

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 46:3-9, BABYLON'S IDOLS; ISRAEL'S SALVATION, PART 2

The first two verses of this chapter strongly suggest the defeat of Babylon via the figurative defeat of the primary Babylonian gods Bel and Nebo. The question is, is this speaking about Babylon's defeat at the hands of Cyrus, or is it a reference to the future, final defeat of Satan's Babylonian world system? It may refer to the former as a type of the latter. The blessings the Bible describes as flowing from the defeat of Babylon have never been literally and completely fulfilled. The next two verses reinforce the idea that the end times are at least the primary subject.

Isaiah 46:3–4 ³“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, You who have been borne [עָמַם] by Me from birth [בְּטֶן] And have been carried [נִשָּׂא] from the womb [רֶחֶם]; ⁴Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done [עָשִׂיתִּי] it, and I will carry you; And I will bear you and I will deliver [מִלֵּט] you.

There are seven first-person personal pronouns used in the English text of these verses referring to Yahweh (the NASB unnecessarily adds one more for what they think is a clarification of the text, “borne by Me,”). The only translations that insert “by Me” are those in the line of the King James Version (KJV, NASB, NKJV, ASV, ESV). This arrangement of the first-person personal pronouns is actually more pronounced in the Hebrew text where the personal pronoun “I” is followed by a verbal construction rendered “I will” (imperfect verb) or “I have” (perfect verb) resulting in “I, I will bear ...,” “I, I have done ...,” “I, I will carry ...,” and “I, I will bear ...” (Is. 46:4). Using a literal translation of the Hebrew text, there are actually twelve first-person personal pronouns in these two verses that refer to Yahweh. While not apparent to us in our English Bibles, this Hebrew grammatical form is very emphatic. God is doing these things to, with, and for Israel; Israel cannot do these things on her own.

God's involvement with Israel is never ending and it is always designed to see to it that His plan for history, throughout the Bible, but particularly in the Old Testament and as revealed through the prophet Isaiah as the program relates to Israel, culminates in the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants He made with Israel and in the King ruling from the Davidic Throne in the Messianic Kingdom. Obviously, the church has a role to fulfill as well, but that is an unknown factor at the time of Isaiah.

What is once again being revealed here is the sharp contrast between the nature of God and the nature of idols, and the relationship God has with His people contrasted with the relationship between idol worshippers and their idols. Idols have to be carried around by the worshippers; they are lifeless and can do nothing on their own. God, however, carries His people along, and He is in no way dependent on them for anything. Israel cannot carry God along in any way for any reason. That does not mean that God's people have not been, and do not continue to be, a burden to God, but it does mean that He will never forsake them because they are being a burden; He still forgives them and restores them.

Isaiah 43:24–25 ²⁴“You have bought Me not sweet cane with money, Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices; Rather you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities. ²⁵“I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

The house of Jacob and the remnant of Israel are commanded to hear what the Lord is saying through the prophet. All Israelites are the subject of these promises from God to sustain them. The house of Jacob refers to both believers and unbelievers coexisting throughout the history of the nation until the Messianic Kingdom begins. The believing remnant is included in these promises, of course, but they will inherit the covenant promises in the Kingdom whereas the unbelieving Israelites will not.

Figurative language is used here to refer to the nation. This is not about individual Israelites from birth to death; it is about the nation and the people who comprise the nation as a group. It is about the nation being created by God and sustained by God throughout history until the nation is finally delivered at the end. The fact that the Israelites have greatly suffered throughout history does not mean that God is not sustaining them along the way. It does mean that Israel's suffering is part of God's disciplinary program for the nation for their rebellion along the way. Whatever happens, God will not allow the nation to be completely destroyed.

The fact of Israel's special creation by God is affirmed by the idea that the nation has been carried by God from birth. He created them, and He sustains them throughout all the travails the nation has experienced and will continue to experience until the Kingdom begins.

Borne, נָשָׂא, means to carry a load. It is the same word translated “burdensome” in verse 1. Israel is a difficult load, but the nation is a load that that God continually bears. “Borne,” is the most frequently used word for this translation, but I like the word “carried” better (LEB, NET Bible) simply due to the fact that “borne,” b-o-r-n-e, which does mean carried or transported, sounds like the word for birth, “born,” b-o-r-n, and is easily confused with it, especially given this context which relates to the birth experience.

Birth, בִּטּוֹן, means belly, womb, stomach, innermost parts, or abdomen. It refers to the reproductive organ in the pelvic cavity of females that houses a developing baby during pregnancy. This clause is literally rendered: “The ones being carried from [the] belly (or womb).” “From the womb,” (*beten*), is an idiomatic expression meaning “from birth.”

The NIV translation translates this word in this verse as “conceived,” but the word does not mean conception. Given the nature of paganism's connection to fertility rites and the text's identification of birth, the word “conceived” is incorrect. “What is excluded is the idea that God has given birth to the Israelites. That image is not found here, nor elsewhere in the OT. God may give form to persons in the womb, but it is not his womb, nor is it a womb that he has impregnated. It is only after birth that God enters the picture as one who carries. This situation is almost certainly intentional, to distance God from the fertility rites of pagan religion with their sexualizing of deity in order to promote the continuity between Creator and creation” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 230, n. 18].

Done, עָשָׂה, means to do, to make, to labor, or to create referring to carrying out or performing an action or course of action. With the exception of the NASB, all of the other translations I routinely use for comparison purposes translate this word as “made,” which is appropriate and, I believe, preferable given God's Creator relationship with the nation. The TANAKH translates the word as “I was the Maker,” and the ISV uses the word “creator,” both of which are perfectly acceptable.

Carried, נָשָׂא, means to carry, to take up, to lift up referring to bearing, carrying, in order to pick up and move an object in linear movement. The sense of this word is to move while supporting.

Womb, רֶחֶם, means womb; this word is most frequently used to refer to a woman's womb (26 out of 31 occurrences of the word).

Both “borne” and “carried” are passive verbs. Israel is doing nothing, contributing nothing, to the survival of the nation as it moves to fulfill the nation's divinely assigned destiny. God is carrying the nation along in the midst of all the temporal divine discipline Israel is undergoing. God is doing the work of preserving and sustaining and God will do the work of deliverance when the time comes to do it.

It seems to be noteworthy that the metaphor moves from birth to the years of old age, but it does not reference death. Israel is not going to die as a nation; Israel will be delivered into the Messianic Kingdom as a nation. Delivery is mentioned in this verse; the destruction of Israel is never mentioned. Yet, through all of this, Israel is a passive participant. The nation is incapable of surviving on its own; God is protecting them along the way.

God does not change in any way; He is who He is, but He specifically reveals to Israel that He will always be the same in terms of His interaction with them as a nation. “I will be the same” (v. 4) is literally “I [am] He” which brings to mind the covenant name of Yahweh going all the way back to Moses and the burning bush (Ex. 3:13-16). The name “I AM” relates to an eternally existent, unchanging God. “The one who says “I Am” is self-existent, self-dependent, and noncontingent, as well as unchanging. He is above the changes, the limitations, the unforeseen of time and space. He can indeed carry us through whatever may come to us” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 231]. The unchanging God who made promises to Israel must fulfill those promises with Israel, and they relate all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In terms of application, this situation should give us a great deal of assurance to know that we have a God who keeps His promises to Israel, because we should expect nothing less from Him regarding His promise to save all who believe in Christ Jesus. He who promises to save us the moment we believe, will fulfill that promise just as He will fulfill His promises to Israel. If God will not keep His promises to Israel, then what makes anyone today believe He will keep His promises to us? Because He is God, He can do nothing less.

From the birth of the nation over 3,000 years ago, God has been carrying the continuous, burdensome load that Israel has been. He has been carrying that load the entire time,

and He will carry it through to the end. The concept that God has been carrying Israel along under His providential provision, support, and protection is not confined to these verses. That is a theme expressed throughout the Old Testament. In other Scriptures, God, in relation to Israel, has been pictured as a father carrying his son, a shepherd carrying a sheep or a lamb, and an eagle catching and carrying its chicks on its wings when teaching them to fly on their own.

Deuteronomy 1:31 ³¹and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.'

Psalms 28:9 ⁹Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; Be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.

Exodus 19:4 ⁴You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.

Deuteronomy 32:11 ¹¹"Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.

Later in Isaiah, in a section of Scripture remembering God's mercy in His relationship with Israel, the prophet declares that "... He lifted them and carried them all the days of old" (Is. 63:9).

Finally, it will be God who will deliver the nation. Israel will not and cannot deliver itself. The word "deliver," *נָצַח*, means to save someone. This verb form represents intensity. The time of complete and final deliverance will be at the end of the Tribulation which will be the most intense period of destruction levied on the earth and mankind since the Flood and which necessitates an equally intense response from God to bring it to an end and to deliver all Israel.

In verse 5, there is another declarative statement by God that there is no person, no thing, no idol, no nothing that is comparable to Him, equal to Him, and like Him.

Isaiah 46:5 ⁵"To whom would you liken Me And make Me equal and compare Me, That we would be alike?"

The three different Hebrew verbs used here—liken, equal, compare, alike—are essentially synonyms. The point is that there is nothing that can be considered to be equal to, comparable with, or like the Creator God. He is unique, only He has divine attributes, and there is no thing and no one else like Him. There is no category of beings referred to as "gods" of which He is only one among many. He is the only God and there is no category of "gods" to which He must belong. He is totally separate from that which He has created, and He exists apart from anything that rebellious mankind has conjured up out of the depths of a depraved mind.

The stupidity of idol worship continues to be exposed in the next two verses, they mark the end of God's discourse on and condemnation of idols as it has been presented in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 46:6–7 ⁶“Those who lavish gold from the purse And weigh silver on the scale Hire a goldsmith, and he makes it *into* a god; They bow down, indeed they worship it. ⁷“They lift it upon the shoulder *and* carry it; They set it in its place and it stands *there*. It does not move from its place. Though one may cry [צַעַק] to it, it cannot answer [עֲנֶה]; It cannot deliver him from his distress [צָרָה].

Idols have to be made from created materials because they have no existence as beings. Idols did not exist prior to the creation. Presumably, gods can do things which implies the ability to think and to exercise power, but manmade idols are inert with no ability to think or to do anything. They can't even move themselves from place to place! Once they get there, they just sit there and do nothing. There can be nothing in common between the God who made everything and a so-called god made out of something that is itself a part of God's original creation.

The very fact that man thinks he can provide some sort of created raw material to a workman who can make a god out of that material is a revelation of the depths of depravity since the Fall, and the subsequent sin nature mankind acquired because of it, that has been placed into the mind of mankind. That is simply stupid, even insane, thinking, yet the majority of mankind has been thinking that way since the Fall. Because Satan is insane—it is, after all, insanity to think that the creature can defeat the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator God—the world system he runs and the people who accept his satanic rule over them are also operating according to the dictates of an insane system. That insanity is further emphasized because every human being who has the physical capacity to rationally think already knows the Creator God by means of His creation, because He has placed that knowledge within them (Rom. 1:18-21).

People bowing before and worshiping an inanimate piece of created material in light of the fact the Creator God is already known to them, is the height of insanity. As a god, these things can do nothing. People can call upon them all they want, but it will not do any good; the idol cannot answer their cries.

Cry out, צַעַק, means to shout, to call out, to cry out referring to crying out with an appeal for something or some action, which is often done in desperation or difficulty. Man instinctively knows that God exists and that He can help in times of need. The problem is that mankind mostly looks to nonexistent gods to provide that help, and those inanimate images cannot answer.

Answer, עֲנֶה, means to answer, respond, or reply referring to responding to a question or circumstance with a verbal reply or even occasionally an action.

Distress, צָרָה, means trouble, need, distress, anxiety, calamity or enmity all of which are conditions in which man frequently finds himself while trying to make it through life in a broken, sinful, fallen world. It may represent a state of intense inner turmoil, physical pain, or terror. It refers to a state of very unfavorable circumstances with a focus on the

emotional pain and distress of the situation. The sense of the word is one of an oppressive state of physical, mental, social, or economic activity.

In this context, there is a spiritual aspect to this word. The word is used to describe the land of a people who are in rebellion against the Lord and rejecting Him as being full of distress, darkness, and gloomy anguish, yet, the Lord wants to bring into such a place the light of salvation which dispels darkness and gloom.

Crying out to God is not unusual; believers do it all the time. People in distress do that all time. Mankind has the intrinsic knowledge concerning their own lives that they need something greater than themselves to help them out in times of trouble. The difference is that Yahweh is the one, the only true God and only He can help anyone in distress. As we just noted, the sad fact is that people already know the truth, but they reject it. Idols are deaf, dumb, mute, immobile, and completely inanimate; they cannot deliver themselves or anyone else. All that the powers behind the idols are capable of delivering is destruction. That is in sharp contrast to the fact that Yahweh can deliver all who call on His name whether for temporal issues of distress, or for the distress that comes with being a lost soul in need of a Savior.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to proclaiming the power of God, who is the only true God, the One who knows the end from the beginning, the righteous, sovereign One who will accomplish His plan for history and which itself will culminate with the salvation of Israel.

He begins by reminding those who are in rebellion against Him to remember who He is.

Isaiah 46:8 ⁸“Remember [זָכַר] this, and be assured [אָצַשׁ]; Recall [שׁוּב] it to mind, you transgressors [פְּשָׁעִים].

It is not like the Israelites didn't already know the identity and the things of God. They are commanded to “remember” which suggests they already knew these things but had departed from them, and to “recall” which is better translated to return to the things they need to remember. God is calling them to remember the things revealed to the Israelites long before and into the present time and return to those things.

Remember, זָכַר, means to remember, to recollect, to bring to mind referring to recalling information or events.

Recall, שׁוּב, means to turn back, to return, to go or come back to a place, condition, or activity where one has been before. In its most basic sense, it means to return by making linear motion back to a point previously departed.

They need to stand up and be men to do that, but it is nothing they cannot do when it is Yahweh who is carrying them along and ensuring their preservation.

Assurance, אָצַשׁ, means to act as a man, to be of strong courage, i.e., to be encouraged or emboldened. It has the sense of being able to face and deal with danger or fear without flinching. It has another meaning of to fix in mind or to be assured. Some

theologians believe it means to stand firm, but that does not fit the context. They are not to stand; they are to return to where they once were. This word is not well attested and the meaning is not only uncertain, it is really undetermined and there are a number of ways used to interpret it. Most lexicons define it as to act as a man with courage or to be assured, but neither is certain. My opinion is that acting as men of courage fits the context well. The Israelites need to remember and then have the courage to act like men, abandon idolatry and rebellion, and return to fellowship with Yahweh. It takes courage to turn from the world system, which is completely hostile to the things of God, in which the majority of the world's people, including our friends and relatives, are immersed.

Isaiah 46:8 ⁸“Remember this, and show yourselves men, Turn [it] back, O transgressors, to the heart” (LSV).

Isaiah 46:8 ⁸“Remember this and be brave; take it to heart, you transgressors! (CSB)

Isaiah 46:8 ⁸Remember this, and shew yourselves men, Turn *it* back, O transgressors, to the heart. (YLT)

Isaiah 46:8 ⁸Remember this, and shew yourselves men: Bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors. (KJV)

Departing from God to worship idols has a deleterious effect on one's ability to realize the truth. Immersing oneself in idolatry far removes a person from the one true God. That makes it easy to become more a part of the world religious system and less a part of God's program for the world. Being immersed in the worship of other gods implies a belief on the part of the worshiper that other gods exist, which would also serve to draw idol worshiping people, particularly the Israelites who should know better, away from God.

“What is the antidote to unbelief? Memory. God is not to be known in the endlessly recurring cycles of nature, mind numbing in their glorious repetitions, but in his stark, unrepeatable intrusions into history. Remember those moments, say Moses and all the prophets, for as you do, you will see reality. You will see God as he really is and know that you can entrust yourself to him” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 235].

Sometimes, theologians tend to forget how rebellious and idolatrous Israel was at this point in the nation's history. Constable, for example, stated, “[R]emembering is the antidote to unbelief. Israel needed much encouragement, as well as stern warnings, because she was only a small island of monotheists in a sea of polytheists” [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:132]. They are being called to remember, and they did need encouragement as well as stern warnings, but they didn't remember, they didn't listen, and they didn't obey. Israel's monotheism at this point in the nation's history is very overstated by Constable. Obviously, the nation was originally created to be monotheistic, but the reality was they were going through the motions of Judaism while embracing paganism, interrupted only during short periods of time when the nation turned back to Yahweh and turned away from idolatry which happened under the few faithful kings of Judah such as Hezekiah and Josiah. There was, of course, a believing remnant—that is not an issue; the believing remnant has always

been and will always be present in the nation. However, idolatry was rampant in Israel, it had even invaded the Temple, and we need to remember that idolatry and the rejection of the Law by their failure to observe the Sabbaths were the ultimate reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and for the Babylonian captivity. That is clear in the Scriptures.

During Jeremiah's ministry, the people were in open rebellion against God to the point that they refused to listen to Him and defiantly refused to obey Him, in favor of continuing in their idolatry. They had an arrogant, rebellious spirit.

Jeremiah 6:16–17 ¹⁶Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk *in it*.' ¹⁷"And I set watchmen over you, *saying*, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'

After the Babylonian conquest of Judah, Jeremiah was among the Israelites who fled to Egypt although he was an unwilling participant in that move. He was contending with them concerning their idolatry, and the people proudly reminded the prophet that idolatry had been a long-standing practice in Judah.

Jeremiah 44:16–19 ¹⁶"As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you! ¹⁷"But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for *then* we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. ¹⁸"But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine." ¹⁹"And," *said the women*, "when we were burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and were pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands that we made for her *sacrificial cakes* in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?"

This is a very open embrace of idolatry and rejection of the God of Israel.

Jeremiah 44:25 ²⁵thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, as follows: 'As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled *it* with your hands, saying, "We will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her." Go ahead and confirm your vows, and certainly perform your vows!'

This attitude led to their destruction and very few of those who went to Egypt ever returned to Israel because they had continued in the pagan ways of their forefathers in Israel.

In Ezekiel 8, God provided Ezekiel with a vision of the idolatry that was taking place at the gates and in the Temple. Later, after Ezekiel and some of the Israelites were already living in exile in Babylon, but before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the Lord condemned them for following after their fathers' spiritual idolatry. Not coincidentally, this

condemnation immediately precedes the prophecy of the Tribulation judgment for Israel in the end times.

Ezekiel 20:27, 30-31 ²⁷... 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed Me by acting treacherously against Me.... ³⁰"Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and play the harlot after their detestable things? ³¹"When you offer your gifts, when you cause your sons to pass through the fire, you are defiling yourselves with all your idols to this day....

The idols are worthless, but God is not and He has the deeds to prove it. He is the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe. The Israelites knew that better than any other people on earth knew it, but they needed to remember these things in order to walk in the manner they were created to walk.

It is obviously very apparent that addressing the Israelites as transgressors is quite appropriate. Transgress, *קָשַׁע*, means to rebel, to transgress, to break with or away from referring to being in open defiance of an authority or standard of an agreement. It has the sense of acting in disregard of laws, commandments, or promises such as covenants.

By remembering the things revealed by the Creator God and by remembering the miraculous works of God, the Israelites should realize that God is the only true God, that He is the ever-present God of Israel, and He will see to it that Israel realizes the covenant promises made to the patriarchs.

What are the Israelite transgressors to remember?

Isaiah 46:9 ⁹"Remember the former [ראשון] things long past [עולם], For I am God [אל], and there is no other; *I am* God [אֱלֹהִים], and there is no one like Me,

The "former things long past" refer to all God has done on behalf of the nation from the beginning of the nation, its "birth" (v. 3), to the lifetime of Isaiah. Former, *ראשון*, means former, beginning, preceding, or earlier indicating the beginning unit in a series or a point of time at the beginning of a duration. Long past, *עולם*, means a long duration or antiquity referring to being ancient or old, i.e., existing for a long time in the relative past. It has the sense of old times as a reference to past times or states of affairs, often in the distant past. This word also refers to the future and to eternity, but that is not the context here.

Some theologians use the concept of *עולם* to suggest that the time period in question predates the formation of the nation and goes all the way back to the Creation. "... [T]he prophet wants his people to reflect on all that they know of God as far back as they can go—from eternity ... [I]t is not just the exodus events that are in mind here. It is all the former things that have been recorded for Israel's memory, including the creation and the flood, the patriarchs, the exodus, the conquest, the judges, David and Solomon, and on and on. Remember these things, because their testimony is unanimous: only the Being who did all that has the right to be called God; *there is no other*" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 235, referencing Schoors, *I Am God*, 275]. While that is all true, the context in this

pericope suggests that the birth of the nation is in view (v. 3); therefore, I don't believe the historical past prior to the patriarchs is necessarily in view. The other problem with this line of thought is that עולם does not have to refer to eternity, but it is easy to fall into the trap of always trying to force the concept of eternity or everlasting into it. No translation I routinely use for comparison purposes uses "from eternity" to translate the word in this verse. Instead, they use "things of old," or "things from long ago," or some similar understanding of the word as used in this context. The word may refer to a long duration of time without carrying the sense of eternity.

"... [T]hey are also to remember the former course of their own history. The former things would seem to refer not to earlier prophecies, but to early events in Israel's history, such as the exodus and conquest. To indicate the antiquity of the former things the prophet adds the phrase, *from eternity* or *from olden time*. Inasmuch as the people are commanded to remember these things, they must have taken place in time; hence it is better to translate in this context, *from olden time*" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:226].

The Israelites need to remember what He has done for them in the past which should then serve as a guideline for how they relate to Him in the present and then going forward on into the future because He is God. They need to remember everything about Him that they have learned in the past and at least disregarded if not forgotten altogether. "Remember" is a command; this is something they are to do without question; for their own sake, they need to remember and, based on the facts remembered, return to God.

"For" (or "because") indicates the reason they should remember: He is God, the One of divine attributes; He is the only God, and there is no being anywhere who is like Him. The reality is that there is no other being in the universe that possesses divine attributes in any measure. He uses two names to refer to Himself: עֵל ('*el*) and אֱלֹהִים ('*elōhîm*). "The recollection of all that has gone before is meaningful because it is God who has so acted and he cannot change. *God ... God*: the former is '*el*, God in his transcendent deity; the latter '*elōhîm*, God in the fullness of his divine attributes. He is the only (*no other*) and unique (*none like*) God" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 295]. Keil and Delitzsch have a similar definition of these names. "... Jehovah alone was *El*, the absolutely Mighty One, and '*Elohim*, the Being who united in Himself all divine majesty by which reverence was evoked" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:454].

In Hebrew, there are two words used for the first-person personal pronoun "I": אֲנִי, the most common, and אֶנֶכִּי, which is a more ancient word and generally appears only in the earliest books. It is significant in this verse because when used with God, as it is here, "I am God," it is showing the superiority of God as the truly divine One.

God is the only one who can predict the future. He uses the earlier prediction of Cyrus as Israel's liberator as an example for the Israelites to look back on once it comes true, which would then further serve to authenticate the Creator God who knows the end from the beginning. Only God can predict the future and see to it that the prediction comes to pass.