

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

**In preparation for Sunday, May 7, 2023**

**Passage: Isaiah 41:21-29**

Memory Passage: Isaiah 41:25-27

### **DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Is. 41:21-29.** The futility of idols, especially compared to the one true God, is a recurring theme in chapters 40-48. Why does Yahweh identify Himself as both “Yahweh” and “King of Jacob” (v. 21)?

(b) What is the first “case/proof” the nations are to produce (v. 22)? The claim must be more than merely saying what has happened in the past, so be specific about what the nations are being asked to produce.

(c) Why will their failure to produce evidence of the purposes and goals of past events separate the pagan gods from Yahweh (compare, for example, Isaiah 42:9)?

### **DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Is. 41:21-29.** What is the second “case/proof” the nations are asked to produce (v. 23a)?

(b) What is the third “case/proof” the nations are asked to produce (v. 23b)?

(c) “Do good, or do harm” is a way of saying, “Just do something! Anything!” Why would doing this allow everyone to be “dismayed and terrified?”

(d) What is Yahweh’s verdict on the nations’ gods and anyone who chooses to serve them (v. 24)?

### **DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Is. 41:21-29.** If Isaiah 41:2-3 refers to Cyrus, who does Yahweh “stir up” in v. 25?

(b) Yahweh presents His own “case/proofs” in vs. 25-29. What will Cyrus, the one He “stirred up,” accomplish (v. 25b)?

(c) Why does Yahweh say Cyrus comes from both the “north” and “from the rising of the sun” (i.e., the east) (cf. 41:2-3)?

(d) When Yahweh says Cyrus will “call upon my name,” does this mean he is one of His followers, and if not, what does it mean (see 45:5; Ezra 1:1-4)?

### **DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Is. 41:21-29.** How does Yahweh challenge the nations and their gods (v. 26)?

(b) Remembering that the Babylonian exiles are in mind, what does God say about Himself (v. 27) and all other gods (v. 28)?

(c) What will be His evidence for these claims (cf. v 25)?

(d) What verdict will Yahweh pronounce on the nations' gods when Cyrus appears (v. 29)?

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Ezek. 14:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:1-14, & 1 John 5:21.** Though we are not tempted to submit ourselves to the Babylonian gods Yahweh challenges in Is. 41:21-29, we are regularly tempted toward idolatry. As you read these passages, note what they teach you about idolatry and the heart, what happens in our hearts as we embrace something other than Christ for our joy and sustenance, and what God still thinks of idolatry.

(b) In what ways are you tempted to “take into your heart” (Ezek. 14:3-4) anything other than Christ? What lies are you accepting to lead you to idolize these things/people/ideas/desires? In what ways have these things/people/ideas/desires become “stumbling blocks of iniquity” (Ezek. 14:4) and led to grumbling, anxiety, anger, poor decision-making, sexual immorality, fear, lack of love for others, or any other sinful behavior?

(c) What should you do in response to these idolatrous activities? How will you handle temptations toward idolatry in the future before they become sin (James 1:14-17)?

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*Idols Are Nothing*