

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 41:1-7, YAHWEH CONFRONTS THE NATIONS

In this chapter of Isaiah, Yahweh assures the Israelites that they need not fear because He is in charge of world affairs. He is using the people and the nations of the world for His purposes just as He is using Israel for His purposes. His purposes for world history will not be thwarted, nor will His plans and purposes for Israel fail to be realized. Those things are inseparable.

“The purpose here is one of motivation. How can a condemned and fallen people ever become the Servant of God in the world? How can they begin to exercise the trust that was taught in chs. 13-39? The answer is unmerited grace: grace to defeat their enemies and grace that declares them not forsaken. Obedience that is motivated by fear is minimal obedience; but obedience that is a response to wholly underserved deliverance is of a sort that does not ask about requirements. It asks only if there is not more that needs doing” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 79].

Most theologians believe verses 1-7 refer to a forensic, or legal, setting and that Cyrus is the one from the east. If Cyrus is in view, which seems to be accurate, he is also serving as a type of another One who will come from the east at the end of the Tribulation (Zech. 14:4). God's power and justice continue to be matters of discussion here. The point is being made that Yahweh alone is God. These verses relate to Isaiah 40 concerning God's power over the nations and His reassurance of Israel. Isaiah 40:31 is related to the renewal of strength with God being the source of strength and not idols or the international mutual aid pacts that are identified in this chapter. Ultimately, we will see that Yahweh is not just the Savior of Israel, He is the Savior of the world. The end times are clearly referred to in these first 20 verses to some extent. Are they referring entirely to the end, or is the prophet relating to short-term and long-term issues? Just as in chapter 40, I am not so sure this isn't entirely an end time focused revelation, but I would not get dogmatic about it either.

Isaiah 41:1 “Coastlands [אֵי], listen [תִּשְׁמַעוּ] to Me in silence, And let the peoples [לְאֻמִּים] gain new [יִתְקַיְּמוּ] strength; Let them come [יָבִיאוּ] forward, then let them speak [יְדַבְּרוּ]; Let us come [קָרְבוּ] together [יִתְקַדְּמוּ] for judgment [מִשְׁפָּט].”

There is no judicial proceeding identified here; instead, God has summoned the nations to be silent before Him. Israel is a spectator for this great drama, and God is reassuring them that He will protect them. “[T]he purpose of this legal language was to convince the people of Judah (not the distant nations) that they could trust God to strengthen and care for them. This goal was accomplished by having God testify about his power before the nations. This imaginary process could present essential evidence that should persuade the Hebrew audience to accept the idea that God is more powerful than the nations and their gods. The language illustrates that one can logically test the validity of the claims made by God and the claims of the distant peoples and their gods” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 124].

Coastland, אִי, means an island or a coastland which is a land in a coastal area. Here, it is used in an idiomatic way to refer to the nations of the world, and not just to the nations of the Mediterranean Sea. In this verse, this word is also translated as “islands,” “distant lands,” or “lands beyond the sea.” Motyer calls this “shorthand for the far reaches of earth” [Alec J. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 251].

Listen, שָׁקֵט, does not mean to listen; it means to be silent, speechless, or dumb. This would be better translated “Keep silent towards Me” (YLT), “Keep silence before Me” (NKJV, KJV, ASV), or “Be silent before me” (ISV, HCSB). Unger writes that, “Keep silence has the pregnant sense of ‘listen to Me in silence’” [Merrill F. Unger, “Isaiah” in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1251]. While “listen” may be understood, I’m only pointing out the text does not literally say that, and the text is quite understandable as written in the Hebrew. “Pregnant” as used here by Unger means “full of meaning; significant or suggestive” [s.v. “pregnant,” *The Oxford American College Dictionary*]. There is also the element present in this word of being silent in the presence of the awesome holiness and majesty of the Creator God who is doing the speaking. The word here is in the form of an imperative verb, which is a command. The verb form also indicates that God is causing them to be silent before Him. It is not just about people listening to God; it is about them being silent and speechless in His awesome presence. It is also about capturing the people’s attention and preparing them to hear the Word of God.

People, לְאֻמִּים, means people or nation. The text is plural making it a reference to all people of all nations. The thrust of the term indicates “all people in their definable groups. This clearly suggests the unity and the diversity of humanity” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “לְאֻמִּים,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 466].

The concept of strength here is addressed to the people and the nations. This is also akin to the command Yahweh gave to Job:

Job 38:3³ “Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

They needed strength in order to enter into this debate with God, and it makes sense in terms of the frightened reaction of the people and the nations as God speaks to them. Keil and Delitzsch believe the concept of strengthening the nations removes an excuse they might employ, i.e., weakness, once they face defeat at the hands of God [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 7, Isaiah, 7:403*]. Young believes the command to strengthen is a reference to the strength they will need to contend with God [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:72].

There is no condemnation of the nations in this verse. They are being summoned to be told they cannot fight against God and win. “*Renew their strength*: the expression is the same as in 40:31, ‘put on new strength’. There it was an invitation to return to a position of undoubting faith and to experience the renewal that faith brings; here it implies that the same way of renewal is open to the whole world: they too are invited to put their trust in the God of Israel and find new strength” [Alec J. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 251-252].

No one is really sure why the peoples were commanded to put on new strength. Keil and Delitzsch could be correct, Young could be correct, and Motyer reaches a very reasonable conclusion that I tend to favor. Pagan nations have no way to strengthen themselves serving idols, but they can turn to the Lord and receive the strength that only He can provide.

Three requests or commands are issued to the people and the nations here. These are imperative verbs (Jussive) that are not quite so strong as the regular Hebrew imperative verb, and they express a wish, a request, or a command.

New, הִלַּךְ, means to change or to renew. Most English translations use “renew” in this verse rather than “gain new” as our NASB translation has it. The peoples would renew their strength by listening to God.

Come, קָרַב, means to draw near, to approach, to step forward referring to moving towards or near.

Speak, דַּבֵּר, means to speak, to talk together, and to express in speech.

The peoples were finally called to come together in order to hear God's righteous decision on the matter: however, there is one line of thought that suggests the word for judgment is actually referring to a debate rather than to a decision. That leaves the door open for a decision after a debate or an argument on the merits of the case. There is a picture of unity among the peoples in this verse, which world history reveals to be true, but in an ungodly way.

Come, קָרַב, means to come near, to approach, or to get closer.

Together, יַחְדָּו, means together or those joined together.

Judgment, מִשְׁפָּט, means judgment, decision, or dispute referring to a determination of right and wrong on legal matters. The text literally reads, “together for the judgment draw near.” The NET Bible translates the word as “debate.” They base that on the context. “The Hebrew term מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*) could be translated ‘judgment,’ but here it seems to refer to the dispute or debate between the Lord and the nations” [NET Bible, 2nd ed., s.v. “Isaiah 41:1,” 1286 n. f]. The TANAKH supports this position by translating the word as “argument.” In this context, argument does not refer to an angry exchange, but to “a reason or a set of reasons given with the aim of persuading others that an action or idea is right or wrong” [*The Oxford American College Dictionary*]. This supports the concept of a debate. In this context, I believe there is merit to translating the word as “debate” or “argument.” The context has a progression: listen to God, be strengthened, come forward, speak, and then we will come together for debate with the implication that a decision will then be made. The thought is that the nations should respond to reason and come to the proper conclusion.

Most theologians believe that verse 2 is a reference to the Persian King Cyrus. Some rabbis and theologians believe it is a reference to Abraham, who was called out of the east in righteousness. Most believe it is a reference to Cyrus because he is identified in chapter

44-45, and he allowed the Israelites to be restored to their land. However, the same argument, in terms of scriptural proximity, could be made for Abraham since he is mentioned in Isaiah 41:8. Jerome thought it was a reference to Christ.

The fact is this person is not identified and no one really knows the identity of the referent. "Unfortunately, most commentaries place much more emphasis on a specific person, often a political conqueror God stirred up in the East. Calvin and Luther thought this referred to God's call of righteous Abraham from the east, others thought this refers to the righteous conquering Messiah, but most commentators hypothesize a reference to the Persian King Cyrus because his quick military victories in 45:1-3 match what is said in 41:2-3. Nevertheless, with such limited general information, these characteristics could be applied to almost any major conqueror" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 129, n. 156]. Due to the reference to what seems to be the same king in verse 25, Cyrus may be the conqueror that is the subject of these verses.

Isaiah 41:2-3 ²"Who has aroused [עוּר] one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness [צִדְקָה] to His feet? He delivers [נָתַן] up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow. ³"He pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.

The emphasis in these verses is on God; it is not on the person God calls.

Ultimately, if this not a direct reference to the Messiah, this person is a type of the Messiah, and this Scripture relating to Israel's deliverance and security can only be completely fulfilled in Him. "The full sense of the passage, moreover, will be realized only in the Messiah, who will be the great Conqueror of the nations 'in righteousness'" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1252]. "Jesus Christ will be the ultimate fulfillment when He returns to the earth east of Jerusalem (on the Mount of Olives) and overcomes His enemies, who will have assembled in Palestine" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 113].

God is the one who has aroused this king from the east. Aroused, עוּר, means to be awake, to stir, to agitate, or to disturb. The sense is to cause to be agitated, excited, or roused. "Stirred [aroused]: literally 'roused' as if from sleep, 'stirred' to activity, not motivating someone already on the move but giving the initial impulse to act" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 252]. The verb form used here indicates that God causes this king to arise and do His will. It is God who will deliver up nations and subdue kings before him. We know that God raises up peoples, nations, and kings to do His will, and we know that He can take peoples, nations, and kings down according to His will. He will use unbelievers as well as believers to further His program. This is nothing new. This king is going to play a role in restoring the Israelites, but in the end, this is a mission that only the Messiah King will be able to fully, once for all time, accomplish.

The context here relates to the future. The judgment of verse 1 has not yet been revealed. The person aroused from the east has yet to arise whether it is Cyrus or the Messiah or

both. Is this person the Messiah or is it a type of the Messiah or is it a prophecy of both in the near-term and the long-term sense?

Righteousness, *קִדְּוָה*, means accuracy, straightness, rightness, righteousness, or what is right and just. The sense of this word refers to adherence to what is required according to a standard. This word "refers to Cyrus not so much in his own equity, but because he consummated God's righteous purpose in restoring His people from captivity" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1252]. It refers to the pursuit of a righteous purpose. We generally don't consider pagan kings to possess a biblical standard of righteousness; therefore, the righteousness must be the righteousness of God that is being served by one who is inherently unrighteous. "The word is not then to be restricted to the sense of a condition of righteousness, but rather includes all God's providential dealings in the carrying out of His righteous purposes. If the righteous purposes of salvation [of Israel] are to be accomplished, they must be carried out by one whom God raises up, and the carrying out of these purposes is the work of righteousness. It is, says Alexander, 'the righteousness of God as manifested in his providence, his dealings with his people and their enemies'" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:73]. The righteousness of this person, or his lack of righteousness, is not the issue; the righteousness of God is the issue.

Some theologians believe Cyrus was not an oppressive pagan king, but rather a king who was, in fact, a righteous king who obediently carried out God's will. "Who is this mighty man from the east? Says Isaiah. Is he simply another wicked tyrant like Sargon or Sennacherib whom God will use? No, says the prophet. This man's purposes are in accord with God's purposes. He bows at the foot of righteousness (i.e., God), who has called him. Thus far more than simple victory characterizes Cyrus. He is obedient to right, and this makes him the deliverer" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 82]. The truth may lie between those two extremes. Cyrus may have been a more benevolent king than the majority of the Middle East kings of that time were, or not, but he was still a dictatorial, pagan king who ruled with an iron hand. In an area of the world where cruelty and death were dealt widespread, it is naïve to think that Cyrus was a righteous believer in Yahweh and acted accordingly.

The Scriptures do indicate that God did allow Cyrus to conquer a number of nations and build the Medo-Persian Empire.

2 Chronicles 36:22–23 ²²Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah—the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, ²³"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!'" (cf. Ezra 1:1-2).

We have to temper the idea that Cyrus was a righteous believer in Yahweh, however, with the knowledge that Cyrus also gave his pagan god Marduk credit for his successful empire building excursions. "Marduk ... sought a righteous prince, after his own heart,

whom he took by the hand, Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called by name, to lordship over the whole world he appointed him ... to his city Babylon he caused him to go ... his numerous troops in number unknown, like the water of a river, marched armed at his side. Without battle and conflict he permitted him to enter Babylon. He spared his city Babylon a calamity. Nabunaid, the king, who did not fear him, he delivered into his hand" [quoted in Merrill F. Unger, s.v. "Cyrus," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 269-270].

I have concluded that Cyrus gave Yahweh His due, but it seems likely to me that he considered Yahweh to be another god alongside his god, Marduk. I don't think that based on this Scripture in Isaiah that he was a righteous king in terms of what the Bible would consider to be a righteous king.

The sentence about calling righteousness to his feet is a bit difficult. The text literally reads, "to his foot;" not feet; it is not plural. It is "a regular idiom meaning 'to follow him'" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 252]. In other words, God's call to this person is causing him to follow God and do His righteous work.

God delivers nations into the hand of this person. Delivers, נָתַן, means to give or to cause to receive referring to transferring possession of something concrete or abstract to somebody. To give means to place an object or an idea in the possession or control of another, implying value of the object, as well as purpose for the exchange.

Why would God deliver nations into the hand of this person that do not impact whether or not the Israelites can be restored to the land? There is a difference between God allowing something to happen according to the dictates of the fallen world, and God directing something specific to happen. We do not know the answer to why he will allow this person, Cyrus, to conquer nations, plural, if, in fact, that person is the subject of this verse, but we do know that when the Messiah King returns, He will conquer not just nations, but the world and its nations in total. That will be the final fulfillment of prophecy. In the meantime, we do know that international relations are being directed by God to fulfill His plan for history that will culminate in the Messianic Kingdom. I think it goes too far to say that God micromanages everything that happens—although He could do that if He desired to do so—but it is correct to say that He uses everything that happens to move history towards His desired ends.

Motyer discussed this issue. "In a word, Isaiah raises the whole problem of the *violence* of history: why did it start in the first place? Why is one person allowed to rise to such power? Why is such violence permitted to succeed? Why is it all such a mess? The prophet insists that in every movement of world affairs, the Lord initiates, purposes and achieves, and that all is in accordance with a purpose of *righteousness*. He does not say that we can ever see that it is so; he teaches that it is" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 252]. Part of the answer to all that is simply found in the progress of history according to the dictates of a broken, sinful, fallen world populated by people who possess a sin nature. God does not micromanage history, people and nations do operate with free will, yet He uses everything that happens towards the furtherance of His will for history. However, there are times when He explicitly directs people and nations to do His will, and that seems to be particularly pertinent as it pertains to His program for Israel. As Motyer noted, we don't necessarily physically see that, but we know it is happening.

This warrior will have the God-given ability to absolutely destroy any and all that he marches against. He will be able to pulverize them much as masonry is ground into dust or treat them as chaff that is easily blown away into nothingness by the wind. No one will be able to resist the sword and the bow wielded by this person. No one will be a threat to him, and he will conquer nations he has never before visited. The reference to "the road with his feet he does not come" is possibly an indication of the speed with which he is able to conquer nations. This concept was applied to Alexander the Great in Daniel 8:5 where he was said to be represented by a goat "... coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground ..."

God specifically stated that He was the One doing the things revealed in these verses. This is divine notice to people that pagan gods can do nothing; Yahweh is the only true God, and He alone is the One who directs history.

Isaiah 41:4 "Who has performed [פָּעַל] and accomplished [עָשָׂה] it, Calling forth [קָרָא] the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

This verse begins with another rhetorical question. The only possible answer is God, and He provides that answer.

Performed, פָּעַל, means to do, to make, to perform, or to accomplish referring to carrying out or performing an action or a course of action.

Accomplished, עָשָׂה, means to do, to make, to produce by labor, or to accomplish or complete, referring to performing or carrying out an action or a course of action.

I like the NASB translation here; performance is the primary element of the first word in this context, and accomplishment characterizes the second word very well. These words refer to the One who originates the blueprint for world history and for Israel, and who ensures the progress and the ultimate completion of His plans. These two verbs are in the perfect tense representing completed action, but it is action that is future. Because God is doing it, it is certain to come to pass even though it has yet to occur from the prophet's viewpoint. This is another example of what I have called the prophetic perfect. Whether this is a prophecy of Cyrus releasing the Israelites from captivity to return to Jerusalem, or to the distant future when the Israelites will finally enter the Messianic Kingdom, or both, the truth is that this is God's work; He performs it, and He accomplishes it.

Calling, קָרָא, means to call, to proclaim, to summon, or to name referring to summoning or calling in an official manner.

Yahweh is the One who created the generations of people who have existed, who exist at the time, and who will exist in the future, and who controls their destiny. God formed the nations at Babel (Gen. 11:8), but He formed the people from the beginning. It is fair to say that geographical regions were settled early on, such as the land of Nod, east of Eden (Gen. 4:16), but nations with recognized national boundaries were a creation of God.

Notice the two “I am” identifiers used here which any Israelite would have recognized as a reference to Yahweh from the burning bush identification Yahweh revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14. In order to leave no doubt, He also specifically identified Himself as Yahweh.

The personal pronoun “I” begins the sentence which, in Hebrew, emphatically indicates that He is to be identified with the proper noun Yahweh that follows. “It is the full meaning of the name Jehovah which is unfolded here; for God is called Jehovah as the absolute I, the absolutely free Being, pervading all history, and yet above all history, as He who is Lord of His own absolute being, in revealing which he is purely self-determined; in a word, as the unconditionally free and unchangeably eternal personality” [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:405].

By saying He is the first, God is not saying that there was a time He did not exist and then came into being. This is not about God's essence; it is about His governance of His creation. “The meaning is not that God is the first to come into existence or that He is the first one of those beings that have existed. Such a thought is counter to all that the Bible teaches. Rather, we must understand the language in reference to the idols and gods that are being condemned. God is the first in that He antedates all these; inasmuch as He is the director of human history. He antedates all history. God, therefore, is the first in the sense that before all human history began to run its course, He IS. The language stresses His independence of human history and movements. He is above history; He is above His creation” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:77].

Last probably refers to an end of history as we know it. Yahweh existed before mankind came into being, and He will continue to exist after mankind passes from the scene, if that were to occur. Of course, we know that cannot happen; the segment of mankind that is composed of believers will always exist in His presence.

“Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the one God who has the status, the longevity, and the past performance to support the suppositions made in 41:2-4a. God's past deeds leave a record that is irrefutable. This defense of God's divine character should have strengthened the confidence of the Hebrew audience that was listening to the prophet. They need not fear other nations or their gods” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 130].

The reaction of the peoples to God's pronouncement is one of fear—which it should be absent any obedience to His words. The problem for the Gentile world is that the vast majority of Gentiles not only do not want to embrace the remedy for their fear, which is grace through faith, but they knowingly, willingly reject it.

Isaiah 41:5–6 ⁵The coastlands [אֲרָ] have seen and are afraid [יָרָא]; The ends [קְצֵה] of the earth tremble [תָּרַד]; They have drawn near and have come. ⁶Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, “Be strong [תִּזְקַק]!”

Coastlands, אֲרָ, means an island or a coastland which is a land in a coastal area; it is the same word used in verse 1 to refer to all the nations of the world and not just to the nations

in the immediate vicinity of the Mediterranean Sea. The use of this word, coupled with the reference to the “ends of the earth,” reinforces the worldwide, all nations, all peoples context of these verses. End, קֵצָה, means the end, limit, edge, outskirts, extremity, and outer fringe which refers to the distant end of a space or of a defined area. When coupled with earth, אֶרֶץ, the meaning clearly refers to the entire planet. The people of the world stand in fear of the Creator God, the One who is the first and the last.

Afraid, יָרָא, means to fear, to be frightened, and to be afraid relating to a state of feeling great distress and deep concern over pain or unfavorable circumstance. This is not a reference to the awesome, reverent fear of God that we should have; it is a reference to fright in the face of an almighty God who has the power to remove one's life simply by speaking the Word to do so. This kind of fear is a legitimate fear of God when one is on the unbelieving side of humanity. It is probably also a legitimate emotion on the part of a rebellious believer too. Although the goal is restoration, temporal, divine discipline is something to fear when God imposes it.

Tremble, תָּרַד, means to tremble, to be terrified, or to be frightened. As a physical phenomenon it refers to moving or jerking quickly and involuntarily up and down or sideways, often as a sign of fear or anguish in people. We generally don't think of trembling as something quite that overt a physical manifestation, but we do relate it to involuntarily shaking as a result of being cold or frightened. Fright, probably even terror, is the obvious context here.

“The first verb [“seen”] is perfect, but is a prediction of what will occur in the future; the second verb is future [“tremble”], and strengthens the idea of futurity expressed by the first. ‘The isles will see,’ we may render, ‘and as a result of having seen, will be in fear’ [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 78].

This fear causes the peoples to come together. Human beings always feel better about things when they experience them as a group that offers support and encouragement—no matter how futile it may be and how silly it can look in the face of the factual basis for their fear. They all come together encouraging and telling one another that everything is going to be fine. Strong, תָּוַק, means to be or to become strong or powerful beyond the average or expected; whether physically or in one's constitution. They are trying to put on a brave front, to suck it up, and tough it out. That seems to be a bit futile when dealing with an omnipotent Being.

Instead of appropriately responding to the fear of God by repenting and believing, the people resort to their idols which obviously cannot solve the problem for them. Isaiah spends a lot of time condemning idolatry and the futility of practicing it in this book.

Isaiah 41:7 ⁷So the craftsman encourages the smelter, *And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, “It is good”;* And he fastens it with nails, *So that it will not totter.*

Most theologians believe the fear expressed here is the result of the depredations of King Cyrus. That is, in my mind, suspect for at least two reasons. One, these three verses follow immediately after God's declaration that He is the first and the last, the eternal One. It

therefore seems reasonable to believe that God is the source of the peoples' fear. "They fear not so much because of the approach of Cyrus as because of the God who placed him upon the stage of history. Here is a God unlike the idols of the heathen, a God who can truly move the course of nations" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 78]. Second, Cyrus did not cause fear and trembling throughout the entire world, and the population of the world will be in fear because of what they have seen the Lord do among the nations of the world. That worldwide fear will happen during the Tribulation when God is exercising His wrath on the world, but it could not have happened when Cyrus was conquering nations in the Middle East. Furthermore, in verses 10-12, God counsels the Israelites to have no fear for He is with them. Therefore, I would not disavow any end times meaning here.

We do know that during the Tribulation, the people of the world will not repent of their idol worship.

Revelation 9:20 ²⁰The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

If the god they fashion with their own hands is so good, why do they have to fasten it upright with nails in order to keep it from tipping over. Yahweh cannot be confined to one place; He is omnipresent. He needs no help to exist. Except as they provide cover for demonic beings, these idols are nothing.

There is a very interesting train of thought in these final three verses. "The sequence of thought here is typical: universal nervousness drives mankind into collective security and a brotherhood of fear. Out of this emerges the need to have a 'spiritual' power on their side but the product cannot exceed its source: human skill, human approval, human stability. Humankind's 'gods' are only projections of humankind's weaknesses" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 253].