

ISAIAH 46

Lesson 36: "'Gods' You Must Carry Versus a God Who Carries You"¹

Mike Taylor

www.MondayNightBible.Org

MAIN IDEA

Idols are crushing burdens that sinners carry, to their own destruction, but the living God carries his children from their birth to their old age, even to their glorious salvation.

SUMMARY OUTLINE

I. The "Gods" of Babylon are a crushing burden, crushed in the end (46:1-2).

A. God directly contrasts "gods" that must be carried with the true God, who carries his people. See Isa. 40:11; Deut. 1:30-31.

B. False gods and idols of Mesopotamia:

- Bel (Marduk): a god worshipped by Cyrus. His people offered great quantities of food to this idol every day.
- Nebo: a Babylonian god believed to preside over literature, the arts, and the sciences.
- Baal: the Canaanite god believed to bring rain and fertility.
- Asherah: wife of Baal and mother goddess. Also a term for a pole marking a religious location.
- Molech: a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice.
- Chemosh: a god associated with the heavenly bodies; also known for child sacrifice.

C. The Israelites had the mistaken view that the gods of Babylon (i.e. Bel and Nebo) were stronger than their God. Here God shows just how inferior these man-made gods are.

II. The incomparable God carries his people from birth to old age (46:3-5).

A. The pagan gods Bel and Nebo must be carried in an oxcart; but the God of Israel carried his people (e.g. the Exodus, the remnant of Israel from the exile).

¹ Outline adapted from "Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Isaiah," by Andrew Davis.

B. Even strong Christians underestimate how actively God is sustaining them every moment.

C. God carries his children through trials ("footprints in the sand").²



III. The idols cannot move, neither can they serve (46:6-7).

A. The foolishness of a wealthy man who did not worship his silver and gold until after it was fashioned into an idol.

B. The idols of Bel and Nebo are ineffective in saving those who come under military attack.

IV. Remember the God who plans and orchestrates history (46:8-10)

A. God ordains the future then orchestrates human history to bring it about.

B. Examples: The Exodus and crossing of the Red Sea, the deliverance of Noah, the military successes of Joshua, Gideon, and David.

V. God's plan is to bring salvation near to those who are far away (46:11-13)

A. The coming of Cyrus is not God's final end. His ultimate purpose is a redeemed from every nation on earth standing pure and holy in the new heaven and new earth.

B. Cyrus allowing the remnant of Israel to return and rebuild the city of Jerusalem is a demonstration of God's plan to save those who belong to him.

APPLICATION

As believers we are to be vigilant about putting *ultimate value* on anything other than Jesus Christ. Instead we are to delight in God knowing that he carries us when we are too weak to walk. The most important thing in life is a loving relationship with God. Make that first and everything else will work out.

² A beautiful poem written by Mary Fishback Powers.