

shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (40:31).

This ends the general prelude to chapters 40 to 66. With chapter 41 we begin more specific consideration of Israel's difficulties.

Isaiah 41

In chapter 40 some of the principal themes of the section we are now beginning were stressed in a general way. We now begin the main body of the symphony.

The outstanding theme of chapter 41 is the supremacy of God over all the false gods of the heathen. In the first verse He calls the people of all the lands to appear before Him and to answer the declaration of His supremacy. The chapter ends with a verdict against all the gods of the heathen: "Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion."

In verse 2 God asserts His supremacy by declaring His control over all the forces of history. He points to "the righteous man from the east," a powerful monarch who has been conquering for a number of years and is even beginning to appear as a menace to Babylon itself. God declares that He Himself is the One Who raised up this mighty king and gave him power over the nations. In the following chapters there are many allusions to this king who is to be used as God's agent in the deliverance of His people.

Verse 4 again declares that God is the One who has brought this great historical force into being.

Verses 5 and 6 present a vivid picture of a nation filled with fear as they see the advance of the conquering armies of Cyrus. The words, "the isles," which occur here and also in verse 1 are generally used in the Scriptures as a reference to the Greeks, many of whom were established on the islands around Greece or on those in the neighborhood of Asia Minor. A few years before Cyrus made his attack on Babylon he directed a great campaign, leading his armies clear across Asia Minor from east to west, and the Greek cities were filled with terror. During this campaign he conquered the famous Croesus, king of Lydia. Verses 5 and 6 depict the terror of these Greeks and of the other enemies of King Cyrus as he