

Have You Grown Weary of God? – Isaiah 43:22 – 44:23

Introduction – Idols are wearisome gods to serve. “But I am not an idolater,” you say, “I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. Look, here I am in church. Isn’t that proof enough?” Yes, but is it wearisome for you? Is it a bummer to worship, to give yourself to prayer, to follow the Lord’s commands? The question is not are you tired (from good, hard, faithful service), but are you weary – weary in your soul? And a more haunting question is this: Has God grown weary of us?

What Brings the Weariness (43:22-28) – There are two parties wearied here. The worshippers of God are wearied (v22) and so is God (v24). Israel’s worship was a farce because it was not matched with faithful obedience, such that the Lord did not regard it as worship at all (1:11). When there is no real *renewal* in the covenant *renewal* worship, worship becomes wearisome. This happens when you think you can manipulate God with your formalism or impress him with your vibrant authenticity and sentimental sincerity. Both become empty and wearisome when God is weary “*with your iniquities*” (v24). No one can impress God, no religious system can impress God, no church or denomination can impress God. He is weary of us; He is burdened with our sins.

The Only Way Out (v25) – For His own sake, He blots out our transgressions. This is the Good News in short form. He blots out our sins so that they are not remembered at all against us – by remembering them fiercely, justly, completely, when Jesus died on the cross. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because there was full condemnation of us in Christ Jesus. This shocks the system and wakes up the soul.

Thirsty for the Real Thing (44:1-8) – Here and ultimately, again, we know that these prophecies are pointing to the finished work of Jesus, who is First and the Last (v6, Rev 1:8, 22:13). This is the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to all nations (v3, Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:17-21). Now consider what He is promising. He who formed you will help you (v2). In the driest, most fruitless life or situation, He will pour out the water of life that will quench the deepest thirst (v3) and bring forth an overflow of this same life upon future descendants (v3) and all over the world (vv4-5, see Acts 2:39). These are the waters of baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit – poured out upon the nations. This is what Jesus promised (John 7:37-39).

The return from exile was a major event in the history of Israel which would prove God’s faithfulness to His Word and His people. They would be the witness of His mercy. But how much more are you, are we, a testimony to the overflowing mercy of God to the nations? We are the testimony that “*Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one*” (v8).

The Foolish and Betsing Sin of Idolatry (44:9-20) – However, let us return to the first question – are you weary of God? Because that person is somehow experiencing a stop in the floodgates of the living waters, the ongoing life in the Rock who is Jesus. Idolatry is what brings forth this weariness. Idolatry is not only deeply offensive to God, it is also fundamentally absurd and empty and those who indulge in it feed on ashes and delude their hearts (v20). “*Idolatry is the worst sin of all, because it moves God to the periphery of our lives and puts something else in his place*” – Webb.

Isaiah will go on to mock idolatry with piercing irony. He wants to make clear they are worthless (v9) and an embarrassment to the people who hold to them (v11). How could a god who is fashioned by a man be a real god (v12)? Notice that in contrast to man’s creation in God’s image, these gods are made in the image of man (v13). Idolaters take of the good things God gives, they use those things for their own good, but rather than giving thanks to God for those good gifts, they turn those gifts into idols themselves (vv14-19, Rom 1:21). But idols are not simply blocks of wood. “*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry*” (Col 3:5). Greed and covetousness are idolatry and drive a man, a woman, or a country into a hydra of sins. Paul also warns us that there is an idolatry that comes from adding to the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor 12:1-4, Col 2:20-23). These are wearisome religions.

“Return to Me” (44:21-23) – Idols are wearisome gods. Therefore the answer to a weariness towards God is not seeking something else, some more idolatries. It is repentance (“*return to Me*”) and thankful praise (“*break forth into singing*”). “Remember” who you are in Christ (v21); Israel was to remember even when she was in exile. God’s glory would be manifested in Israel, His servant, who will display to the world the wonders of His grace (v23); others will see in God’s people what God has achieved. This turning to God, these songs of praise and deliverance, are to occur when God does this and long before He did so because He promised He will do so (“*you will not be forgotten by Me!*”).

Idols are wearisome gods. What does Jesus say? “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*” Are you weary of God?