

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 44:18-20, THE FOLLY OF IDOLATRY, PART 2

Isaiah continues to reveal the foolishness and the blind spiritual condition of those who worship idols and pagan idolatry is stripped bare and revealed to be the folly that it really is. Finally, it is rebuked.

Isaiah 44:18-19 ¹⁸They do not know [יָדַעַ], nor do they understand [בִּינִין], for He has smeared [טָחַתָּה] over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend [שָׂכַל]. ¹⁹No one recalls [שׁוֹבֵב], nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat *it*. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination [תּוֹעֵבָה], I fall down before a block of wood!"

The pronoun "they" refers to pagans worshiping false gods in the form of idols. The Israelites are the subject of these verses, but these truths are applicable to pagan worshipers throughout history. The Israelites, however, had special revelation from the prophets; they were, and still are, totally without excuse! Notice that knowledge, understanding, and comprehension, and more importantly, the lack thereof, are important concepts in terms of what should be the appropriate and godly way of knowing, understanding, and comprehending the folly of idolatry. Idolaters lack knowledge, understanding, and comprehension. Why? Because those things are God given elements in the life of mankind that are only made clear in light of spiritual understanding. God is truth and apart from Him there is no truth whatsoever.

Proverbs 1:7 ⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

John 14:6 ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Psalms 31:5 ⁵Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.

Know, יָדַעַ, means to know, to learn, to perceive, to understand referring to being cognizant or aware of a fact or a specific piece of information; to possess knowledge or information about. To discern may also be an element of the meaning of this word. The sense of this word is about the process of gaining knowledge through experience with objects and circumstances.

This verse is really about discernment. Without God as the basis for truth, discernment skills cannot be developed. That was true in Isaiah's day and that is true today. Those who worship idols cannot even discern the folly of making a god out of something that is also used for fuel. They cannot discern true from false, good from evil, and completely worthwhile from completely worthless.

Discern, *בִּיַן*, means to discern, to perceive, to understand. The concept of insight is an important element of this word. It has the sense of mentally understanding an idea or a situation. The ability to exercise good judgment is part of the concept of exercising discernment which is essentially the ability to discern between things such as good or evil. In this case, the ability to discern between the reality of a transcendent Creator God and impotent, non-existent gods made out of materials created by the Creator God is the issue. "The verb refers to knowledge which is superior to the mere gathering of data. It is necessary to know how to use knowledge one possesses.... *bin* is a power of judgment and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge" [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "*בִּיַן*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 103].

In Hebrew, understand is a synonym for discern; they are the same word. Even though the word "discern" is not used in most English translations, I think "discern" may be the best word to use in this verse instead of "understand." The ESV is the only version I regularly consult that uses the word "discern" in both verses, 18 and 19. The HCSB uses the word "insight" in verse 19 which is also better. Discernment describes the ability to differentiate and discriminate between two or more things, but understand is more restricted to comprehending the meaning of something. I'm not saying that using "understand" is incorrect, I'm saying that "discernment" is a better description in English for what is happening in this verse which describes people who are unable to see the difference between a piece of wood used for fuel and another piece of wood originating from the same wood source that is somehow thought to represent a divine being.

Isaiah 44:18–19 ¹⁸They know not, nor do they discern ... ¹⁹No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say ... (ESV).

Know is in the perfect verb form representing completed action. Their lack of knowledge is final and complete. Understand is an imperfect verb form representing the fact that their lack of discernment skills is an ongoing problem for them. They have no knowledge at all because they have rejected what they intrinsically know in their heart (Rom. 1:18-20); therefore, they have no basis for developing the discernment skills that would turn them from idolatry to the Creator God. That is not to say that they can never know; they could know if they would seek to find out, but they don't because they do not want to know.

Comprehend, *שָׁכַל*, means to look at, to behold, to be prudent, to understand, or to comprehend. It is a word that refers to possessing the cognitive skills to mentally perceive an idea or a situation. The word primarily refers to the ability to act prudently based on what one discerns. It is essentially another synonym for mental comprehension and the application of godly discernment skills based on what one knows. This word is translated "understand" in Jeremiah 9:24.

That brings us to the same hardness of heart issue that was so evident concerning Pharaoh in the Exodus story. As people harden their own hearts, it becomes more and more difficult for them to realize they need to turn to God and be saved. The more they harden their hearts by rejecting God and rejecting His truth, the more their ability to know and discern is weakened. At some point, God just gives them completely over to their sin and rebellion. While I do not believe that people completely lose the ability to believe

and be saved as long as they have life left in their mortal bodies, I do believe they can harden their hearts to the point where it becomes practically impossible for them to believe and experience the new birth, a spiritual birth, that results in eternal life.

Romans 1:24–25, 28–32 ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.... ²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are gossips*, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

God is always at work drawing people to Him through the general revelation of creation. That was true in the ancient past, and that is still true today. The Apostle John revealed three ways that God has worked, and still works, to draw people to Him so that they might believe and be saved. God has always drawn people to Him by means of revelation. For most of the world this relates to general revelation, the creation, but it is also through special revelation, the Scriptures. God the Father is always at work drawing lost mankind to Him so that they might be saved.

John 6:44 ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Furthermore, Christ Jesus draws people to Himself by means of His sacrificial death on the cross. This truth was not yet available prior to the cross, but the knowledge of a coming Redeemer was available prior to the cross.

Genesis 3:15 ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

John 12:32 ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

Finally, the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world. His indwelling ministry is different in this dispensation, but His convicting ministry has always been operative.

John 16:8 ⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

Pagans have no excuse for rejecting God and worshiping idols. None!

This whole situation is a conundrum. How can it be that people who think the same piece of wood that provides fuel can also be a god who presumably has the ability to do god-like things? For those who have a spiritual mind, this is a very confusing situation because

the answer is so obvious to the spiritual person. We do not understand the thinking behind these situations because they are so evident to us, but the spiritually dead person does not have the basis upon which to formulate sound decision-making capabilities.

If God actually made them blind and uncomprehending, which presumably renders them not responsible because God brought it about and not them, then why are they held accountable for their rebellion? They are held accountable because, as Paul noted, they suppress what knowledge they have in unrighteousness, that is, they deliberately and rebelliously reject what they already know (Rom. 1:18-20)—and they do, in fact, know the Creator God. Their stupidity and rebellion manifests itself in blind eyes and uncomprehending minds. It is not that God is doing that to them; they are doing it to themselves. God simply gives them over to the consequences of their spiritual rebellion. But there is a concept of judicial blindness that God can impose on people once they have blinded themselves and hardened their hearts to such a degree that He renders them senseless so that they will continue to believe the lie and perish. However, we always need to remember that as long as there is life in any human being, there is still the possibility of justification salvation.

We have the example of the Exodus and hardening of Pharaoh's heart, but the New Testament may have the best example. After the Rapture of the Church, the people left on earth are those who have rejected Christ; every believer is gone and, at least immediately after the Rapture, there are no believers left on earth. They have been deceived and completely fallen for the satanic lie. Since that is their state of mind, they will receive a God sent deluding influence giving them over to what they want, which is the lie.

2 Thessalonians 2:9–12 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹²in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Once the Tribulation begins, those who believe the lie of antichrist and believe in him, will, due to their deliberate rejection of Christ Jesus and His truth, be allowed to believe in the lie that leads to judgment and ultimately to eternal spiritual death. The concept is not unlike Isaiah's words in Isaiah 6:9-10 when the condemnation of the people involved the fact that they could see and hear, but they could not understand. They had insensitive hearts, dull ears, and dim eyes all of which worked together to prevent the understanding that leads to belief. The same concept is at work here concerning idolatry.

“Humans could have done differently, but we did not want to. We did not, and do not, want a sovereign God to whom we owe grateful and total obedience. We want a universe in our own image, whose limits and benefits are dictated by us. That end, according to Isaiah and the other biblical writers, demands intellectual suicide, since this is so obviously not the case, but the end has always seemed worth it to us. So God visits on the pagan mind the gathering darkness it has freely chosen” [John N. Oswalt, *The*

New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66, 185].

Smeared, *סָמַר*, means to spread over, to be smeared over, stuck shut, or covered. It is referring to causing not to understand or to comprehend something, conceived of as smearing over.

In this context, it is a theological metaphor indicating that at some point, as part of His divine temporal disciplinary program for Israel, He will punish them for their idolatry by making it impossible for them to discern the difference between Himself and some piece of wood, that each person decided part of which was going to be a god and part of which was going to be used for the mundane purposes of making life comfortable in terms of fuel for heating and cooking. That is a nonsensical thing, but Satan so confuses the spiritually dead mind that the nonsensical becomes what is supposed to be good sense. Instead, it is insanity. This metaphor involves spiritual blindness leading to the inability to accurately comprehend truth and furthermore, to be able to accurately discern between the truth and the lie, good and evil, and right action and wrong action. God allows them to go their own way and the more they go on their own way, the more they are blinded and hardened to truth, and the more lost in their own rebellion they become.

We can see this same situation all around us today. But none of this is new. Isaiah already addressed this issue earlier in his book in his condemnation of wicked Israel.

Isaiah 5:20–21 ²⁰Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! ²¹Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

This is a perfect description of fallen mankind and the worldview of those who worship anything other than God. Paganism is simply the result of man's inherent need to worship something or someone, but, blinded by rebellion, fallen man cannot discern between what is worthy of worship and what is not. The mind of fallen man is beset by difficulties concerning spiritual matters because he has no truth basis for exercising knowledge and discernment skills, which are only born of God, and what skills he does possess are skills imparted by the adversary, Satan, which are therefore only evil, insane, and subversive.

The smearing of the eyes and the minds can also be the product of generational indoctrination and training which is the product of a Satan worshiping, God rejecting fallen world system. The people immersed in pagan cultures, living out a pagan worldview, worshiping pagan gods, rejecting the knowledge they know from general revelation and from the divine implantation of the knowledge of the one true God that he has placed within them, are indoctrinated into pagan theology and the pagan worldview from generation to generation. In that sense, their eyes and their minds are dulled by being plastered over simply by means of cultural immersion and indoctrination without any thought being given to the illogical, nonintellectual nonsense being propagated. The rejection of God for pagan thought feeds on itself and creates a dangerous downward spiral that, just like a whirlpool, is very difficult to escape.

The NASB translation that begins verse 19, is an accurate representation of the thought of the text in English, but it is not a literal rendering of the text itself.

In Hebrew, the text reads, וְלֹא יִשִּׁיב אֶל-לִבּוֹ, and is literally translated, "and not he causes to bring back to his heart." The NASB translates this clause: "No one recalls."

Isaiah 44:19 ¹⁹And no one takes it to heart ... (LEB).

Isaiah 44:19 ¹⁹And none doth turn *it* back unto his heart ... (YLT).

This clause in the sentence is saying that people are ignoring the differences they can plainly see in a piece of wood between what they personally decide can be either fuel or a god. If people actually discerned the logical implications of what they are seeing and doing, they should be able to realize the folly of their idolatry. The fact that people cannot look at an inanimate piece of wood that can be used for fuel and come to the realization that something like that cannot possibly be divine showcases just how foolish, ignorant, and illogical the darkened human spirit and soul is when operating under the sway of Satan and his world system. It is truly insanity.

In terms of application, what do we see all around us today? Is mankind any different today than it was 2,500 years ago and longer? Men who think they are women; women who think they are men. We see people undergoing surgical mutilation in vain attempts to change their sex—which is determined at the DNA level and can never actually be changed. We see boys/men allowed to participate in girl's/women's sports simply because they claim to be female where they, based on their innate masculine, muscular superiority dominate the female athletes and destroy their opportunity to fairly compete in athletic competitions. Marriage has been redefined to mean that whatever perversion anyone can imagine is legitimized and sanctioned by the government. Today we see people worshiping government as the solution for all the ills of society. Government is run by Satan's world system so who are people who think government is the answer to mankind's problems—whether Democrat or Republican, left or right, capitalist or socialist—really worshiping? I'm not saying one isn't better than the other, but if you think government, any government other than the Messiah King's government, is the answer to man's problems and you take that thought to the point of worshiping that government, who are you really worshiping regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum? Another aspect of all this is that mankind is thought to be evolving into an ever better and better class of beings who can control their own destiny. All of this, and so much more in today's world that could be discussed, is insanity. The pagan heart of man from years past, apart from God, is still the pagan heart of man today. Pagan thought, which is illogical and ignorant, keeps people from recognizing the folly of idolatry. Furthermore, paganism and the darkness in which it exists keeps people from seeing the light of God's truth.

How is all of this we see around us today any different than the people of Isaiah's day who looked at a piece of wood and decided, in their own mind, which part of that wood was going to be used for fuel and which part was going to become their god? How can anyone in their right mind ever even consider it to be true that the same piece of wood, picked out by man, could be used not only for cooking food and heating, but also for

making something that is supposed to be a divine being with all the powers and authority such a state entails? I'm suggesting that the pagan insanity exhibited in that situation is no different than the insanity exhibited today in the situations I've described above. The human heart is only evil continually which is a timeless truth.

Jeremiah 17:9 ⁹“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

I can't help but think that this is also a revelation about the fact that idolaters reject the knowledge they already intrinsically know about God, because He has placed it in their minds (Rom. 1:18-20), and they therefore never bring it to heart or, more accurately, to mind. If they would bring to mind what they already know about God and acknowledge the truth of it, they would realize the futility of their pagan pursuits. I couldn't find any other commentators to verify that thought, but I don't think we can ignore the fact that people ignore, i.e., do not bring back to heart, what they already know about God by means of His general revelation. If any pagan responds to His drawing ministry and seeks Him out, He will ensure that they receive further revelation. Revelation, once accepted, allows light and light leads a person out of darkness. Truth and reality become more evident the more one leaves the darkness behind. Eventually, people are led to the point where they must make a commitment to fully embrace the light or return to the darkness. This is, of course, a timeless truth, but the paganism of Isaiah's day is used here to present it. Until a person comes to faith, everyone is a pagan of one sort or another.

What does the pagan do with the wood that is not burnt for fuel? He turns it into an abomination, a detestable thing, i.e., an idol.

Abomination, תועבה, means an abomination, detestable thing, or idol referring to something that is an abomination which causes horror and disgust in others because such things are loathsome and abhorrent. Something that is thought of as an abomination may be considered a thing of horror. The word may refer to anything that is offensive, but in this context, it is referring to a carved image made out of wood and meant to serve as a god. “Fundamentally, tō'ēbā denotes the persons, things, or practices that offend one's ritual or moral order, while t'ḇ delineates the loathing of that offensive person, thing, or practice. The abominable or repugnant nature is determined by a person's character, values, or culture.... Pagan worship practices, deceit and insubordination within the covenant nation, and superficial worship of Yahweh constitute three major realms of abhorrent activities” [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. “תעב,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 4:314-315].

In this context, the viewpoint of God is important for identifying the abomination as an idol which is obviously something that God hates. He is a jealous God and He tolerates no competition even if it is from lifeless material objects made from the things of the created order.

Exodus 34:14 ¹⁴—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—

Deuteronomy 5:7-9 ⁷You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁸You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in

the water under the earth. ⁹You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

“Part of those divine expectations entailed the avoidance and loathing of certain prohibited items and practices. These prohibited issues were demarcated by Yahweh himself and because of that are incompatible with his character and must be rejected and abhorred by any Yahweh worshiper. All of these abominations constitute a threat to the harmony and existence of Israel, Yahweh's covenant community. The fundamental issue appears to be Yahweh's desire to preserve the purity of his chosen people so as to enable them to clearly mirror his character to the surrounding pagan nations” [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. “תעב,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 315].

Any Israelite dalliance with idols and the worship associated with idols was an abomination to Yahweh. The worship practices of the Canaanites were an abomination and participating in them made the participant himself an abomination.

Deuteronomy 18:9–14 ⁹“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. ¹⁰“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹²“For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. ¹³“You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴“For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so.

Leviticus 18:30 ³⁰“Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God.”

When Israel was being prepared for entry into Canaan after the Exodus, they were told to destroy all the graven images, i.e., idols, they found there. Their failure to do so carried serious consequences. If they disobeyed, they would be destroyed just like the idols were supposed to be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 7:25–26 ²⁵“The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. ²⁶“You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.

When Joshua was preparing to die, he charged the Israelites to choose between serving Yahweh and serving pagan gods in the land of Canaan (specifically the Amorites in this Scripture) (Joshua 24:14-28). In response, the Israelites swore to worship Yahweh alone; however, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Joshua told them they would sin against

Him by serving foreign gods. If they failed to live up to their agreement to worship Yahweh alone in gratitude for all the good things He had done for them and in obedience to the Law, then He would harm them and consume them. The people made a covenant with Yahweh that day to serve Him alone, but, of course, Joshua was right, and they could not keep the covenant they made not to worship idols and participate in pagan Canaanite worship practices. One of the consequences for their idolatry would prove to be destruction at the hands of foreign nations, Assyria in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Babylon in the Southern Kingdom, Judah. Of course, the nation was reestablished after the Babylonian captivity only to be destroyed again at the hands of Rome as divine discipline for their rejection of the Messiah King.

The penalty for following after pagan gods was death (Dt. 13:1-18). If a prophet misled the people into following other gods, he was to be put to death. If a family member led someone into idolatry, he was to be put to death. If a city departed from God to worship pagan deities, the city was to be destroyed and all the booty in the city devoted to destruction under the ban as a burnt offering to Yahweh.

Actually, Isaiah's warning to the Israelites concerning the abomination of worshipping pagan deities was another in a long line of warnings against engaging in such practices. They didn't listen before, and they didn't listen to Isaiah at this time either. It is also interesting to note that this condemnation of idolatry immediately follows a section of Scripture that began the chapter that promises redemption and blessing for Israel. Israel's rebellion and disobedience are always condemned, temporal discipline is always imposed, and Israel always continues to rebel!

Isaiah 44:20 ²⁰He feeds on ashes; a deceived [תָּלַל] heart has turned [נָטָה] him aside. And he cannot deliver [נָצַל] himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

The end result of wood, after being used for fuel, is nothing left but ashes. If a graven image made out of wood is subjected to fire, it too will be reduced to nothing but ashes. What kind of god is it that can be reduced to ashes? The answer is that only a "not god" can be reduced to ashes. The true God is eternal and indestructible. "When wood is reduced to its substantial reality, what is it but ashes? The idol may impress, but it is in reality no more than the substrate, the dead embers" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 280]. Feeding on ashes represents a pretty disgusting meal to say the least! It is certainly not a nourishing meal, in fact, eating ashes cannot be pleasant, so why do it? Why not stop doing it? The end result of worshipping an idol can have an end result that is no better than eating ashes. It is worse than nothing; it is disgusting and even harmful!

Deceived, תָּלַל, means to deceive, to cause to fall, to be false, or to be dishonest. This verb form is causative but passive, meaning an outside deception has acted upon the heart and brought deception into it by means of untruths that were embraced as truth. Obviously, all people are born into unbelief and rebellion. Once they are born, most people are indoctrinated into various forms of pagan worldviews and religions. This is the deception mankind's hearts are embracing that causes them to turn away from the truth.

Turned, *נָטָה*, means to stretch out, spread out, to extend, or to turn away. This verb form is causative, active meaning that once the lie is believed, the truth is stretched into the lie, and the person is caused to deliberately turn away from the truth.

Deliver, *נָצַל*, means to draw out, to pull out, to be delivered or to deliver oneself referring to rescuing someone from harm or evil, and in some cases imprisonment.

The end result is total deception and enslavement to the lie. The pagan cannot cause himself to be delivered out of paganism and be saved because the lie has been believed. He cannot even recognize the lie that is right in front of his eyes in the form of a lifeless, impotent piece of wood that he has fashioned into what he fancies to be his god.

We do have to acknowledge that no one can save themselves, but we also know that anyone who responds to the general revelation God has provided and seeks after the truth revealed in it, can find it. Paganism blinds people to the truth of general revelation so that it is rejected and they instead turn it into a lie that leads to spiritual death unless overcome. Once people reject the truth, they can do nothing else but overtly embrace pagan thought as we noted that Paul detailed in Romans 1.

When people reject the truth, God gives them over to their sin and their rebellion. Three times in Romans 1 the statement that "God gave them over to ..." identifies the results of embracing the lie of Satan's world system and rejecting the truth of the Creator God. He gives them over to "the lusts of their hearts to impurity" referring to worshiping the "creature rather than the Creator," (v. 24), to "degrading passions" referring to sexual perversion that violates the natural functions of human sexuality (v. 26), and to "a depraved mind" that leads mankind into all manner of personal sin patterns (v. 28).

In terms of the Israelites, they not only had the general revelation of the creation, they had the special revelation that God provided them from the time of their formation as a nation. The nation's embrace of Canaanite paganism was inexcusable. They had been warned time and time again before the conquest of the land and once they were in the land all the way up to the Babylonian captivity; therefore, they were without excuse. The Law of Moses was explicitly clear:

Exodus 20:1–5 ¹Then God spoke all these words, saying, ²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³"You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Israel has truly reaped what Israel has sown for the nation's sins of rebellion and disobedience.