



Remembering and Forgetting

Being with God in a land of idols - Isa 44:1-23

*Eternal One: Nevertheless, listen to Me, **My** people:
Jacob, **My** servant; Israel, **My** chosen.*

*2 The Eternal **who made you,**
who formed you in the womb and **promised to help you,** has this to say:*

*Eternal One: Don't be afraid, **My** servant Jacob,
My dear Jeshurun—**My** chosen.*

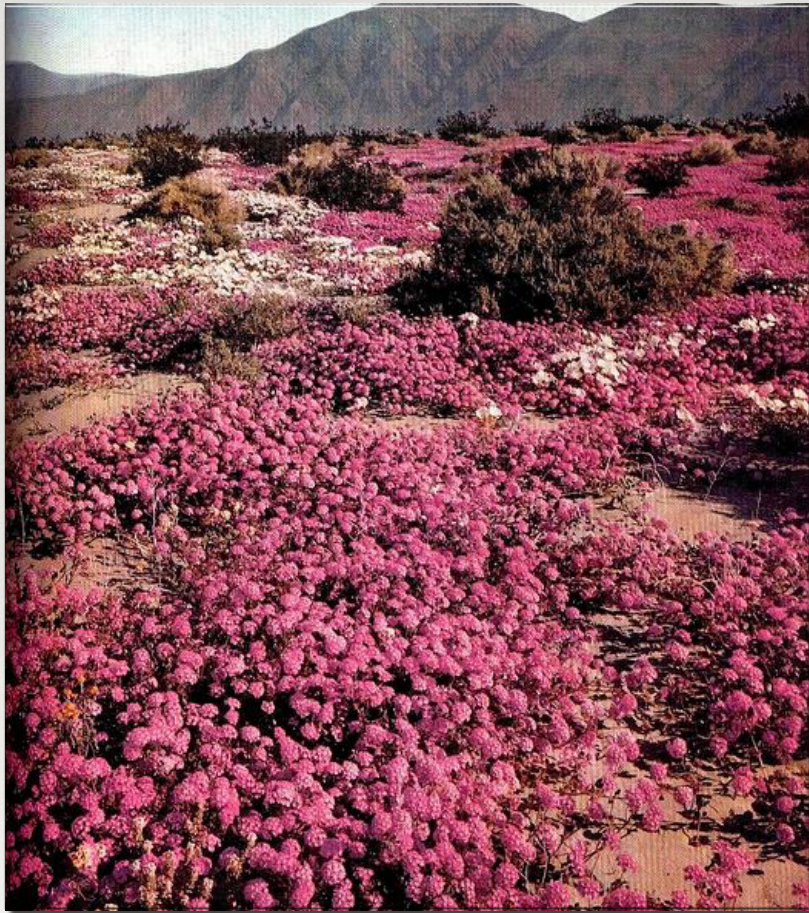
*3 Like a devoted gardener, **I will pour sweet water** on parched land,
streams on hard-packed ground;*

***I will pour My spirit** on your children and grandchildren—
and let My blessing flow to your descendants.*

*4 And they will sprout among the grasses, grow vibrant and tall
like the willow trees lining a riverbank.*

*5 One will call out: "I belong to the Eternal."
Another will say, "Jacob is my people; Israel my honored name."
Yet others will write "Property of the Eternal" on their hands.*





When God's spirit is poured upon a languishing creation, the results are surprises that recall the innovations of the first creation. The barriers that separated human beings from God crumble as a relationship of wholehearted love arises from a barren wilderness of alienation and distrust, and the restoration of that primal relationship brings with it in turn the removal of barriers separating human beings from one another.

It is time for people of faith to reclaim with Second Isaiah the audacity to envision God's creative spirit being poured out on a world that resembles a wilderness. ... The same God who creates that yearning in the human heart (for renewal) is eager to satisfy it with the inpouring of the life-giving spirit, a spirit of reconciliation and new birth.

Paul Hanson



*The Eternal, Commander of heavenly armies,
King of Israel, who paid their ransom, has this to say:*

*Eternal One: I am at the beginning and will be at the end.
There is no God except for Me.*

7 If you know any God like Me, tell it now.

*Declare and demonstrate any who can compare to Me.
Or if you know and have announced events before their
time,*

told what is to come, then speak so now.

*8 **Don't be afraid. Let your minds be clear of fear.**
Haven't I announced events and revealed what is to
come?*

*From the earliest days, I have done so. You know it—you
have seen and know.*

*So, go ahead, My witnesses: is there a god out there
other than Me?*

*Witnesses: There is no other rock like God. I don't know a
single one.*



“Worshipping idols is and always has been the default way of life for human beings. It’s the most natural thing in the world for a human being to put his or her trust in something that can be seen, heard, smelt, touched, or at least cognitively understood. It takes tremendous effort to overcome that natural tendency and instead put one’s faith in a God one cannot empirically sense and/or cognitively understand. Once one has taken that step, it takes continuous effort to maintain that faith.”

From Kehila news, Israeli messianic group

Idol worship was anathema, but it was not stupid. No one believed that a piece of wood, metal or stone could change the weather or increase the flocks. The carved material was only a symbol of the power of natural forces, and it was presumed that concentration on their form, whether human or animal, together with suitable gifts and sacrifices, could bring about the desired results.

Stephen Rosenberg, The Persistence of Idol Worship, Jerusalem Post.

*You shall have not have any gods before Me ... You shall
not make...
You shall not bow down... you shall not worship then .
(Exodus 20:3)*

*The theatre of betrayal is in the heart.
There, more painfully than in objective, observable
behaviors,
the people have turned away from God.
- Avivah Zornberg*



WHAT IS THE APPEAL OF IDOLS ?



- ✦ *Controlling our Future*
- ✦ *Securing our Future*
- ✦ *Masking our Vulnerability - all flesh is grass*

Eating Ashes



A god carved and gold plated by artisans is neither capable of delivering a people from its bondage nor worthy of that people's devotion. And what is to be said about those who defend such gods? Unlike members of the prophets community who are witnesses taught by the events of their history, the witnesses of these gods "neither see nor know"

Paul Hanson

A fool like this is feeding on ashes- his addled mind and deceived heart lead him nowhere. He can't figure out how to save himself much less see the error of his ways and say "Is this idol in my hand just a lie." Isaiah 44:20



*Let that be a lesson to you My People
Don't forget it, Jacob; O Israel, remember you are mine
I made you; you are my servant, I will not forget you.*

*I have swept away your wrongdoing, as wind sweeps a
cloud from the sky
I have cleared you of your sins, as the sun clears the
morning mist.*

I have rescued you, come back to me

Remember These Things ... Return to Me

For Second Isaiah, the restoration of Israel to the blessings of their covenant relationship with God was not a parochial matter. It was nothing less than a key to the restoration of the harmony within the entire created order, for as witnesses to God's universal sovereignty Israel served as mediators of shalom stemming from Torah obedience and extending to the entire cosmos. Fittingly, therefore, the trial ends with the courtroom filling with a hymn of praise joined by the heavens, the earth, the mountains and every tree of the forest. Hanson

