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Sermon Notes

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## **The True God Ridicules Idolaters and Raises Up Cyrus**

**Isaiah 44:1-28**

There are many different kinds of laughter... there is the laughter of joy at the birth of a healthy new baby; the laughter of children playing a fun game; the laughter that comes when a funny person tells a humorous story or joke; the laughter of amazement when we see a miracle or something that brings us surprising joy...or the laughter of peace and celebration when we finally make it to the New Jerusalem and all our troubles are behind us:

*Psalm 126:1-2 When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. <sup>2</sup> Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.*

*Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.*

But in the Bible, the laughter of God is always reserved for his arrogant foes who think they can take on this awesome God and defeat him!

*Psalm 2:2-5 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. <sup>3</sup> "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." <sup>4</sup> The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. <sup>5</sup> Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath*

*Psalm 37:12-13 The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; <sup>13</sup> but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming.*

*Psalm 59:8 But you, O LORD, laugh at them; you scoff at all those nations.*

In Isaiah 44. We hear God's mocking laughter at those who make idols out of a block of wood...

It is biting satire, depicting a man searching through the forest for the ideal piece of wood... he finds it, cuts it in half and uses half of it to cook his

**dinner, and the other half to make an idol which he bows down and worships**

**God's laughter is meant to jar idolaters out of their insane foolishness so they can bow down to the living God...**

### I. God Promises to Pour Out His Spirit and Create His Children (vs. 1-5)

Immediate context: God is able to rebuild the depleted nation of the Jews... many died at the time of the exile to Babylon, by the sword or famine or plague

Just a small number, a tiny remnant, God preserved and allowed to go into exile; the rest were slaughtered

The concern: how can God rebuild the nation after the Exile? Where will all the children come from?

Answer: God is able to raise up from nothing a new nation; more than that, He is able to give them strength to flourish

HOW? By the power of his Holy Spirit!

But that is only the immediate context

The larger picture: God is able to bring to life people dead in their transgressions and sins... to bring them to Christ... to make them children of God... again we may ask, "HOW?" The answer comes from this section of the chapter: by God's Spirit

#### A. The Lord Softly Calls Jacob to Listen (vs. 1-2)

***Isaiah 44:1-2 "But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the LORD says-- he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.***

1. Faith comes by hearing; so in order to rescue his people's hearts from idolatry, he must speak his words into their hearts
2. God summons His people by multiple names: Jacob, my servant, Israel, Jeshurun ("my righteous one")
3. He reminds them TWICE that he has chosen them
4. Beyond that, he formed them in the womb... that is true of every human baby that was ever born... but God's children especially should be mindful of it
5. He also promises to HELP them in their trials

B. The Lord Promises to Pour Out His Spirit on the Dusty Ground (vs. 3)

***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.***

1. This language God uses again and again in this section: streams of water in a dry and thirsty land
2. Here in verse 3, in Hebrew parallelism, we are openly told what this means: it is not so much a physical promise of water in the desert, although it certainly does mean that ultimately: God is able to take this cursed earth and make it bud and flourish
3. But what is really going on is the POURING OUT OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT on the hearts of his children
4. It is amazing how often God uses liquid imagery for the working of the Holy Spirit: God pours out His Spirit like water, like rain, like a river
5. This is ultimately fulfilled in the New Covenant gift of the outpoured and indwelling Holy Spirit:

***Acts 2:17-21 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'***

C. The Result: God Raises Up His Children Out of the Dust (vs. 4-5)

***Isa 44:4-5 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. One will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel.***

1. Here the children of Israel are likened to grass springing up in a meadow, poplar trees by a flowing stream
2. Remember how God made Adam from the DUST OF THE EARTH
3. Remember what John the Baptist said to Pharisees and Sadducees who were so proud of being Jews

***Matthew 3:9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.***

4. This refers not merely to biological reproduction of Jewish babies while their parents were in exile in Babylon, or in the decades that followed; more significantly it refers to this:

***John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive [Christ], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.***

5. This verse refers to the vast growth of the family of God by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit!!
6. And the blessings of a NEW NATURE by the power of the Holy Spirit:

***Ezekiel 36:26-28 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances. Then you will live in the land that I gave your fathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God."***

7. Verse 5: The result of this will be Gentiles who will seek to outdo each other in expressing their loyalty to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

***One will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel.***

## II. God Alone Can Explain the Past and Predict the Future (vs. 6-8)

### A. The Lord Alone is the First and the Last (vs. 6)

***Isa 44:6 "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.***

1. Many titles for God: King, Redeemer, Lord Almighty...
2. A powerful exclusive claim: Only God controls the flow of history... he is the FIRST and the LAST... there is no other God

### B. No One is Like God (vs. 6-7)

***Isaiah 44:6-7 "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out***

***before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come.***

1. You cannot compare ANYONE or ANY GOD to this true God... no one is like Him; the gap between God the Creator and all the Creation is INFINITE!!
2. Here God again challenges the idols of their hearts and minds... another TRIAL, or a TEST: whoever thinks he is LIKE ME, let him lay out BOTH past and future
3. First, the past: what has happened since I established my ancient people
4. He challenges the idols to recount in careful order (the Hebrew verb means to lay out in careful rows or stacks) what has happened from the time that he established “an ancient people”
5. History is extremely difficult to recount... people may think they know what happened, but they have only part of the story and their perspective is flawed
6. Historians know how difficult it can be to get an accurate account of what really happened in some great battle; the FOG OF WAR makes it very uncertain who did what when
7. The idols cannot recount all the steps that have gone into shaping and molding the people of God since God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees
8. But then God goes beyond the past to the FUTURE:

C. God’s Challenge to the Idols: Explain the Past and Predict the Future (vs. 7)

***Isaiah 44:7 Who, like me, can announce the future? Let him say so and make a case before me, since I have established an ancient people. Let these gods declare the coming things, and what will take place.***

1. We have already noted that the ability to predict the future belongs to God and God alone!
2. So when God challenges the idols to do this, he knows they cannot!

D. We Are Witnesses: God Has Predicted the Future (vs. 8)

***Isaiah 44:8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."***

James 4:14 says “You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring.” But in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, God stunningly names Cyrus as the man who will set his exiles free,

rebuild the towns of Judah, rebuild Jerusalem, and lay the foundation of the new temple. This is mind boggling, because Cyrus would not be born until sometime between 600 and 580 B.C., at least a century later! Did his parents really have free will in naming their son? Did they get a sudden prompting from a “still small voice” that Cyrus would be a good name? As Proverbs 16:1 says, “The reflections of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.” God named that baby, and then raised him up to astonishing power, as we shall see in the next chapter.

But God alone can do this. We are locked in time, unable to know for certain if we will even be alive tomorrow. Events of history continually stun us. But nothing stuns God! So we should not fear anything (vs. 8), because God has predicted everything we need to know about the future, and it will certainly come to pass. The Jews of Isaiah’s day could already witness to many fulfilled prophecies (like the slavery of Abraham’s descendants for 400 years in Genesis 15:13). We 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians are God’s witnesses to even more: like the Cyrus predictions of these verses, and even more significantly, the prediction of the substitutionary death of Christ in Isaiah 53). There is no other Rock than this God!

### III. God Ridicules Idol-Makers (vs. 9-20)

#### A. Idol-Makers and Idol-Worshippers Will Be Shamed (vs. 9-11)

***Isaiah 44:9-11 All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing? He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and infamy.***

1. God highlights the utter WORTHLESSNESS of BOTH idols and idolaters
2. A basic principle: you become like what you worship
3. Old saying: imitation is the sincerest form of flattery;
4. More profound is WORSHIP: what we passionately worship we eventually imitate in the extreme, we imitate

5. Christians are being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29)... gradually made more and more like Christ
6. But idolaters gradually become more and more worthless as they worship worthless idols
7. God says they are BLIND like the idols themselves
8. He also says they can PROFIT HIM NOTHING... the idol can do nothing to help those who worship it
9. The end result: WRATH on the Day of Judgment... they will be ASHAMED of what they have worshiped and terrified by the wrath of God

#### B. God Ridicules Idol-Makers (vs. 12-17)

***Isaiah 44:12-17 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. 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 the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. 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. It is man's 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. 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." 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."***

1. In verses 12-17, God escorts us into the workshop of an idol-maker. The first idol he makes is constructed of iron, the second of wood. But it doesn't matter what the material, the process itself is ridiculous. The ironworker has to labor over hot coals to make his metal god. Sweat pours from his face and, if he forgets to drink water or eat, he grows steadily weaker. How different is our God, who as the Creator of the ends of the earth never grows faint or weary (Isaiah 40:28). Nothing God does ever wears him out. God is a consuming fire that can light limitless logs without diminishing his strength. But this ironworker sits at the end of a hard day of heating iron to a glowing yellow and pounding it on an anvil. He mops his brow and feels satisfied. He has made a god worthy of worship!
2. So also the carpenter does the same work, but in a different medium. He measures with a line and marks it out with a compass. He shapes it with a chisel. Like the famous sculptor once said when asked how he made a magnificent statue of a horse: "I choose a block of marble, then cut away

everything that doesn't look like a horse." So it is with the idol-maker, and herein is the offense: he has an idea of the god in his mind first (he conceptualizes a god by what he sees with his eyes), then shapes the wood accordingly, cutting away everything that doesn't look like the god. But we must see the arrogance in this, the damnable hubris. We the created have turned unfulfilled away from our glorious Creator, and take his place, shaping a god out of our own imaginations. So the woodworker proceeds, shaping the idol in the form of human likeness. Frankly, all idolatry in the end is just self-worship. So the idol-makers shapes a man to worship.

3. The satire goes beyond this, for the idol-maker goes out into the forest to cut down cedars, cypress, or perhaps an oak. The harder the wood, the more money he'll charge when he sells it. In order to have a lasting supply, he plants a grove of trees (and note that the rain made it grow! God's activity cannot be avoided.) He chops down a likely tree for the idol, but he doesn't need the whole piece. So he cuts it in half; half he uses for a fire on which he can make his dinner—roasting his meat, which he eats and is satisfied. But the other half he uses to make a god, before which he bows down and says, "Save me, for you are my god." God is very detailed in describing the process, slowing down and repeating it: "half for the fire, which he sees and enjoys; half for a god, which he bows down and trusts." Absolutely ridiculous! Imagine if someone inadvertently threw the "god" in the fire when cleaning up the next morning; he would cry "Blasphemy!" and be enraged. What he is really worshiping is his own artistry, his own craftsmanship, his own idea of an invisible god. He controls the god because he shaped it.

#### C. God Exposes the Mindlessness of Idolatry (vs. 18-20)

***Isaiah 44:18-20 They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. 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?" He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"***

1. God zeroes in on the tragic MINDLESSNESS of idolatry... how foolish it is
2. Again, we become like what we worship

***Psalm 115:4-8 Their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. <sup>5</sup> They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. <sup>6</sup> They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. <sup>7</sup> They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throats. <sup>8</sup> Those who make them are just like them, as are all who trust in them.***



3. Here, God says the idolater becomes as mindless as the idol he made: wooden-headed, blind, dead, motionless... unable to discern the truth
4. He should STOP and THINK about all this! How can it be that HALF OF IT I used to cook my dinner; HALF OF IT I now worship
5. He should understand that the idol he has in his RIGHT HAND is a lie
6. It cannot save him; and he cannot save himself from his idolatry!

#### IV. God Has Swept Away Our Sins Like a Mist, So Rejoice! (vs. 21-23)

##### A. God Calls Israel to Remember (vs. 21)

***Isaiah 44:21 "Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you.***

1. God calls through all of this to Israel to REMEMBER the true and living God; and to REMEMBER the lessons they've already had many times about the futility of idolatry
2. All of this was written decades before the idolatry under Manasseh (Hezekiah's son) would necessitate their exile to Babylon
3. God has called them to remember, specifically because he has promised he would NEVER FORGET his people!

##### B. God Sweeps Away Our Sins Like a Mist (vs. 22)

***Isaiah 44:22 I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."***

1. What an incredibly gracious God we serve
2. God is willing to forgive amazingly heinous sins by His people... to sweep those sins away like the morning mist, like they never happened

***Micah 7:19 you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.***

***Psalms 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.***

3. This can only be done through the redemption worked by Jesus Christ... by His blood atonement!

***Romans 3:23-25 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.***

4. God has promised to sweep all our offenses away by the cleansing blood of Christ
5. On the basis of this, he calls on his people to RETURN TO HIM
6. The Jews after the Exile would heed this call and return to Jerusalem to resume their religious life in the Old Covenant
7. We are called on again and again to return to God after we've sinned

C. All Creation Rejoices in the Redemption of God's Children (vs. 23)

***Isaiah 44:23 Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O 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.***

1. The effects of God's amazing redemption go as far as the physical creation as well
2. God calls on the earth beneath our feet to shout and the mountains and trees to break forth into song
3. Remember the strong link between human sin and the cursing of the earth:

***Genesis 3:17-18 "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you***

***Romans 8:19-22 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.***

4. In Christ the curse on the earth will ultimately be removed
5. The future world, the New Heavens and New Earth will be perfectly blessed, free forever from the effects of Adam's sin

V. God Raises Up Cyrus to Rebuild Jerusalem (vs. 24-28)

A. God Alone Created All Things (vs. 24)

***Isaiah 44:24 "This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,***

1. Again, God identifies himself as Redeemer AND Creator

2. He stresses plainly that he ALONE made all things
3. Again, this is plain evidence when combined with the New Testament of the deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity

***Hebrews 1:2 by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.***

***Colossians 1:15-16 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.  
<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.***

***John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***

B. God Foils False Prophecies and Fulfills True Ones (vs. 25-26)

***Isaiah 44:25-26 who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, 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 built,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'***

1. God makes certain that the words of the false prophets are exposed as the lies they are
2. God exposes the “expert predictions” for the nonsense they are... he overthrows the learning of the wise
3. BUT he carries out the words of His true messengers!
4. Samuel:

***1 Samuel 3:19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.***

5. So also Isaiah!! God let none of Isaiah’s words fall to the ground
6. The clear prophecy: Jerusalem shall be inhabited
7. Judah’s towns shall be rebuilt
8. Amazing in that Judah and Jerusalem were completely destroyed; Jeremiah, the final prophet during the destruction of Jerusalem, saw what had happened in the end:

***Lamentations 1:1 How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!***

Now God is predicting the time when the city will be rebuilt... and eventually totally repopulated!!

### C. God Commands Cyrus to Rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple (vs. 27-28)

***Isaiah 44:27-28 who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,' 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." ' '***

1. Here is one of the most astonishing prophecies in the Bible!
2. Before the city of Jerusalem was even destroyed, Isaiah was predicting how and by whom it would be rebuilt! Before the temple was even destroyed, something the Jews said could never happen, Isaiah was predicting how and by whom its foundations would be laid!!
3. Probably 125-160 years before Cyrus was even born!!
4. God actually goes so far as to call him his “Shepherd” to accomplish all he pleases concerning Jerusalem
5. God flexes his prophetic muscles here and establishes his clear claim to infinite superiority over the idols! They can do nothing... God can accurately predict the future and make it come to pass!
6. WHY? Why was it eternally important for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and its temple reestablished?

So that Jesus Christ could be born in the Promised Land, a clear “Son of Abraham” and “Son of David” (Matthew 1:1) in fulfillment of the prophecies made that through their offspring, all peoples on earth would be blessed. So that salvation could come from the Jews. (John 4:22) That’s why.

## VI. Applications

### A. Come to Christ!! He sweeps away our sins like the morning mist (vs. 22)!!

Finally, let us never stop marveling at the grace of God in Christ, his power in sweeping away our sins like the morning mist. We should give him thanks day after day; we should bask in the richness of his forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus. We should feel forgiven, and extend that forgiveness to others. And we should look ahead to the delight of seeing Christ face to face and worshiping him for what he’s done!

- B. Understand the power of the Holy Spirit to cause the children of God to spring up out of nothing (vs. 3-4) Pray that God would do this to lost people in Durham and to the ends of the earth! Thank Him that He did it for you!!

We should have our hearts captivated by what's truly going on in the world—the building of the family of God by the sovereign Spirit. The Spirit of God is able to raise from stones and from the dust of the earth children of God by the power of the gospel. We should be living for this, delighting in it, realizing that it is the story of the world.

- C. Laugh with God at the folly of idolatry! God is openly mocking it throughout this chapter... LAUGH... but also be aware of your own tendency toward foolish idolatry

This chapter has echoed with the laughter of God throughout the centuries, the healthy mocking of foolish idolatry. Like all of God's actions through the prophets, this also has the redemption of God's elect in mind. We should take very seriously the threat of idolatry in our lives, and the utter folly of living for material wealth, or earthly pleasure, or career ambitions, or the praise of human beings. We should be aware of the lure of these things—of the “ultimate driving machine” (BMW), or a Patek Philippe wristwatch, or a penthouse condo in Manhattan, or being on the cover of Forbes. Most of us will never achieve any of them, but the desire for something like them is enough. Closer to home is just the “shopping therapy” of a trip to the Mall or even to Wal-Mart or Best Buy. Idolatry sneaks into our hearts and teaches us to set our hearts on things that can never satisfy. A block of wood can never answer prayer—we know that. But do we know that a 10% raise won't satisfy the longings of our hearts?

- D. Marvel again at God's perfect knowledge of PAST and FUTURE

1. Perhaps you've never thought about how difficult the past is to know perfectly
2. Think about how long a court trial goes on seeking to establish a creditable account of what happened so the jury could make a wise and informed decision... think of how historians contradict each other on aspects of the Battle of Waterloo or what led up to WWI... If the past is so difficult for us to know, how impossible is the future
3. Marvel at verses 24-28! The Cyrus prophecy is ASTONISHING... marvel also that God destroyed the temple (though he wanted it built by Solomon)... see the damage of idolatry that led to the destruction of the temple... but God wanted the temple rebuilt as well
4. All of this points to the work of Christ on the cross!! The temple and all the animal sacrifices were fulfilled in Christ... trust in Him!!

We should also marvel again and again at God's supernatural ability to predict the future through his servants, the prophets. We cannot praise him enough for this astonishing Cyrus prophecy. We should probe the depths of the decree of God, marveling that God knew what his parents would name him before their parents named them! The past is foggy to us, the future is completely shrouded. But both are alike illuminated before the eyes of our eternal God. Let us trust in him completely, and worship the God who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end.