart from the pagan nations
Cyrus is going to destroy
6. God could have rejected Israel because of their idols, but in grace He forgave them and will use Cyrus to restore them to the Promised Land

B. "Abraham, My Friend"

1. How amazing is that statement?!!
2. The God of chapter 40, the one who declares that the nations are dust on the scales and a drop in the bucket, actually calls a human being his "friend"
3. Abraham was just a pagan moon-worshiper in Babylon; God called him, transformed him, and built him up by faith
4. Jesus called his disciples "friends"

John 15:13-15 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

5. After His resurrection, Jesus expanded the language... he called them
BROTHERS

C. The End Result of this Covenant: DO NOT FEAR

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

1. How easy it would be for Israel to fear as they hear of the new conqueror Cyrus sweeping in with such power
2. But God commands them not to fear... the same reason he always gives: I AM WITH YOU
3. Just as He said to Moses; just as Jesus would later say to the disciples in the boat... "Fear not! I am with you!!"
4. Christ has promised to strengthen us and help us

D. God's Commitment: To Crush Israel's Enemies by Transforming Israel

Isaiah 41:11-16 "All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. ¹² Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. ¹³ For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. ¹⁴ Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵ "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. ¹⁶ You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

1. God speaks plainly of Israel's enemies: "Those who rage against you..." (vs. 11) He promises they will all perish
2. There will come a time when Israel will search for any enemies at all and find none
 - a. It is difficult to see when these words would be fulfilled in the future days of Israel... Israel would be under Gentile domination from that day on
 - b. I believe the perfect fulfillment of this must be in the salvation that Christ works for us at the cross and the future Kingdom of Heaven in which all enemies will be condemned by God and separated out like chaff from wheat
3. God promises to take Israel by the right hand and help them... they need fear no enemies

4. God acknowledges that Israel is a WORM... and LITTLE...it is not because of Israel's power or population; but because of God's commitment, His covenant with Abraham

Isaiah 41:14 I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your REDEEMER, the Holy One of Israel.

- a. This ultimately MUST refer to the atonement worked by the blood of Jesus Christ

E. Israel Transformed into a Mighty Threshing Sledge

Isaiah 41:15-16 "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. ¹⁶ You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

1. Ultimately and amazingly, this little worm, Israel, will be transformed into an awesome power to level the mountains
2. A "threshing sled" was a wooden platform with sharp stones or metal discs mounted on the underside... it was used in the threshing process to separate the grain from the stalk
3. The mountains represent the overpowering obstacles the "little worm" Israel is facing... those problems, though lofty and massive, will become like chaff swept away before the wind
4. Israel will be left rejoicing in the Lord!!

F. Again: This Language Must Point Us to Christ!!

1. The problems of our sins are mighty and imposing

Puritan: "My sins are as numerous as hairs and as mighty as mountains..."

2. The problem of our enemies are mighty: the world, the flesh and the devil
3. The problem of the Law, which stood opposed to us and was against us
4. The problem of the holiness of God and His terrifying wrath
5. The problem of death and hell
6. In Christ alone are these mighty mountains levelled and we emerge triumphant!
7. This may also refer to the Second Coming of Christ, when the armies of heaven will defeat the antichrist and its terrifying forces

IV. The Lord Transforms Nature and Refreshes His People (vs. 17-20)

Isaiah 41:17-20 "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. ¹⁸ I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. ¹⁹ I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, ²⁰ so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

A. The Poor are Parched... No Water Anywhere

1. The lack of water represents the judgment of God... both physically and spiritually
2. The Promised Land rendered parched like a desert under the judgment of God

Deuteronomy 28:23-24 The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. ²⁴ The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

3. The Promised Land had been "a land flowing with milk and honey," a land which drank in the rain throughout the year and needed no irrigation like Egypt; but when Israel sinned, God began turning the land into a desert

B. The Real "Desert" is Spiritual: Distance from God

Psalms 63:1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

C. God Promises Amazing Refreshment: BOTH Spiritual and Physical

1. "water in the desert" = Spiritual renewal by the Holy Spirit

Isaiah 44:3 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.

2. God renews His people by the work of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit
3. God also promises to restore the cursed earth... made a desert by human sin

D. The "Garden of Eden" Language Means Paradise Has Been Restored

Isaiah 41:19-20 I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, ²⁰ so

that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

1. When the earth has been renewed, when the “**New Heavens and New Earth**” come, we will glorify the work of the Lord in doing all this

V. The Lord Alone Determines and Declares the Future (vs. 21-29)

- A. What’s Amazing about All This: God Raises Up Cyrus to Benefit Worm Israel!!
- B. God’s Control of History is for His Own Glory and the Salvation of His People
- C. Now God Openly Takes on the Idols

Isaiah 41:21-24 "Present your case," says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. ²² "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, ²³ tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. ²⁴ But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.

1. The challenge is this: can your idols do what I can do?
2. God has the power to predict the future... specifically because God has the power to DETERMINE the future

Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

3. Almighty God determined every twist and turn of history; including all the mighty emperors with their impressive conquests, the sparkling cities they built, the monuments they left... how long they ruled for, what scientific advances they sponsored, what effect they had on literature and language, music and culture
4. Everything lay plainly out in the mind of God before one of them came to be
5. Now, He challenges the idols to tell Him what is coming next
6. But the idols are storefronts for demons... and the demons don’t know what his going to happen next
 - a. Idols are demons

1 Corinthians 10:20 the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God

- b. Demons are fallen angels

c. Angels don't know the future

1 Peter 1:12 Even angels long to look into these things.

D. Both Past and Future Are Inexplicable Except by God

1. God challenges the idols to tell what the former things were...
2. Not merely to recount the history of them... that's hard enough to do
 - a. History is quickly forgotten
 - b. And no one really knows for sure all the details
 - c. Military historians speak of the "fog of war"...
 - d. It is very challenging to ascertain all aspects of what happened in the past
 - e. It is even more difficult to discern the PURPOSE behind it all

Isaiah 41:22 Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome.

f. The PAST: Where is it all heading? Why did it happen that way?

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

- g. The future: dark, shrouded in mystery... unknowable except if God reveals it
3. The idols can do NOTHING... they are not gods, they have no knowledge, no power, no energy... they actually have no EXISTENCE
4. So those who choose them and worship them are fools

Isaiah 41:24 But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.

5. But the Lord is the everlasting God... He is the LIVING GOD... He IS history; Those who worship Him will be saved

E. Final Summary

1. God is acting in history to bring about His purposes... including raising up this conqueror (Cyrus the Great) to come from the east and from the north to destroy Babylon

Isaiah 41:25 "I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes-- one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay.

2. God was the only one to foretell these events, because He is the only one who ordained them and would bring them to pass

Isaiah 41:26-28 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. ²⁷ I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. ²⁸ I look but there is no one-- no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them.

3. He did it so that Israel AND all the nations on earth could see the truth of God's word and trust in Him

John 14:29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

VI. Applications

- A. Turn Away from Idols... and Come to Christ [Uniqueness of Christ and the Bible!!]
- B. Stand in Awe at the Sovereign Power of God
 1. God is the ruler of History
 2. The events of History are unfolding exactly according to His plan
 3. God calls Cyrus the Great to be a world conquering emperor 160 years before he is even born!!
 4. God does everything for the praise of His glory... but also for the benefit of his small, weak people—little worm, Israel
- C. Stand in Awe at God's Ability to Predict the Future through the Prophets... [only God can do this!!]
- D. Do Not Fear: God is With You
 1. It's so easy to be anxious about the future!!
 2. God rules over the future with meticulous care
 3. Memorize and meditate on verse 10

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

E. Be Refreshed Spiritually by the Holy Spirit

1. Verses 17-20 highlight the way God will make rivers flow in the desert
2. Isaiah 44:3 identifies this as the work of the Spirit on our hearts
3. Are you weary in your life? Allow the Spirit to refresh you!!