

# IDOLS ... AGAIN

Bel and Nebo wobble and duck, as their images  
sway on the backs of oxen and donkeys—such a heavy burden  
For the weary animals—as they are carried about.  
2 These “gods” bow and sink together, unable to escape the coming invasion;  
they march off into captivity.  
3 Eternal One: Listen, you who count yourselves among Jacob’s descendants,  
all the remnant of Israel.  
It is you, not I, who have been carried from before you were born.  
Indeed, when you were still in the womb, I was taking care of you.  
4 And when you are old, I will still be there, carrying you.  
When your limbs grow tired, your eyes are weak,  
And your hair a silvery gray, I will carry you as I always have.  
I will carry you and save you.  
5 Does anyone compare to Me? Can you find any likeness?  
Who or what might be My equal or even close to Me?  
6 What about those who use precious materials for gods—  
hiring artisans to carefully craft gold, silver, jewels,  
And exotic wood into a god—  
then they bow down and worship it

7 Their god is a mere object. They have to lug it around on their shoulders  
before they can stand it up in its proper place.  
It just sits there, unmoving until they pick it up again.  
It never speaks, never answers.  
It cannot help them, no matter how desperate they are.  
8 Remember that—and don’t be tempted to conform!  
Think about it, you rebels.  
9 Remember the old days. For I am God; there is no other.  
I am God; there are no other gods like Me.  
10 From the beginning I declare how things will end;  
from times long past, I tell what is yet to be, saying:  
“My intentions will come to pass.  
I will make things happen as I determine they should.”  
11 I am the one who called Cyrus, the bird of prey from the east;  
from a land far away I summoned him to do what I intend.  
My word went out, and I will see it done.  
My plan has been made, and I will see it through.  
12 Listen closely, you strong-willed people  
who have veered far from the right path.  
13 It won’t be long until I make things right;  
My salvation is getting closer and closer; it won’t be delayed.  
I am ready to rescue Zion, My chosen place,  
and display My beauty and splendour to Israel, My chosen people.



The god Bel falls down, god Nebo slumps.  
The no-god hunks of wood are loaded on mules and have to be hauled off. *Message Bible*



THIS IS THE END...

My only Friend, the End



# BEASTS OF BURDEN: The ultimate Irony

“But the dismissive mockery not only wants to make the gods appear ridiculous. The more serious theological claim is that they cannot ‘rescue the burden ... they cannot protect or make safe the very bulk of their own material form, that is, their own images, let alone those that worship them .... Indeed, these gods shall themselves be carried away into exile, humiliated by the coming Persians (Cyrus)”.

Brueggeman



Whatever gods/idols we manufacture will never have what it takes to hold us up or support the weight of our human despair or hopes





# FROM THE WOMB TO THE TOMB

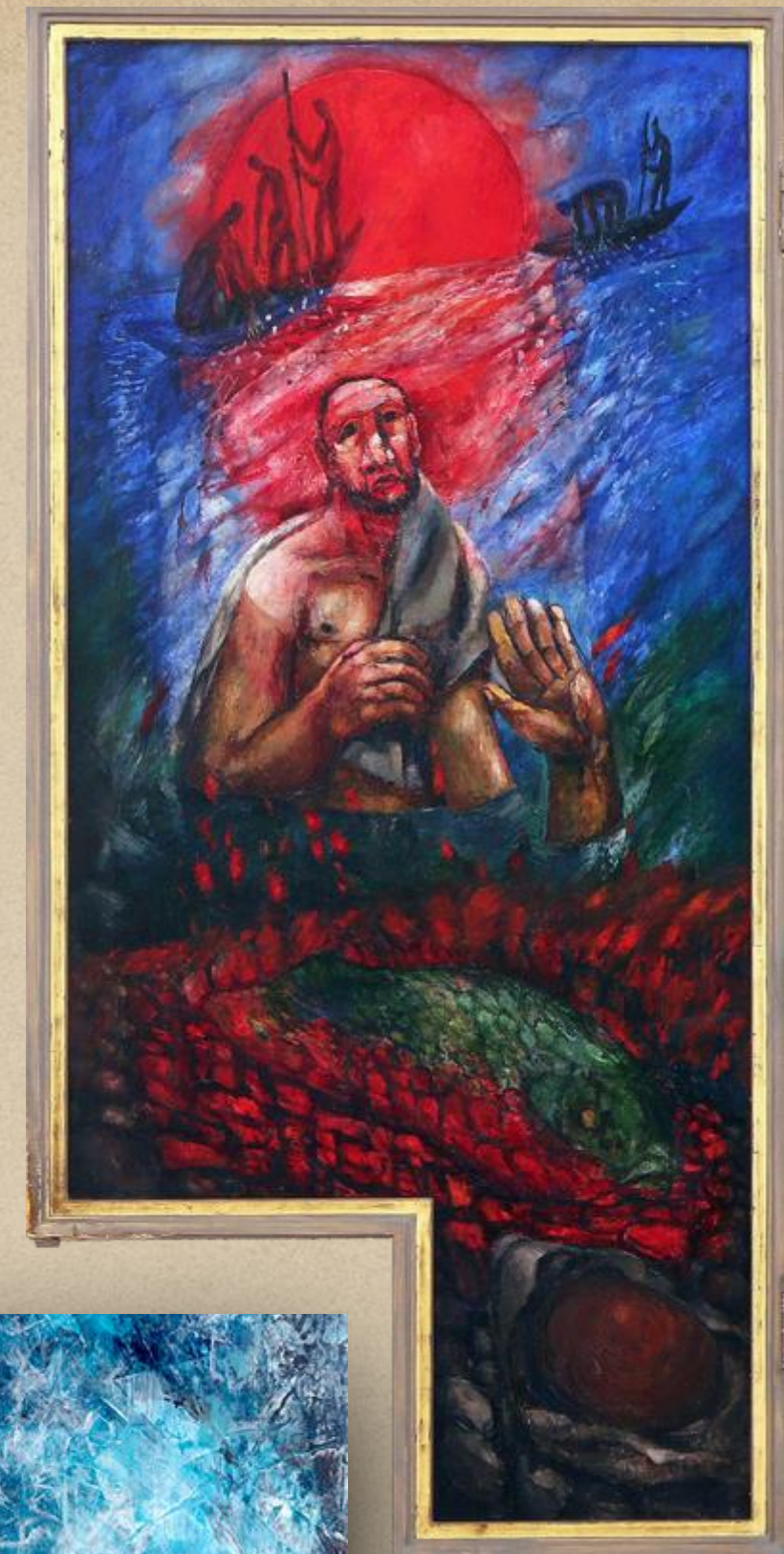
“A carefully structured lesson/wisdom built upon listening and remembering, is presented in contrast to the ridiculous picture of idols borne and carried on stumbling beasts.” Hanson

“In the case of Yahweh, it is not the god who is borne and carried but the people who are borne and carried by God.... In Israel’s history, from its birth in the exodus down through future generations even to old age. The passive voice suddenly is transformed into the active in a staccato showing the initiative of

Israel’s God:

I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and I will save.”

Hanson





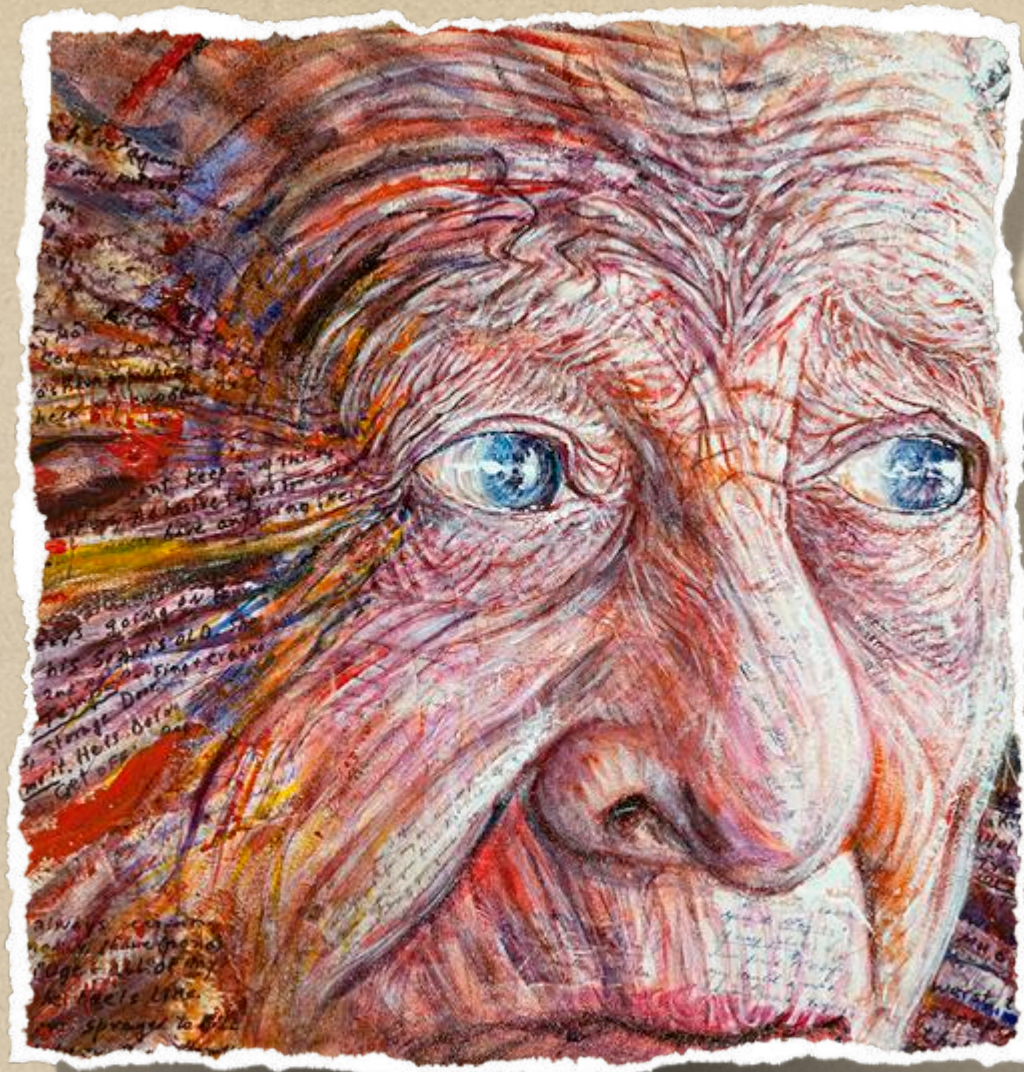
# FOOL'S GOLD & HIDDEN MERCIES

- ◆ “We pay out of pocket, calculate and price out our objects of worship, hire and contract out to the lowest bidder for a deal on our gold plated idols, hire a middle man to carve out a “lasting” image of our ultimate concern ... only to discover that what is incomparable, priceless and eternal has been reduced to merchandise creating empty hearts and souls.”
- ◆ “We have become the project manager to our version of the holy and all we are left with are creations which are inanimate, immoveable, silent and dispassionate; too hefty and clunky to haul around, ultimately burned, swallowed or crushed to splinter and dust.”



1897. "We have it Rich." - Washing and panning gold, Rockerville, Dak.  
Old-timers, Spriggs, Lamb and Dillon at work.  
Photo and copyright by Crabill, 1889.





## “REMEMBER THIS”: God’s Memory Palace

“And when you are old, I will still be there, carrying you.  
When your limbs grow tired, your eyes are weak,  
And your hair a silvery gray, I will carry you as I always have. I will carry you and save you.”

“Israel’s hope lies in re-reading the chapters of their history that reveal God’s involvement in their life at its every stage, all of which taken together reveals a pattern summed up by God in verse 10 “My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfill my intention.”

Hanson





# “FUTURE PRESENT PERFECT”

## The Mysterious tenses of God

From the very beginning I AM telling you what the ending will be, All along letting you in on what is going to happen,

Assuring you, 'I'm in this for the long haul, I'll do exactly what I set out to do,'

I call a bird of prey from the east, a man from a distant land for my plan. As surely as I have spoken, I'll make it happen;

My plan has been made, and I will see it through. Isaiah 46:10-11

“The pattern of divine guidance in past and present provides the basis for a bold promise to those who have been engulfed by the uncertainties of life as a conquered people surrounded by the apparently victorious gods ....

The importance of hope is never more apparent than in times of deep crisis. Nothing less was at stake than Israel's identity as a people and their divine commission to be light to the nations. The

kind of hope presented by the prophet is not of the dreamy, wishful-thinking sort.” Hanson



# LOVED & CARRIED

## Dead Weight Lifted

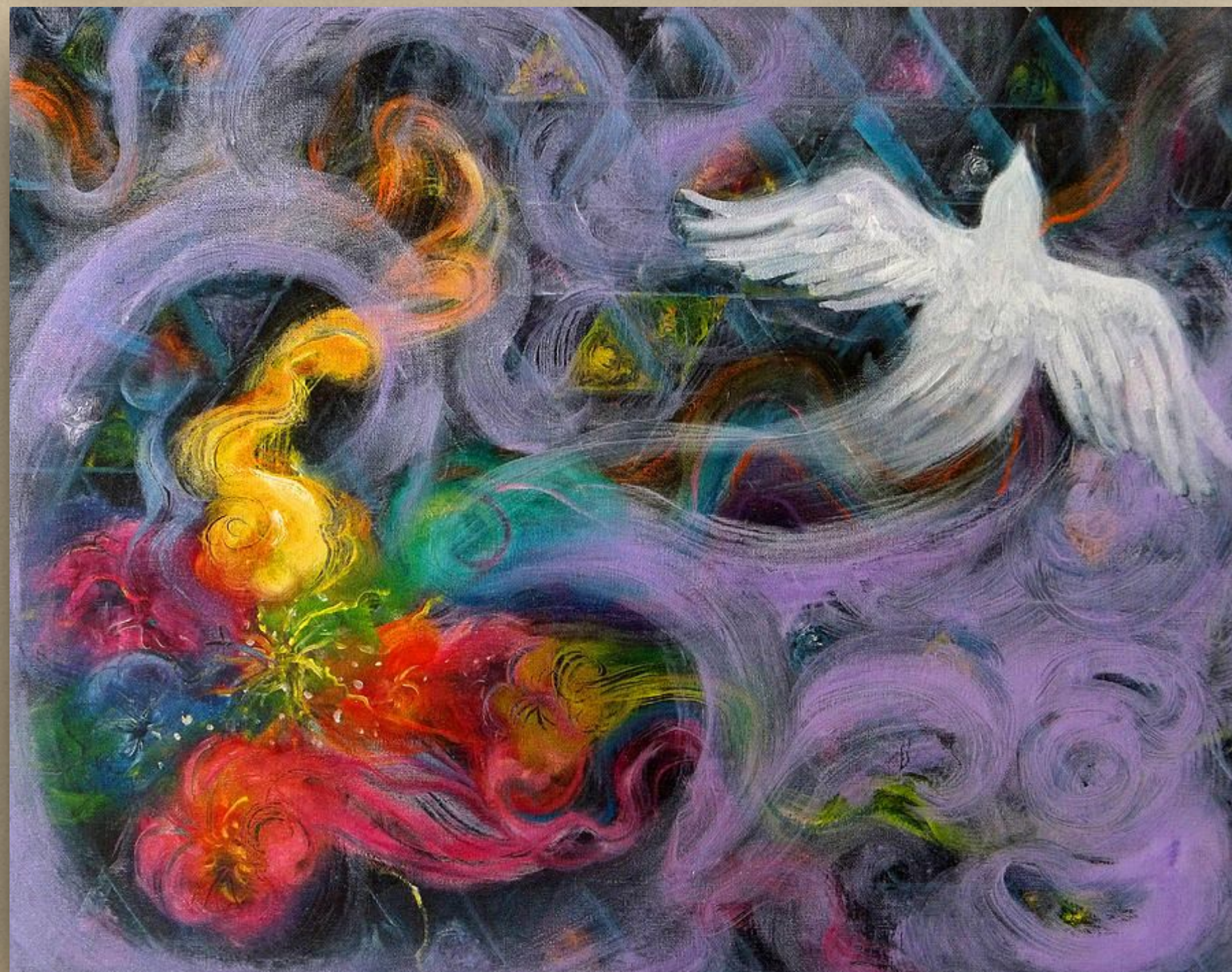
- ♦ “Yahweh’s passionate and powerful assurance to Israel in exile takes into full account the inadequacy and failure of Israel. But Yahweh’s resolve is not thereby diminished. It is for this inadequate, failed people that this active, resolved, passionate God will now make a difference. The difference is rooted in Yahweh’s readiness to move past transgression into fidelity, thus relying on the assertion of forgiveness ....”.

Brueggemann

“Now is the time!  
Here comes God’s kingdom!  
Change your hearts and  
lives, and trust this good  
news!” Mark 1:15







“The divine purpose of remembering is to fulfill the gift of God’s righteousness in human history. Hope is possible in a troubled world because faith enables us to recognize that the destiny of the universe is determined neither by human potentates, not by whimsical principalities, not by blind fate, but by the God, known through communal memory to be just and compassionate, who answers the cries of the oppressed in acts of deliverance.” Hanson



“Our world offers as many glistening, golden idols as did the ancient world of Babylon. Their promises include material gain, self-indulgent sensual pleasures, feelings of superiority, peer group affirmation and the deeply coveted “likes” on social media. But in the moment of deepest need, they are silent as they weigh down upon their devotees with crushing, ruthless force. In contrast, the promise of the Lord abides: “I will carry and will save.”

Hanson





# PRAYERS OF MEMORIAL

We remember you on the ladder with Jacob, in our ups and downs. Thank you for including us in your circle of Covenant.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember you at the brink of collapse, those times of anger and frustration. Thank you for softening our hearts and changing the way we see things.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember you when health and well-being lay in the balance. Thank you for giving us the medicine of love.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember Eternal One, how you've met us in books, blogs and podcasts. Thank you for giving us hope through Experimental Theology.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember your Sabbath Rest Eternal One, a grace when we feel stuck on our hamster wheel of burden.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember you Abba Father in times of fear and dread. Your presence is felt in knowing that 'We're there for each other'.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

We remember you as we light the candles of Covenant. Thank you for bringing us home and giving us a yearning to be open to you and to each other.

ALL: And God said "I will Carry and Save"

## Eternal Father

Thank you our for never forgetting us, for always carrying us and saving us in our past, present and future. You always Remember. Keep our Memories Green as we join you in carrying each other towards Your universal Hope.

