

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 43:8-13, GOD'S WITNESS: ISRAEL

Now the narrative turns back to a courtroom setting in which blind and deaf Israel is called as a witness against the idolatrous nations. In the end, the pagan gods will be found worthless; they can save no one. Only Yahweh is the one true creator God of the universe. Unger believes the blind and deaf are the nations, but that is a minority position. It goes with the territory of being unsaved Gentiles that they are totally spiritually blind and deaf. Up to this point in the book, Israel's spiritually blind and deaf condition has been emphasized and verse 8 is considered by most commentators to be no exception. However, given the context of verses 8-9, I think Unger's assertion is quite possible. We have to remember that there were no chapter and verse divisions in the original book penned by Isaiah; therefore, verses 8-9 could go certainly go together and make perfect sense given the context.

These verses have a purpose. They warn Israel against relying on idols, and they imply that the Gentile pagans need to turn from idols to the one true, living God. "The conviction that only the LORD can promise and perform is a safeguard against idolatry, which in turn is a destroyer of that conviction and is warned against in a confrontation similar to that in [Isaiah] 41:1-29" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1260]. In courtroom jargon, verses 8-9 represent the gathering of the participants and a proclamation of the issue at hand.

Isaiah 43:8-9 ⁸Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears. ⁹All the nations have gathered [קָבְצוּ] together [יַהֲרֹוּ] So that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare [יְגִידוּ] this And proclaim [שְׁמַעוּ] to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified [צַדִּיקוּ], Or let them hear and say, "It is true."

The world's people, enmeshed in pagan theology, have lost any sense of reason or knowledge of God. They are called together so that they may be shown the folly of trusting in lifeless things that can do nothing for them. "The people (the nations) who are blind, yet have eyes, and deaf and yet have ears, that is, idolaters, who become just like the deaf and dumb, lifeless gods they worship, are called together and confronted with the utter impotence of their idols" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1260].

Others believe the blind and deaf referred to here is blind and deaf Israel just as the previous references to being blind and deaf in Isaiah have referred to Israel, and there certainly is no doubt that Israel has been spiritually blind and deaf throughout the nation's history: past, present, and still into the future. However, in each of those instances, the context is much clearer than it is here given the content of the next verse. Some commentators see these two verses in parallel—Israel in verse 8, pagan Gentiles in verse 9. Israel can certainly testify to the facts of God's miraculous dealing with them, they are recorded in the Torah, but they can't present any spiritual truth to the Gentiles because they have largely rejected it themselves. Nevertheless, Yahweh's faithfulness to Israel is

on display for all to see if they would only allow themselves to actually see it and understand it.

Again, the imagery here of being blind and deaf is coupled with the fact that the people—everyone, Jew and Gentile alike—have eyes and ears to see and hear if they would only use them for their God intended purposes in terms of spiritual matters.

The timing and the mechanics of how this works is a bit of a puzzle. Has this happened yet, or is it a future event? When has God gathered Israel and the nations of the world together to face the truth? I would not get dogmatic about it, but I'm not so sure this isn't a Tribulation passage, because that is when both Israel and the world, at least to some extent, are going to finally learn these things. There is no other time in history, except at Babel, when the world system will be more together than during that time. The verb translated "bring out" is a verb form that is causative in nature, that is, God is causing the people to come out, and that is done to no greater degree than during the Tribulation when the whole world will be acting as one against God and against Israel all of which is according to God's plan for history. That is a time of judgment when God shows everyone, Israel and the world, who He is and how powerfully He is acting on Israel's behalf. Concurrently, the Tribulation will be a time when false religion is completely exposed as a failure. The one world religion that will be headed by the antichrist will fail and be exposed for the evil that it is.

Gathered, קָבַץ, means to gather, to collect, to assemble in one place. The sense is implied that there is a relationship of kind, or unity of purpose of the objects that have been gathered.

Together, יַחְדָּו, means together, wholly, and in unity with each other, all, with one accord pertaining to being whole and in a state of oneness.

These words suggest something that is still in the future when the world comes together under antichrist. The world has never been unified to this extent since Babel—but it will be. These verses also follow immediately after the verses that speak of the worldwide regathering of Israel in belief that takes place at the end of the Tribulation, so the context at least supports the idea that an eschatological time period is in view here.

Unger, however, thinks the reference to proclaiming the former things is a reference to Isaiah's revelation that Cyrus is going to be Israel's deliverer from Babylonian captivity which will be revealed in chapter 45.

The problem the nations have is that they have no witnesses, then or now, who can testify to the fact that idols are gods of some sort, any sort actually, who have any power to do anything. They are not, and they cannot provide any proof, any reliable testimony that they are gods.

The idolaters were challenged to declare and proclaim their knowledge of the former things.

Declare, דגד, means to propose, announce, inform, give evidence or to provide an explanation. The sense is to let something be known. The verb form used here means to cause to declare.

Proclaim, שצע, means to hear or to be heard. The verb form used here means to cause to be heard.

God provides the world with a forum to definitively show Him, show Israel, and show everyone else that their idols do, in fact, have power, and they need to make their case. If they could do so, their participation in idolatry would be justified, and their idol worship would be vindicated. That is, of course, not possible.

Justified, צדק, means to be just, to be righteous, but the primary sense here is to be vindicated or proved.

The challenge for the world is to provide witnesses who can verify that idols possess and exercise god-like power. They needed to provide proof that false gods had made predictions in the past that had come true. If they cannot do that, and they cannot, then the world is able to see that Yahweh is the only true God who, in fact, can predict the future and it comes to pass. He has a track record to run on. He not only knows what is going to come to pass, He can actually bring it into existence and cause it to happen. Idols cannot do that. Predicting something is common; false prophets do it all the time. Predicting something that comes to pass exactly as foretold, when and how, and causing it to come to pass is a much more precise issue. The fact that the idolaters fail to present any testimony from witnesses that can affirm the claim that their gods have god-like power, should give the Israelites, and any skeptics among the Gentiles, cause to look with disbelief on idolatries' claims to represent real gods.

It is not the issue that pagans can and do make predictions. They did then and they still do. There are fortune tellers and psychics in business today who make lucrative livings out of telling people what they want to hear by making it in the form of predictive prophecy. The issue is one of accurately foretelling the future and of interpreting the significance of fulfilled prophecy in light of current events. Pagans fail on both counts. If pagans get something right, it is simply dumb luck; they have no discernment powers that enable them to know the future. Even if they get something right, they have no spiritual discernment skills that would enable them to explain either its meaning, its significance in terms of current events, or for the future. Nebuchadnezzar knew that (Dan. 2:1-13) which is why he demanded that the wise men of Babylon not only tell him the meaning of his dream, but they tell him the contents of the dream first. He wanted authentication that the "magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans" were as perceptive as they claimed to be. The king knew that if he told them the dream, they could just make something up to fit the details of his dream, but if they knew the dream itself, then they were receiving divine revelation and could be trusted.

Replacement theology and Amillennial Eschatology do great damage to literal hermeneutics which makes it impossible to properly interpret texts such as this. Isaiah 43:5-7, the immediately preceding verses to the verses we are studying now, are about the final regathering of Israel into the land in belief in order to enjoy the fulfillment of the

covenant promises God made to Israel. Replacement and Amillennial theologians cannot allow that interpretation to stand, because they must interpret the Bible in such a way that their theology is confirmed which denies that Kingdom covenant fulfillment. You need to be able to spot these issues whenever you are doing your own personal Bible study. Young believes verses 5-7 pertain to the church, and he carries that error on into his commentary on verses 8-9. "... the Lord has brought forth people that have blind eyes. This fits in well with the general declaration of God's purposes of restoration made in the preceding two verses. The people mentioned have been blind and deaf in that they have not seen the wondrous working of God in the earth nor listened to the heavens declaring His glory. To the truth they were blind and deaf. Now, however, they have both eyes and ears, for they now see and hear, and willingly follow Him who has brought them forth out of the darkness of bondage and ignorance. In the broadest sense this passage is a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles unto God. The leading out, or causing to go out, is a reference to the place of confinement in which the people had been and to the deliverance from that place. It is the calling out of darkness into the marvelous light of God Himself" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:147].

It is interesting to note that God calls Israel as His witness to the fact that He alone is God, the only God who has ever been, the one true Creator God of the universe. If for no other reason, this is remarkable because Israel has been blind and deaf throughout most of their relationship with Yahweh. They are not reliable witnesses in and of themselves, but they are reliable witnesses to show to the world God's faithfulness to His covenant promises and to His power to bring them to fulfillment. By virtue of the fact that God has been divinely dealing with Israel for centuries, they are supposed to learn things and ultimately place their faith in Him.

Isaiah 43:10 ¹⁰"You are My witnesses [עֵדִים]," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know [יָדַעַתְּ] and believe [אֲמִינִי] Me And understand [בִּינִי] that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed [יֵצֵרָה], And there will be none after Me.

Witness, עֵד, means a witness, testimony, or evidence referring to a person who testifies in a legal setting sometimes extended to refer to inanimate objects serving as witnesses. It may have the sense of referring to a symbol of a past event which serves as a memorial. This is what Israel is, a memorial to the faithfulness, the power, and the veracity of Yahweh despite their unfaithfulness. The revelation is not about Israel itself as a reliable witness because Israel was not faithful to do God's will and be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," (Ex. 19:6), but it is a revelation of God's faithfulness and power in connection with Israel. Israel is a witness in that respect, and Israel is expected to learn important spiritual truths from their interaction with Yahweh.

"Witnesses" here is plural. Israel as a nation is singular, but the nation is made up of people, plural. It is also quite possible that the witnesses are referring to both entities earlier identified as God's servant, one being national Israel (Isaiah 41:8-20) and the other being the Messiah Servant (Isaiah 42:1-4). "Obedient or disobedient, 'the servant' Israel is a witness to the faithfulness of God and the fact that there is no other God who is like Jehovah. Collectively Israel is a blind (v. 8) and essentially passive servant (v. 10). By contrast the individual Servant of Jehovah is God's active agent to accomplish His divine purpose for mankind. The individual Servant of the LORD, the Messiah, is the absolutely

obedient messenger of God who delights to do His will (42:4)" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 351]. The servant national Israel never accomplished the mission the nation was created to fulfill, but the Messiah Servant came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10:7, 9), and He will fulfill that purpose. If I am correct in my belief that this is a revelation of Tribulation truth, then both entities, Israel the servant and the Messiah Servant, will be particularly powerful witnesses for Yahweh during that time against the futility of the pagan worldview.

The Lord's work in creating Israel and appointing the nation to His service is to be used for the purpose of getting the Israelites to know, to understand, and to believe. In terms of understanding Israel's relationship to Yahweh, we need to understand that the concept of belief involves both the nation and the individuals who make up the nation. Israel as a corporate entity rejected the Lord at His First Advent, and Israel as a corporate entity must be led to faith and into calling for Messiah's return to rescue them from annihilation at the hands of antichrist. At all times, every individual Israelite must place their faith in the Messiah in order to be granted eternal life and the forgiveness of sin.

The three verbs, to know, to believe, and to understand, are all imperfect verbs referring to ongoing action.

Know, יָדַע, means to know, to notice, to hear of, to learn referring to being cognizant or aware of a fact or a specific piece of information; to possess knowledge or information about.

Believe, אָמַן, means to be firm, to build up, to support, to nurture, or to establish. The primary meaning is that of providing stability, confidence, firmness, or certainty. It may also signify certitude or assurance and belief, in the sense of receiving something as true and sure. To believe is also in a verb form that is causative meaning to cause to be certain or sure, to cause to be certain about, or to cause to be assured. When it refers to belief, it refers to an assurance, a certainty, in contrast to something possible, hopefully true, but not certain.

Understand, בִּין, means to discern, to realize, to perceive, to understand referring to hearing and apprehending information. It has to do with gaining insight. It is a power of judgment and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge. Acquiring understanding requires persistent diligence. It involves more than intelligence; it speaks to character. If the individual does not acquire it, it is his own fault. One must desire to discern the works of Yahweh, the fear of the Lord, righteousness and justice, and His will as His Word is obeyed. Acting on the objective presentation of God's revelation leads to understanding.

This is a chain of events. Knowing, or learning, leads to believing, that is, confidence and certainty, which ultimately leads to understanding, the development of perceptive insight, which is a concept that goes deeper than simply knowing. The expectation is that Israel, who had personally experienced the majesty, the power, the holiness and righteousness, and the faithfulness of Yahweh would grow in their knowledge of Him and have faith in Him and therefore be the witnesses He created them to be. Once the

Israelites as a nation really come to know, believe, and understand, they will finally be the nation God created them to be.

Due to Yahweh's continual dealing with and support for Israel, including His supernatural creation of the people, the signs, wonders, and miracles involved in forging the Israelites into a nation and bringing that nation out of Egypt and into Canaan, the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and His divine protection of the nation throughout history, the nation is the perfect witness for verifying God's holy and righteous attributes, veracity, and faithfulness. If the Messiah Servant is also part of the witnesses, then no more perfect witness could be found.

"Yahweh pointed to the people of Israel, His servant, as those who would be His witnesses that He could predict the future and bring it to pass. For example, He had promised to make Abraham a great nation, to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, to give them Canaan, and to make David's dynasty secure. He had fulfilled all these promises and more. In the process He had made the Israelites His witnesses so they would learn that He alone is the true god. Similarly, Jesus told His disciples that they would be His witnesses. They had witnessed His works for several years and could testify to His uniqueness, even His deity" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 121].

This testimony is intended to show the Israelites that Yahweh is the only God, that idolatrous gods are not gods at all and therefore powerless, and they should believe in Him, the Creator God, because He is the only true God. There was no god before Him and there will be no god after Him, which is a way of saying that He has no beginning and no end. He is the only true God that has ever existed and that will ever exist. "The statement *Before me ... after me* explains the enigmatic *that I am he*: he is the only God. Since no god existed before him and none will exist after him, he is evidently self-existent and self-determining: he *is*.... Before gods were made, he was, and after all the gods are gone, he will be. Thus what Israel is called to learn is not merely that God is great or loving or just or powerful, but much more, that he *is*, that there is no other, that he alone is the one with whom all creation must come to terms" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 147]. We also need to remember that idolatry was not only a problem among the nations; it was a very serious problem in Israel as well.

The only way that the Israelites can finally be the complete and effective witnesses to the nations they should have been all along, is when they finally reach the state of national consciousness that is the result of knowing, believing, and understanding. They still have not come to that place, but they will.

Israel was created to be God's witness to the world, but they failed to do that in the way they were created to do it. They are still God's witnesses because He has not failed to be with them, protect them, and use them to further His plan for history. Yet, to fulfill their national destiny, they still must know Him in the way He originally intended for the nation to know Him, and that is still in the future.

This verse also makes it very clear that other gods are formed or created by man; they are not eternal and they are not self-existent. They are not the same as the God who

identified Himself as "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14), the god who is self-existent, uncaused, and who is complete in and of Himself and who needs no one and no thing to be complete. All other so-called gods are formed, that is, man makes them in the image of some aspect of the creation. They come into being; they are not self-existent. Formed, יָצַר, means to form, to fashion, to create, to shape, to forge referring to creating an object out of existing material. There was nothing around from which an idol could be made and even if there was, there was no one around to create idols before God created all that exists anyway. It is foolishness to believe there were gods around before the Creator God created all things which are themselves the raw material for fashioning the gods that are claimed to be in His place. Whatever the claims that are made for these gods, they are not God and they can do nothing God-like.

"Yahweh is unique among all the supernatural beings (a) because one can know that he lives based on his spoken prediction and the fulfillment of his prophecies, (b) because one can have a real relationship of trust with God, and (c) because no other gods have these qualities" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 203].

Isaiah 43:11 ¹¹"I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.

The point is that God's servant, Israel, is to be the witness to the fact that God is the only Savior the world, including Israel, can ever expect to actually save them from the fallen state mankind has been in since Adam's rebellion. False gods can save no one. This proclamation also includes the Messiah Servant. As noted in past lessons, the Messiah cannot be separated from the nation that birthed Him; He is the Savior of the world.

There is much more to Yahweh than just the ability to predict the future and bring it to pass. He can save people by regenerating them and moving them from spiritual death to spiritual life, which is life eternal lived in the presence of God. God made this proclamation on His own behalf. Israel is blind and deaf and their witness at this point is a passive witness that God has been gracious to them and has been faithful to keep His Word to them. Israel cannot save anyone, but God can, and He makes that declaration here, "I, even I, am the Lord" and the only Savior. "The proper name 'Jehovah' [Yahweh] is used here as a name indicating essence: 'I and no other am the absolutely existing and living one,' i.e., He who proves His existence by His acts, and indeed by His saving acts" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, volume 7, 7: 426]. "As if to emphasize in the strongest terms that no one else has the right to his personal name, he says, using the independent pronoun twice, *I, I am the Lord* (Yahweh). Baal is not Yahweh; Marduk is not Yahweh; Ishtar is not Yahweh. In the strongest terms, God denies the syncretism that underlay all pagan religions and was to come to the fore during the Persian era. He alone is Yahweh, and as such is like no other so-called god. Israel's experience should have taught them this" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 148].

God has sovereignly protected Israel from destruction in the past, He is active in preventing Israel's destruction in the present, and He will be active in preventing Israel's destruction in the future. He has always demonstrated His care for Israel, but being true to His character, He has also subjected them to the temporal discipline that He promised

them for rebellion which will eventually serve to correct the nation's behavior and cause them to cry out to Him for deliverance. Not only is He the only One who can save Israel, He is the only One who wants to save Israel; the rest of the world wants to destroy Israel. "Why would Israel doubt that he would either want to or would be able to deliver them? Their whole experience, if they would just learn from it, would tell them otherwise. They are witnesses, whether they want to be or not, to who he really is" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 147].

The first-person singular pronouns used by Yahweh to refer to Himself are declarations of monotheism; He is truly the only God in existence. Most of the Israelites doubt that God can save them, or even wants to do so, but He can save them and it is His ultimate aim to do just that. Israel as a nation is an integral part of God's plan for world history; replacement theology is a lie. Notice that God said that apart from Him there is no Savior. Not only does He want to save Israel, but He wants to save everyone who believes. There is no barrier to anyone coming to faith and receiving eternal life. Hell was not made for mankind; it was made for Satan and his angels (Mt. 25:41). Part of His plan for saving the people of the world is His work in preserving Israel and in fulfilling His covenant promises to the nation. His work with and through Israel makes that nation a witness to the world.

God again provides a reason why Israel serves as His witnesses.

Isaiah 43:12 ¹²"It is I who have declared and saved [יָשַׁע] and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God.

Before Israel committed harlotry by indulging in dalliances with false gods, they had a generation that believed in Yahweh (Ex. 4:31, 14:31), and that was the Exodus generation. Their faithfulness did not last long, but they did believe God's Word that he was going to deliver them out of Egypt. He declared, He proclaimed, and He saved. No pagan god delivered them out of Egypt; Yahweh delivered them out of Egypt, and He humiliated Egypt's gods in the process. That part of the world had to have taken notice (cf. the story of Rahab, Joshua 2:8-11).

Declared and proclaimed are the same words used in verse 9.

It is God who is causing to declare and proclaim His salvation of Israel. He is announcing His work to save and He is causing people to hear His words through the witness, Israel. Save, יָשַׁע, means to deliver, to save, to help, to defend referring to saving from ruin, destruction, or harm. The word may or may not have theological meaning. To move from distress to safety requires deliverance generally coming from outside the distressed party. The one who delivers is known as the savior. The verb form here is causative, meaning to cause to be saved.

"The two synonyms [declared] and [proclaimed] have [saved] in the midst. He proclaimed salvation, brought salvation, and in the new afflictions was still ever preaching salvation, without there having been any ... strange or other god in Israel, who proved his existence in any such way, or, in fact, gave any sign of existence at all. This they must themselves confess; and therefore He, and He alone, is *El*, the absolutely mighty

One, i.e., God. And from this time forth He is so, i.e., He, and He only, displays divine nature and divine life" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, volume 7, 7: 426].

As God's national witness to the world, the story recounting the deliverance of Israel, not just at the Exodus but throughout the nation's history, confirms God's righteousness, faithfulness, power, and His work with Israel that no other god could duplicate even if they existed—which they do not!

"What Israel is a particular witness to is that God performed his saving work on their behalf in the absence of any other gods. No other gods offered a heritage to Abraham; no other gods delivered them, a group of nobodies, from Egyptian slavery; no other gods offered themselves to the Hebrews in exclusive covenant. The gods of the foreign nations were conspicuous by their absence. Why should the Israelites now feel that they should look to those foreign gods for help in their hardship? The Israelites themselves are the living evidence that their God is the only one" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 149].

Yahweh affirms His continuing existence, His nature, and His power over anyone foolish enough to think they can reverse His actions.

Isaiah 43:13 ¹³"Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver [נַצִּיל] out of My hand; I act and who can reverse [שׁוּב] it?"

"Even from eternity" is difficult to interpret and it is therefore interpreted in various ways. The word translated eternity is יוֹם (*yôm*) which means day. Motyer believes this is a way to say God is eternal which is obviously the position the NASB translators took. "From ancient days מִיּוֹם (*miyyom*) can mean 'since time began' or 'today' or 'from today on'—a comprehensive claim to a deity which pervades all time" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 270]. This difficulty results in a number of different ways various translation committees have translated this clause. Most of them add words to it that cause the meaning to stray somewhat from the original Hebrew. "Ever since the day was, I am He" (TANAKH); "Even from the day, I am He" (YLT); "Indeed before the day was, I am He" (NKJV); "From this day forward, I am He" (NET Bible) "Also, from today on I am He alone" (HCSB). Young's Literal Translation is the most literal rendering of the Hebrew. This statement is possibly an idiomatic way of saying that God is eternal.

The literal sense of this grammatical construction is that the present on into the future is in view, not the past. "... [A] more literal translation would be 'even from today' (HCSB); NRSV 'henceforth') which focuses on the people's present problems, or 'even from today onward' with a glance toward what will happen in the future" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, 204]. If this is, in fact, an idiomatic expression, then it would be appropriate to consider this to be a construction that relates to eternity, but you can't get that from a literal reading of the text. I haven't seen any commentators claim this is a known idiom, although some have speculated that it is one. An idiom is "a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words," [s.v. "idiom" *The Oxford American College Dictionary*]. It is "an expression whose meaning is not

predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements, as *kick the bucket* or *hang one's head*"

[Dictionary.com, accessed 12 Dec. 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/idiom?s=t>].

No one can undo what God has done whether it is concerning Israel as a nation or individuals as believers.

Deliver, נָצַל, means to draw out, to pull out, to take away, to strip off, to remove. The verb form used is causative meaning that no one can cause those who are securely held in God's hand to be removed from His hand. This should remind us of the Lord's words.

John 10:27–29 ²⁷“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹“My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

Reverse, שׁוּב, means to turn or go back, to return referring to going or coming back to a place, condition, or activity where one has been before. The verb form is causative meaning no one or no thing can cause God to reverse anything, or, conversely, no person or thing can, of themselves, do anything to reverse what God has done; no one can overpower God and undo anything He has determined to come to pass.

The message these verses convey is really very simple. “In this passage, Israel was chosen to proclaim to the Gentile nations two things: first, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the only God; and, second, He is the only Savior and all who seek salvation must find it in Him” [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, 570].

God's faithfulness to Israel and the nation's salvation was proclaimed long before Isaiah by the Psalmist, and all the nations have seen it and benefited from it. Whether or not the nations appreciate it or like it is another issue altogether.

Psalms 98:3³He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Just as God is faithful to those who are in Christ even when they are unfaithful because that is His nature (2 Tim. 2:13), He is faithful to Israel even when the nation is in rebellion against Him. He made covenant promises to Israel that He, who cannot lie, must fulfill.