

Study 81: Isaiah, Part 37

Isaiah 44 (Cont.)

12 The blacksmith takes a tool
and works with it in the coals;
he shapes an idol with hammers,
he forges it with the might of his arm.
He gets hungry and loses his strength;
he drinks no water and grows faint.

13 The carpenter measures with a line
and makes an outline with a marker;
he roughs it out with chisels
and marks it with compasses.
He shapes it in human form,
human form in all its glory,
that it may dwell in a shrine.

14 He cut down cedars,
or perhaps took a cypress or oak.
He let it grow among the trees of the forest,
or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow.

15 It is used as fuel for burning;
some of it he takes and warms himself,
he kindles a fire and bakes bread.
But he also fashions a god and worships it;
he makes an idol and bows down to it.

16 Half of the wood he burns in the fire;
over it he prepares his meal,
he roasts his meat and eats his fill.
He also warms himself and says,
“Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.”

17 From the rest he makes a god, his idol;
he bows down to it and worships.
He prays to it and says,
“Save me! You are my god!”

18 They know nothing, they understand nothing;
their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see,
and their minds closed so they cannot understand.

19 No one stops to think,
no one has the knowledge or understanding to say,
“Half of it I used for fuel;
I even baked bread over its coals,
I roasted meat and I ate.
Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left?
Shall I bow down to a block of wood?”

20 Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded heart misleads him;
he cannot save himself, or say,
“Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?”

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.”’”

[This is an amazing prophecy! Isaiah prophesied from approximately **739-690 BC**. The northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 BC, and the southern kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Cyrus took the throne of Babylon in 539 BC, over 150 years after Isaiah prophesied of him *by name!*]