

**BEHOLD YOUR GOD (5-7)**

\* **No Likeness Compared to God**  
Isaiah 40:18-21

\* **Jehovah: The Sovereign King**  
Isaiah 40:22-24

\* **The Strong and Holy One**  
Isaiah 40:25, 26

\* **The Source of a Happy Heart**  
Proverbs 15:16, 17

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**November 3, 2013 — No. 3696**

**November 24, 2013 — No. 3699**

a table together as family or friends and share in the love of the saints for one another. How blessed it is, even if we have nothing on the table to speak of, that we are able to share a time of peace and love with one another in the home. We open the Bible after a good meal and we read the Word of God and we pray together as a family. Now, there is a concept that is lost today in the church! How wretched it is, even if we have wealth untold, to be divided and at war with each other in the home. It

hinders our prayers. How miserable it is to gather around a table when there is nothing more than animosity and hatred. Who cares to read God's Word when this is true?

We give our thanks to God in this season of year for what He has given us. It may be nothing, it may be plenty. We give God thanks today! For what? For happiness! For the joy of our salvation. No matter what God has given us—or *not* given us—in this past year we are happy, because we know that He has given us everything we have in His love for us. God works in us such joy and happiness because we fear the Lord! That is the source of all joy—the fear of the Lord! That is the source of love

within the home and family—the fear of the Lord. If there is no fear of God in our hearts, then there is no real love. When there is no real love, there is trouble, unrest, and hatred. That will, in turn, make us miserable and unthankful today.

But when God works in us a deep respect, a deep love, for Him, then we find happiness! And that fear of God Christ has worked in the heart of every believer, has He not? Christ has delivered us from the clutches of sin and unbelief. What

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more could we desire? We are heirs to the finest of riches in heaven.

Those riches await us. In faith we look to God. We begin to understand that He is the end of all things. The earthly gifts we receive of God's hand are but means we use to seek God and the glory that is ours in heaven. We place our firm hope and trust in Him. All because we fear the Lord. Let's give proper thanks to God today. He has given us all that we need and more. We do not look to riches. We look to Him. And there we find a reason for real thanksgiving. May we bring that before Him this day. God give us to fear Him and grant that His love might abound in us.

All thanks be to God.

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

November 3, 2013  
No. 3696

*No Likeness Compared to God*  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

Last week we considered three verses that compared God and man. We took a close look at the worth, the honor, the glory, and the power of God as opposed to that of man. The conclusion? Though man may think himself so great and so powerful, in the sight of God he is less than the fine dust of the balance. God is so great and man is so small that there really is no comparison at all. When laid in the balance, God's glory and power shines forth in all its excellence. The significance of all the nations put together as one is as a drop of water in a bucket. The composite of all the greatest individuals, the most intelligent, the most powerful and influential, the richest, the most famous individuals of this world is emptiness. The most powerful nations together are nothing in the sight of God. He sits in the heavens and laughs at man's feeble attempts to break away from His rule. Even if every nation of this world would join its power together with all other nations of this world to form one grand powerful kingdom, such a kingdom, in God's sight, is less than nothing. That

is the God whom we serve, fellow believers.

Behold your God.

The verses of Isaiah 40 we consider today are more of a practical nature. These verses (18-21) read: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?"

If we truly believe that God is the great and mighty God of heaven and earth that reigns in the heavens, a God to whom no creature can compare, it will certainly affect both our worship and our lives. If we have a low opinion of God, this will reveal itself in dishonorable worship and ungodly living. A high

opinion of God, on the other hand, will result in honorable worship and holy living.

### I. *Judah's Sin*

So, here is the test we receive in the Word of God before us: To whom do we liken God? What likeness will we compare to Him? How will we worship Him? How will we live before Him?

Here is the question that is put before us in these verses: Whom can we compare to God? If God is far greater in glory, power, honor than man, what creature can bear a likeness to God? If God is an invisible God who is transcendent above all the creatures of His hand, what creature can we compare to God? To whom can God be likened?

The nation of Judah in her sin never really considered that question. Neither did she want to consider that question. The nation of Judah had become thoroughly absorbed in idol-worship. Isaiah describes the foolishness of this act in verses 19 and 20: "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved."

This is a description, mind you, of the people of Judah, that is, the church at that time. There is no doubt that this is a fitting description of the heathen nations around her. But Isaiah is not here describing the idol worship of the pagan nations who served other gods. He is describing an action that is unique to Judah. The heathen nations had made graven images of their various gods. The wicked nation of Israel had joined these nations in serving these gods, too, by means of these images. But the sin here described by Isaiah in these verses is a violation of the second commandment of the law of God: Do not serve Jehovah by making a graven image that is supposed to represent Him. "With what creature can you compare Me?" Isaiah asks.

Yet it was this sin that Israel now, and repeatedly up to this point, commits against God. The people had made graven images of the creature and said that these images represented Jehovah. Then they bowed down and they worshiped these images. The act described in verses 19 and 20 is simple to comprehend. The wealthy man in Judah would go to a workman to order an image made. This workman would then melt a piece of iron or brass to shape or mold it into an image of a man or an animal. That same workman would take a sheet of gold and melt a fine layer of gold on top of

means to find some kind of real joy and happiness in life. Enter into that home where father and mother are gone all the time to make more and more money and what do you see with their children? Talk with children who because of wealth witness their parents becoming independent of one another and divorcing—listen to the bitterness they will express.

People keep asking why it is that this generation coming up is so selfish, so violent, so promiscuous? The answer is: they are rich but they do not fear God! They do not love God. They have great treasure, but they are not happy! Mom and Dad will compete for their children's affections by buying them everything their hearts desire. Children mope a little, and parents right away buy them what they want. Parents may insist that their children work to earn money, but then those children are taught no responsibility toward others. They keep their money and spend it on whatever their flesh desires. Our society has raised a generation of selfish, lazy, spoiled, irreverent snobs! Why? Because of riches! And everyone is happy with that. Yet, when the family gathers around their table with the fatted calf, there is nothing more than trouble and hatred. Then you tell me whether these people are thankful to God on Thanks-

giving Day. They not only are not truly thankful, but they do not thank anyone—especially not God! All that because they are not happy.

Far, far better than this, Solomon writes, is possessing little. Possessing enough to put food on the table. Possessing enough to put shoes on one's feet and nice clothing on one's back. A modest home, a trustworthy car. Better by far it is to have only enough money to spread the table with herbs—or literally, vegetables. Do you think that God's people who, a number of years ago, had half the wealth that we have today were less happy? Do you think that children in the home and family that played with a box, that would roll a hoop around with a stick, that would make their own scooters out of old metal skates were less happy than we are today? Do we honestly think that by buying our children everything they want we are making them happier?? Are we really happier today because we have the wealth to go to a restaurant to eat or go on extended vacations, than were the saints of long ago when they could not??? It is far better to have little, to have only a modest spread of food on your table, and to have love.

How true that is, is it not, people of God? There is nothing better than to gather around

of a cow that has been kept in a stall and fattened there for the slaughter. They need not eat moderately, but they have the money to go out and wine and dine every meal. And when they do, they do not go to the fast-food restaurants. Neither are they ever seen frequenting the middle-class restaurants. They are out fine-dining all the time. Our country and society is filled with these kinds of people! Filled with them! Neither is the Christian exempt from all of this.

God has given you and me so much in the way of this world's wealth and comfort that we do not even realize it. We look at others who are much wealthier than we and we begin to think that we do not have it so good. Look at what they are able to do! We cannot afford to do that. I challenge any of us to visit any third-world country and compare what you and I have as middle-class Americans to what they have. We would find out that we are not at all poor! In fact, we would hang our heads in shame! Riches and wealth breed greed. They do not *satisfy* our greed—they wet our appetite for more! And this is why Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven! It is so hard not to place our trust in uncertain riches when we have them. It is so hard not to love money—even

though we know it is the root of all evil.

The point of Solomon is that we can have all these, but these things do not buy for us true happiness. Oh, they buy happiness all right! But the happiness they can buy is only fleeting and not deep-seated happiness. Now, Solomon does not say in our text that with riches comes unbelief. When we look at Abraham and Job, or even at David and Solomon, we see that these men were rich. But they were believers. They did fear the Lord—although in Solomon's case, and even David's, these riches did bring troubles and hatred. But Solomon is not saying that hatred of God and trouble necessarily come when we are rich. But surely this is what is often seen in the homes of the wealthy. Solomon writes in Proverbs 30, "Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" We see this all the time in our society—no one needs God! They have ousted Him from the government, from the schools of our land, and virtually from society itself. And the upshot of it is that, as rich as people are, they are miserable! The rate of suicide continues to rise. People shooting drugs, drinking themselves drunk, sexual binges, partying—all because this world is one miserable place to live. And in their wealth people even turn to these baser

that image to make it look shiny and expensive. Then he would make silver chains to hold the image up so it would not topple over if it was a bit top-heavy.

A poor man wanted his image, too. But he could not afford the precious metal to overlay it. So he would go into the forest and find a certain durable wood that would not quickly deteriorate or rot. After all, this image was to be the likeness of the eternal, unchangeable God! He, too, would find a cunning or skillful workman who was good at carving and this workman would shape this wood into an image of a man or an animal. Since wood was not as heavy as metal, it would have a tendency to tip over a little more easily. So the carver would have to make it bottom-heavy so it would not so easily be moved or bumped over.

We must not overlook the picture that Isaiah here draws for us. The wealthy man had by far the fanciest idol or image of Jehovah. But consider his folly. To make an image of solid gold would simply cost too much. Make the image fancy on the outside, but let the inside be made of cheap metal. That is good enough? Really? Good enough as a representation of the holy and majestic God who holds all the isles in His hands as a very little thing? And why the chains? So the image would not tip over if someone would

bump it off the table or shrine? Really? You are going to bow down and worship an image that can be pushed around by a man as if this idol was a fit representation of Jehovah?

Or the poor man. You are going to choose a log out of the forest, cut it in half, and use one half of it as firewood? Then shape the other half into an image that represents Jehovah? Then make sure you carve the image in such a way that it will not easily topple over either? Now you are going to bow down to that piece of wood as the great and holy one, the all-powerful and unchangeable Jehovah God? The folly of it all!

But the folly of it all is not found simply in this outward act of actually bowing before an image that was made with human hands. The folly, the utter foolishness, of the people of Judah was a matter of their heart. They had a low opinion of who God is. This is where the sin of idol-worship was rooted—in man's vain imagination.

You see, man is always guilty of one sin, a sin that stands behind every sin he commits: pride. In pride, man imagines that God is no different than man, that God actually serves the whims of man. He thinks that he may subject God to the judgment of man. Man will determine the god whom he chooses to serve. Man thinks

that God is altogether such an one as himself. That was the sin of Judah. Judah thought of God as man. God changes His mind, God has a great sense of humor, God does not judge people, God loves everybody and does not want to hurt anyone, God is a buddy and we can talk to Him as if He were our equal. God does not determine everything, God is not the sole ruler over all things. This low opinion of God, this robbing God of His glory and power and transcendence had resulted in the most horrible sins in the nation of Judah. The members of that nation, or the church at that time, began to sin in the way they worshiped God and in the way that they lived. And it was for this reason this nation now lay under the just wrath and judgment of God. Whenever the second commandment is violated, it always results in a perversion of proper worship of God's name. This is true because a low opinion of who God is results in man determining his own worship of God rather than it being determined by God Himself in His Word.

With idol worship in Judah came the horrible practice of the heathen nations—the sacrificing of their children to the gods. The people of Judah were desecrating the Sabbath day, that is, they were not keeping the day holy unto the Lord. They fasted in an outward, formal

way; but behind their fasting was sin. God explains in Isaiah 58:3: “Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.” The outward, formal sacrifice has no pleasure in God's eyes.

Is this any different than the worship of many churches in Christianity today? The church of today rationalizes away the proper use of the Sabbath. We no longer need a day of rest, they say. God is no longer sanctified this day for the worship of His name. To the church of today, too, the words of Isaiah come: Call the Sabbath a delight, by honoring God and not doing your own ways and finding your own pleasure on that day (Is. 58:13).

The modern church of today worships, but is their worship God-honoring? Or does her worship call attention to man? Does God, in His Word, dictate her worship, or are all kinds of man-made innovations injected into her worship?

In Christianity today, too, there is such a low opinion of who God is. No different are we than Judah. A low opinion of God and a false worship also produce the sins that were so prevalent in the nation of Judah. At any given age in the life of the church the members of the church are susceptible to the same sins that characterized this nation. Today, too, just as in Judah's day, the abuse of al-

In the second place, we bear in mind too that this happiness will determine whether a person is thankful or not. Believers are happy!

They are filled with the joy of salvation, and because of that they give thanks. And there is more too, because

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the happiness that they have also determines to whom they are thankful. If my happiness is found only in earthly possessions, then my thanks will be no more than an earthly thanks—a thanks that is not really directed at anyone or anything. When we are filled with eternal joy and happiness, then our thankfulness is directed toward God. We know it is God who gives us all things. We know it is God who imparts to us that joy. It is God who fills that emptiness in our lives. This, then, is why we reflect on this Word of God before us. We take a close look, then, at the source of our happiness.

## II. Its Source

What is it that gives us happiness? Obviously, from this proverb a person is able to have all the riches in the world and not be at all happy. Listen: “better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure

and trouble therewith.” A family and individuals can have great treasure—they can have riches, luxuries, power, and fame in this world. They can have everything their heart desires in the way of this world's comforts. To use the words

of the psalmist in Psalm 73, their eyes can stand out with fatness. From an earthly point of view they do not have a care in the world. They need never fear financially—their life is secure on earth. They have houses—luxurious houses. They have cars—not one but several, and the cars can be the most expensive that are made. They can have all the toys that money can buy. People can have their RV, their snowmobiles, their four-wheelers, their boats, and so on. People can have enough money to go on the most extravagant of vacations. They need never worry about dropping a hundred dollars here or there. They could buy a house with cash, and it would not even put a dent in their savings account. Solomon uses the picture of a stalled ox here in verse 17 to denote that these people can eat the best of the dainties of this world. They are not content with a mere morsel, but they have money to put on their table the meat



ently than we are while sitting there. Who says they are not happy? We go to the shopping mall, especially at this time of year, and we see people walking with their arms full of packages, talking and laughing with each other and they seem no different than we are. Who says they are not happy? We must understand therefore what distinguishes the happiness of a child of God from that of the wicked who do not fear God.

The first thing that distinguishes true happiness from its worldly look-alike is that one is eternal and the other temporal. The happiness of a child of God is eternal. It is rooted in salvation: deliverance from the burden and misery of sin. It is a happiness therefore that cannot be taken away! Christ lives in his heart and works in his heart so that the child of God is fully aware that there is no more condemnation to him. There is no more punishment for sin. The God of heaven and earth is not his enemy who uses all things to destroy him. God is his sovereign Friend who bestows all things on him as a blessing. God loves and favors him. The child of God knows this. And that knowledge gives him joy, peace, contentment in his heart. And that will never disappear. It is his now and unto all eternity.

The unbeliever, on the

other hand, finds happiness in things that pass away, temporal, earthly things. He too carries on in life with a certain happiness and laughter. But it is rooted in earthly riches—a new car, a new house, a new marriage, and so on. But when that particular possession passes away, as all earthly possessions do, then he is miserable. He must look for some other earthly possession to make him happy again. Another difference between true happiness and outward happiness is the result of such in one's heart. When happiness is rooted in sin, then there always remains a nagging, gnawing dissatisfaction, discontentment with life. We know that for ourselves because sometimes when we do not look to God for our happiness we can experience the same thing. Well, in the unbeliever that never is gone. It is always there. And since the unbeliever looks to the things of this present world for happiness, he is always trying to find something new that will remove that nagging emptiness inside. That emptiness, that void in a person's life, is filled when Christ enters the heart of a person. Then no matter what is given or taken away, that believer is going to be filled. One does not need the things of this world to fill any void because his joy and happiness is rooted in Christ. So we bear that in mind first of all in connection with this Word of God.

cohol is an ever-present danger. The abuse of alcohol is a sin that goes hand-in-hand with a low opinion of God. Beer, wine, hard liquor become themselves idols to which men give themselves to find enjoyment in life. In fact, God warns us in Isaiah 22:13, 14 that the sin of partying, along with its abuse of eating and of drinking strong drink, was His judgment upon Israel for her failure to serve Him from the heart. This sin would follow Israel until she would die by the hands of her enemies or be taken away captive.

The sin of fornication also always follows a person who lacks a proper knowledge of God and who walks in the ignorance of his unbelief. The Bible is explicitly clear in its condemnation of fornication. But the people of Judah had ignored the command of God, just as do many members of Christian churches today. What is worse, however, is when the church itself, rather than condemning this sin, condones it, as was true of Judah at that time. The people in Judah and many today think of God as if He is altogether such a one as we are. There is no fear of God. So adultery and fornication abounded in Judah.

Then, too, there was the sin of greed. This too goes hand-in-hand with idol worship. Men make idols out of alcohol, they make idols out of fornication, and men make idols out of money and the luxuries it buys. As a result, they cheat and gamble. Their eyes are tainted by their lust for the wealth and prosperity of this world. All these sins in worship and in the lives of the members of Judah had made this nation ripe for judgment. God's wrath lay upon her.

## II. God's Reminder

God therefore comes to the elect remnant in Judah, those faithful few now who yet have believing hearts and look for the coming of their Messiah, and He asks the rhetorical questions of verse 21: "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?" Do not think for a moment, dear friends, that

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God's saints then were not tempted to walk in the ways of the wicked in Judah. These sins were real

and present dangers—especially to a weak believer. The wicked in Judah did not know God. "My people have gone into

captivity because they have no knowledge,” God had said. But the same is not true of those few believers in Judah. They had knowledge. And Isaiah now appeals to that in these questions.

There are four questions asked here, each of which appeals to the knowledge of God that these saints now have freely been given by God’s grace. “Do you not know?” God has worked in your hearts by His Spirit that you know God. Maybe you need to be reminded of who God is, but you know God! The believer has the work of Jesus Christ in his heart. Christ has died in order that he may be given eyes to see and understand the things of the kingdom of God. To us they have been revealed by a gracious work of God through Christ. We know. We know our sin. We know our salvation in Jesus Christ alone. “Have you not known?” Yes, we know!

“Have you not heard? has it not been told you from the beginning?” Not only has God given His children eyes to see, but He has given them also ears to hear. The gospel has been preached since the beginning of time. God’s people have always heard the Word of God. The prophets have repeatedly told you about the majesty and might of God. You know who God is because God has so worked in your hearts to sit under the preaching of the

Word and to believe in what is said. Truly, the church of Christ can say today that they have heard Christ. They hear what the Spirit says to the churches. They hear this through the true preaching of the Word.

Are we going to be so foolish as the unbelievers in the realm of the church who claim to believe but who walk in the utter foolishness of their unbelief? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? Does not the earth itself, and everything contained in it, shout aloud of the greatness and power and divinity of God? The wicked man may take this truth of God testified of in creation and hold it in unrighteousness. He may serve the creature rather than the Creator, but the same is not true of the believer. We cannot ignore what the foundations of this earth and this universe teach us about our God.

What then does God remind us of concerning Himself? His answer is given to us in verse 18: “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?” Let us not forget who God is. He alone is Creator. All else is creature. He stands above His creation in His transcendence. He is the invisible God who bears no earthly likeness. He is the One true God, Jehovah. He is from everlasting to everlasting God. He has planned all things

that reason, God’s people are a happy people. And we have all the reason in the world to be filled with thanksgiving to God. Solomon writes in verse 15 here in Proverbs 15, “he that is of a merry heart has a continual feast.” If we are happy in this life, then life is for us a continual feast of praise and thanksgiving. Only when one is happy is he truly going to give thanks to God. If we are disgruntled with something, perhaps with life in general, then we fail to give thanks. God’s children, however, do not have reason to be disgruntled with life. They belong to God’s household and family. We are those of a merry heart! In the verses we examine today Solomon searches out for us what gives us this merry heart, this happiness. He is concerned with the *source* of our happiness and ultimately therefore our thanksgiving too.

### *I. A Happy Heart*

The proverb we consider is concerned with happiness. Now, I realize that Solomon does not even mention that in this proverb. But in it he makes a comparison. Notice again: “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” In summary this proverb teaches us that if we

have very little in the way of this world’s possessions, even if that means we have only a table spread with vegetables, but we possess love in our homes and the fear of God in our hearts, this is far better than to have great earthly treasures and therefore a table spread with the finest of foods, including the fatted calf, yet to have hatred in the home and spiritual troubles. Solomon makes this comparison in order to point out to us that if we have all the possessions in the world, but have also hatred and unbelief in the home, then happiness will elude us. On the other hand, we can possess next to nothing in the way of this world’s wealth, but to have the love and fear of God abide in our homes will make us the happiest people in the world. One is therefore better than the other, if we are going to be a happy person and a happy family.

So this proverb is concerned with happiness. But to understand this point that Solomon makes here we must understand what constitutes true happiness. That is important because it looks as if the world is perfectly happy in their riches and prosperity, and that without the fear of God. I mean, we go to the restaurant and look at all the people dining there because God has given them so much in the way of wealth. Those people are holding conversations and laughing and joking no differ-

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

*November 24, 2013  
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*The Source of a Happy Heart  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

Thanksgiving is a day we reflect on the earthly provision that the Lord has given us this past year. It is a time that we gather together as churches and often times with family to give thanks for all that God has given us. Unbelievers like to celebrate this day too. They also speak of giving thanks. “We must be thankful for this and that,” they will say. But they will never speak of thankful to whom. It is important that God’s people not forget to whom we give thanks at this time of the year and to understand how our thanks is really quite different from that of the those who refuse to believe in God.

It is true that at this time of the year we give thanks to God for the earthly gifts He has given us. There is nothing wrong with this since it is God who gives us these too. After all, we do request of God to “give us this day our daily bread.” It is only fitting that when He does this we thank Him for it too. At the same time, believers ought never to separate these earthly

blessings from the spiritual blessings we receive in Christ. We can have all the wealth in the world, but we are reminded in Psalm 73 that this wealth can be used against us. If it carries with it God’s curse, if God uses our earthly wealth to set us in slippery places in order to cast us down into destruction, then that wealth is useless. But if it carries with it God’s favor and blessing, as is true only of the child of God, then we have all the reason to give thanks. This is why we consider today one of the proverbs of Solomon. He writes for us in Proverbs 15:16, 17, “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”

Those who fear the Lord come before God at this time of year filled with happiness and joy whether they receive much or little in the way of earthly gifts. We do so because we belong to Jesus Christ, and God’s blessing rests upon us in riches in and in health but also in poverty and sickness. For

in eternity. He carries out the counsel of His will in heaven and earth. He holds the waters in His hand and the isles as a very little thing. He measures out the entire universe with the span of His hand. Nothing in this world escapes the rule of God. He is supreme in the heavens. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. And He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, “What doest thou?” That was Nebuchadnezzar’s testimony of God. And that is the believer’s confession. God is great and glorious above all creatures. Terrible is He in His dignity. There is no God like unto our God. Look at Him. Look at Him with the eyes of faith and worship Him with a heart of faith. Live to Him out of that faith.

There is no one and there is nothing in this world that can be compared to God. Nothing remotely bears His likeness. Swallow all human pride and bow before the living God with awe and humility and listen to God. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Is. 57:15).

**III. The Believer’s Response**

When we consider how great our God is, our response, as believers, is that of humility. God is our refuge and our strength, a helper ever near us. This God is our God. He will be our guide even unto death! Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief. May I not give in to the temptations that surround me, even when I see others in the church living in the way of these sins. May my worship of Thy holy name be kept pure so that my praises are acceptable unto Thee, the high and lofty One. And, Lord, where I have forgotten Thy name and stretched forth my hands to the idols of this world, rise, help, and redeem me! The believer’s response is always one of humility. Then, in a positive way, he goes forth and strives the more to live a life worthy of God. He walks in thankfulness unto God and enters into worship with God. He lives the life of fellowship and love with the God who keeps covenant with His people. Such a believer then knows and is assured that that great God is his God and that God’s anger and wrath does not rest on him, but his sins are forgiven him and he is blessed indeed of God.

No matter how God then leads him in his life, he is happy and content. Ah—the blessedness of the believer!



**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

*November 10, 2013  
No. 3697*

*Jehovah: the Sovereign King  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear Radio Friends,

**Introduction**

Our God is in the heavens, He does whatsoever He pleases! Jehovah is His name! The everlasting God, the Creator. He took counsel before time began and set forth the way that now unfolds in time. He needed no guiding in doing so. He did not need anyone to instruct Him. He now has measured the waters of the earth in His hand, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. He weighs the mountains in a balance. This is the God whom we serve! We serve no idol. We serve no image of God. We do not make up a god of our own liking and serve him. We bow before the living God of heaven and earth who has revealed Himself in the Bible. He alone is Creator. All else is but the creature of His hand.

Because this is true, He is ruler—the sovereign King who reigns in heaven and earth. He reigns over the creation and He reigns over the acts of men, so that man cannot so much as move without His will. This is the marvelous truth we learn about our God in today’s broadcast. We are going to

study Isaiah 40:22-24. There we read, “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.”

**I. His Seat**

The instruction of these three verses is based upon one fundamental truth. This is given us at the outset at the beginning of verse 22: “God sits upon the circle of the earth.” Now, that phrase may not seem to say anything about the sovereign rule of God over all things, but when properly translated we will understand how it does. Literally we read, “God *is seated* on the circle of the earth.” The term “is seated” is used. And that does say something about

of heaven as a little thing. He holds up, so to speak, under this work. Finally, God is powerful. This term refers to God’s control over something. When a king is powerful he is able to exercise control over his kingdom. God exercises this control in such a way that not one of His heavenly luminaries fails. All of these terms refer to the truth that God is omnipotent—almighty!

**III. Childlike Faith**

Now the injunction: Lift up your eyes on high! Behold your God in the heavens! Many men lift their eyes to heaven. Few believe. The injunction here to us and to Israel is: lift up your eyes of faith and look at the universe around you. Do not be faithless. Do you see the power of God? Likewise, do you see Him in all His holiness? Do not doubt His hand in all things. Do not doubt that He carries out His will in all things, just as He does in the host of heaven, and that He does so perfectly. He is a holy God! This means God leads His church in power and holiness. Of course He does! We belong

to this God. He has purchased us in the blood of Jesus Christ and we are precious in His sight. He loves us and cherishes us as the apple of His eye. Need we ever doubt His constant love and care for us? All we need do is cast our eyes on the cross to see the power and the holiness of God revealed to us. There is the power of God to save us from sin. There His holiness shines forth in the person of His Son, who died to make us holy. This great God of heaven and the earth is our God! And no one can compare to Him. Lift up your eyes and behold your

Lift up your eyes on high!  
Behold your God  
in the heavens!

God.  
God does not forget His people. God has created them and also saved

them. Their destination is set! As believers we walk on the path that leads to heavenly glory. That path may lead each of us in different ways, but the end is sure. It is sure because God’s hand is the one that leads us, and God’s way is sure. Fear not, little flock! Be comforted. Nothing will separate us from the love of God!

Behold your God!

glory. Plus, Isaiah says, God calls them *by names*. Astrologers in their study of the stars give names to individual stars and constellations. There are hundreds, probably thousands, of stars that have been given names by man. But God has given to each star its name. And when He calls out the stars at night and the sun by day, then He does so by name. Impossible? Nothing is impossible with God! This only goes to show that there is not one star that escapes God's sovereign rule and control.

What this verse so graphically lays out for you and me is God's providential control over the heavens. By providence we mean that God not only upholds all creatures but governs them by His hand so that nothing happens in this world by chance. When we speak of God's providential control of the host of heaven, we speak of the truth that God holds every star in its place and so governs their movements that even they fulfill His will. We learn at the close of verse 26 that by God's power not one fails. There is not one star out of place, not one star that is not maintained in its place except by the will of God. As we sat there on our porch in Jamaica we would see, almost every night, several shooting stars. A shooting star is the

death of a star. It has fallen from its place, flies out of control until it burns out. If God for a moment would remove His all-sustaining hand from upholding the universe, it would perish just as those shooting stars. This passage is a powerful testimony to you and me, believing saint, of the power and might of God.

How does Isaiah speak of it at the close of verse 26? "He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that

...there is not one star  
that escapes God's  
sovereign rule and control.

he is strong in power; not one faileth." Three words are used to describe God's power.

The words are might, strength, and power. Each of these words, while referring to the same thing, has its own particular meaning. The term "might" refers to the ability God has to control the host of heaven. A man may have knowledge in a matter without the capability of putting that knowledge into action. But God is mighty. He is capable of upholding and governing the universe. Secondly, God is strong, that is, He is firm and stable. The idea is expressed here that God is able to hold up under the task of governing the universe. When a monster boulder is laid on the shoulders of a strong man, he may bend, even be crushed, under its weight. But God upholds and governs the host

God's rule. At times in Scripture the word "seat" refers to a throne. We read, for example, of Solomon's throne in I Kings 10:19 as a seat. As we well know, the royal throne of a king was that on which he sat in his great throne room while making and executing laws and making his judgments in various matters. The throne, then, is the seat where a king rules over his kingdom. Further, the Bible often refers to one who has the power to judge others as sitting on a judgment seat. In fact, several verses of the Bible refer directly to God's judgment seat. The fact that Jehovah *is seated* on the circle of the earth, therefore, refers not only to God's right and authority to rule but also to His right to judge. Further, that these verses of Isaiah refer to God's power to rule and to judge is implied in that He is the one who brings the rule and the judgments of earthly kings and judges to nothing. So, what we have here, then, in these few verses is the power, the right, and the authority of Jehovah God to rule over all the creatures of His hand, including the lawgivers and law enforcers of this world.

We also learn from this phrase that the place of God's throne is on the circle of the earth. This expresses for us the extent or scope of God's reign. We realize, of course, that the extent of God's reign is more

than simply the circle of the earth. We could say that God is seated on the circles of the universe, so that even the sun, moon, and stars obey His will. But the point Isaiah makes here is that God reigns over all the affairs of this earth. His rule extends over all the nations and their rulers. So He draws this picture for us: God's throne is on the circle, or on the very edge or zenith, of the horizon. It is the place where we will look for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of time in the clouds of heaven. God sits on the edge of our atmosphere, so to speak, and His rule extends to all creatures under Him on the earth and under the heavens.

Isaiah also explains the scope of God's rule in the remainder of verse 22. Notice: "and the inhabitants are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in." Again, an earthy picture. The inhabitants of the earth—all the beasts and birds and fish. The countless throngs of men that are as busy ants hurrying and scurrying about their business are those over whom God is seated. All these are as little bugs, as grasshoppers—a hoard of grasshoppers under the command and rule of God. God's reign extends to all those over whom He has stretched out the heavens or the skies as a thin veil or as a tent under which

they dwell. In other words, people of God, there is not one creature under heaven, there is not one event in the lives of those creatures, that stands outside the rule of Jehovah—the King of all the earth.

Now, all of this definitely teaches us something about the God whom we serve. Yes, He is a King. Yes, He has the right and authority to rule. But these

verses teach us more. God is a *sovereign* King who rules over all things. We must understand all of what this implies. It implies that God's dominion, that is, His supremacy, His control, is an everlasting one. It is not here today and gone tomorrow. His rule is from everlasting, from eternity, to everlasting, and on into eternity. His is the dominion, the rule, the government. Further, God does according to His will in heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. God reigns over all because He is God over all. This is true by virtue of the fact that God is Creator. He made everything. God alone is Creator and all else is creature. Neither did God create any creature, whether that be angel or man, to be independent of Him. God holds in His hand all creatures great

*...there is not one creature  
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and small, and He does with them according to His will and good pleasure. That is what it means that God is sovereign.

It also means, in the second place, that no one has the right to question what God does. No creature of God's hand, whether that be angel or man, has the authority or the right to question God. None can stay God's hand, we learn

in Daniel 4:35, and none can say to Him: what are you doing? No one has the right to presume the rule over God. No one has the right to question His authority or to criticize His justice and judgments in the earth. God is sovereign. He *is* sovereign. That is what makes God, God.

This sovereign rule of God extends over all men as well. It extends over the princes and judges of this earth. This does not preclude the truth, however, that the princes, the kings, and the judges of this earth do have power and authority. Our magistrates, that is, our lawmakers, our president, the members of congress, the judges of our land, the police officers that enforce the law, all have authority and the right to rule over us. And we are called to submit to their

and strength is found in those creatures themselves. So man turns to worshipping them.

Isaiah lays out for us clearly the reality found in the starry host of heaven in verse 26, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." The fundamental truth Isaiah speaks of here is this: God has created these things! Isaiah forces us back to Genesis 1 and the creation of this world. On the fourth day of creation God created the sun, moon, and stars, that is to say, God created everything that we see in outer space. He *created* them. That means, God called forth what we see in space from nothing. "For, lo, He spake and it was done, and all with sovereign power begun stood fast at His command!" That is all He did. He spoke a creative word and the millions of galaxies, each containing millions of stars, stood fast at His command. Isaiah calls attention to the creation of that vast universe before which we all stand in awe and amazement. Can man compare with this God? Men are just beginning to probe outer space—I mean, just scratching the surface of that space that is closest to us—and he boasts of his great accomplishments in this area. Think

of God. He spoke and it was done. The vast, virtually limitless universe—bang—appeared with everything in its place.

But then we will let Isaiah describe it for us: God, he says, brings out their host by number; He calls them all by names. What a beautiful picture he draws for us! That of an army. That is what is meant here by the word "host." It refers to an army. Far be it from the truth that the heavenly luminaries are themselves gods to be served. Rather, they are the creatures of God's hands. Not only did God create them but He is in charge of this host every day. He brings them out each day and puts them in formation. When the daytime comes, then the sun is brought out to perform its duty before God. At night the sun is tucked away and the moon and stars are brought out to serve their function in God's army.

Now, we know that this is not how it works scientifically. But Isaiah is simply drawing a picture of the power of God over the lights of the heavens. They are His army that stands at His command. Not only does God bring out this army but He brings them out *by number*. He counts them one by one and places each one of them in their place to serve its own particular function in the universe. Each declares God's handiwork and

dards. Everything that takes place in this world according to God's sovereign will is good, even when in our eyes it may seem cruel and cold. God is holy.

For that reason God is also consecrated and dedicated to serving Himself as the highest good. In this way God is holy as well. God directs all things in this world to fulfill His will and good pleasure. He is in the heavens and does what He pleases.

To whom then will you and I liken God? Man? Who is equal to Him in holiness? Man? Not even close. Our God reigns in His holiness and we would rather fall into the hands of this holy God than into the hands of deceitful man. No creature can compare to our holy God. No one can even approach unto His holiness. Not even those who are redeemed in the blood of Christ. Surely we are cleansed and sanctified in the blood of Christ. God sees us as holy in Christ because He views us together with Christ. But we know that we are not holy in ourselves. In fact, in us is this old man of sin that is still given over to the sins of this present life. Not even the child of God, therefore, can be compared to God in His holiness. To whom will ye liken me or shall I be equal, saith the Holy one.

## II. Greatest Power

These same questions can be asked in regard to God's power and might. When my family and I lived in Jamaica, we would often sit out on our veranda that overlooked the Caribbean Sea. There were no lights of the city. The nighttime skies were often cloudless. And we would lift up our eye to the heavens. It was amazing! We could gaze for hours on the moon and stars that appeared so clearly in the sky—millions of them! Galaxies of them! Some bright, some dimmer. Always there in their particular places. Wow! What a display of power and glory! Man's place in this universe is so, so small. When the believer gazes into the heavens he cannot help but contemplate the greatness and power of God. When the unbeliever who serves the creature rather than the Creator gazes into the heavens he ultimately falls into the sin of worshiping the host of heaven. The people of Israel had fallen into this sin too. They had begun to worship the host of heaven. How foolish, we might say! Why would they do that? But this sin is not so far-fetched. The starry host of heaven, the sun, moon, and planets, are powerful attestations of God's might and strength. When man refuses to acknowledge the power and might of God in the heavenly luminaries, then he begins to think this power

authority as long as what they require of us does not demand us to disobey God. Then we obey God rather than men. Nevertheless, we must realize that God gives to these men the authority and the right to rule. But that is the point: God *gives this authority* to these princes and judges of the earth. Their power and their authority does not stand outside of God's power and authority. Their authority is a derived authority. God, who possesses all power and authority, imparts this right on these men. This is why we are to obey the authority of those whom God has placed over us. But, on the other hand, this command goes forth to all rulers in Psalm 2:10, 11, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling."

The sad part in all of this is that rulers do not fear their Ruler! Judges do not fear their Judge! The unbelieving princes and judges of this earth defy God and His commandments! They look at *themselves* as the ultimate authority and that everyone must bow before them. In their unbelief the rulers of this world think they know what is best for our country apart from the sovereign rule of God. Their judgments and laws at times contradict the law of the sovereign God whom they ought to fear. The horrible act

of abortion, legalized murder of unborn infants, and now same-sex marriage reveal that men abhor the commandments of God. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His anointed saying: let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:2, 3). But God sits upon the circle of the earth and all the inhabitants of this earth, including the kings and rulers of the earth, are but grasshoppers. Everyone performs the sovereign will of our King.

## II. His Rule

In verses 23 and 24 of the passage we consider, Isaiah explains the rule of God over the very princes and judges of the earth. He chooses these men in particular because, let's face it, it is by their rulings and judgments that the course of nations is set. The word used in the Hebrew translated as princes literally means "weighty one." It is a person whose decisions carry a lot of weight as far as this world is concerned. When considering the history of this world, it is the history of nations. These nations are ruled over by their princes and judges. These men, so it seems, control the course of the future development of this world. So Isaiah speaks of these men because of their



great power and influence over the affairs of this world. Notice what Isaiah writes in verses 23, 24: “That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.” The two words “princes” and “judges” do not refer to two different groups of men. They both refer to the same class of men. They refer to those who are rulers, that is, the magistrates, whatever word we might use to refer to them: kings, emperors, presidents, prime ministers, dictators, what have you—all those men who possess the authority to make laws and to pass judgment on people. They are decision makers—and their decisions affect entire nations and peoples and cultures. They are in a position to reward someone for his deeds and to punish the evil doer.

Concerning these earthly rulers, Isaiah reminds us that each of them is here for only a short time. Even if a ruler reigns for 50 or 60 years, that is but a drop of the bucket in comparison to the centuries that have gone by. God, on the other hand, is from everlasting to everlasting King. His reign over all the affairs of this world does not

end. Concerning earthly rulers we learn that they shall not be planted, that is, they scarcely shall be planted. They shall not be sown, that is, they are just put as a seed in the earth, and the sprout just starts shooting from the ground, and God blows on them and they wither. They are as a stump or the stock of a tree, dead and dried. There is no possibility for new life to come from them. Their very root is dead. The whole of verse 24 reveals God’s power over the rulers of this world. He plants them, He sows them, He blows on them and they wither. These men boast in their ability to become powerful rulers. They have led an illustrious political career or take pride in the military might that propelled them to power. The kings of Judah and Israel had boasted in their might. But Sennacherib, mighty emperor of Assyria, had come and utterly destroyed the northern kingdom of the ten tribes. When Sennacherib boasted of his great power to rule all the nations of the earth, his two sons attacked him in his temple and murdered him. Where was his might then? Nebuchadnezzar would come and take Judah away captive and kill many of that nation. He would then boast in his might. At the height of his power God turned the man into a wild beast and he was driven out before men. As great as the rulers of this earth may seem in their own

governor of Louisiana and on the president that assistance was too slow in coming. If an accident occurs in the workplace or on the road, investigation is immediately made to see whose fault it was. Well, people of God, such is man. He is prone to error or mistakes. They happen all the time. All this is due to sin. Would we really want to place our trust in man to rule and run the affairs of this world?

Tell me, if we examine the history of the world these past millennia, do we observe that it has gotten more spiritually pure, that it has developed in holiness? Look at our society that loves to define license to sin as freedom. Is it becoming more morally pure? Is there less greed, violence, adultery, and drunkenness in our society today? Is this world becoming wiser in its ways? Are we becoming more and more dedicated to serving God? Do people in our present world even acknowledge God and His commandments? With the rise of the new generation, is morality on the rise again? Are we ready to abolish abortion? Are we ready to live in faithfulness to God in holy wedlock as well as single life? Are we beginning to acknowledge the sacred institution of marriage between

a man and his wife alone? Where does man stand today as far as holiness is concerned?

But, enough of man. Now we examine the Holy One—the one who dwells in a light of holiness unto which no man can approach without being consumed. God is light and in Him is no darkness. Ever try to stare at the sun on a clear and cloudless day? It is blinding—so blinding it hurts the eyes. When that sun is out in all its brightness it dispels all darkness. It is pure and radiant. So is God in His holiness. This is why He is described as light in the Bible. God is pure goodness. He is totally, unwaveringly, ethically and morally pure. In God there is no sin. Not a shadow of sin can be found in Him. He makes no mistakes because He is perfect. So pure is He in His goodness and perfection that to look upon Him would be impossible without being consumed in

His holiness. This in turn means that everything God determines to do is good and pure. It is unquestioningly perfect.

We may not always understand His ways, but we know they are all-wise, just, and good. The only reason man begins to question God’s ways is that man thinks he may judge God according to his own impure and sinful stan-

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a couple of different ideas that stand on the foreground. The first of these, of course, is that of spiritual purity. One who is holy is characterized by perfection and goodness. That in the first place. In the second place, to be holy means that one is set apart to the service of God. He is wholly dedicated to serving God in his life, set apart for that service. With that idea of holiness in mind we make a comparison between God and man.

And we start with man. Where is man as far as his spiritual condition is concerned? Well, what does the Bible say about man? Psalm 14:2-3, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." David writes in Psalm 51:5, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The apostle Paul describes the fallen human race in Ephesians 4:17-19 as those who walk "in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

It is clear from Scripture that the fallen human race is far, far from holy. On the contrary, the unbelieving world is depraved, wicked, spiritually impure. Neither is man holy from this point of view, that he is set apart unto the service of Jehovah God. Man in his pride serves himself. He is dedicated to establishing a world of peaceful humanity apart from God and apart from salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. With each succeeding generation comes the vain hope that the new generation is going to do a better job than the generation before it. But everything that wicked man sets his hands and heart to do is characterized by sin and not by holiness. Even the wonderful humanitarian deeds for mankind that seem to us outwardly so good are not done in holiness. Man is a liar. He is a cheat. He is greedy. He is deceitful. He is empty and vain.

Even if we were not to go so far as this in our evaluation of man—although to assess man apart from the Word of God is dangerous—we still must come to this conclusion: man is always making errors. As a result of sin in this world, men in high places as well as low are always making mistakes and errors in judgment. People in our world love to jump on that. When the hurricane that laid low New Orleans was past, all kinds of blame was put on the

sight and in the sight of many in this world, their power and rule are but for a moment, and they and their kingdoms soon perish.

The God who directs the affairs of these rulers of our world simply uses these men to fulfill His good pleasure. All the events taking place in the nations are not arbitrary or happening willy-nilly. All of them take place according to God's sovereign will and good pleasure. And all of them will indeed fulfill the ultimate establishment of His kingdom in heaven. All the affairs of this present world are working toward that end. Add all the short reigns of the kings together, add the temporary reigns of all the rulers of this world together, and a pattern emerges. All of them work toward the establishment of the eternal kingdom of our God.

All of this implies, of course, that God will bring to nothing all the decisions and judgments of the rulers of this world. God brings the princes, that is, the mighty rulers of this earth—those who are also judges who make laws and enforce those

laws—God brings them to nothing. He makes them as vanity or emptiness. Their names are forgotten. The laws they enacted are here today and gone tomorrow. The nations they rule rise and fall. History has shown us that all of this is true. Will it be different in our own land or in

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our present day world? The rulers of the present day nations cannot conceive that their nations will indeed fall. But that they will is a surety. Our

own lawmakers and our president keep talking about our great nation. They think we are so powerful we will never fall. They do not think that God holds them accountable for their sins and that God destroys nations because of their sins. Does any nation honestly believe that it is above the judgment of God upon it? God brings the rulers of this earth to nothing and deprives them and their nations of their place in the earth. What became of Babel?? What became of Egypt, of Assyria, of Babylon, of Persia, of Greece, of the Roman Empire? They all fell—utterly fell. They were destroyed by other nations. God brought them and their rulers to nothing. Their place in the

earth became as if they were never there—they were void and empty. This is how God has always dealt with the rulers of this earth.

And what of their judgments? What of the laws they passed and enforced? They are here today and gone tomorrow. What one administration does, the next administration of government changes. All the decisions, all the rulings of rulers, are emptiness. God brings the power of one man to nothing, only to raise up another man who is scarcely planted and his power is taken away too. God alone is in the heavens. He does what pleases Him among the inhabitants of the earth, who are but grasshoppers under His rule. But again, we ought not to forget the reason Isaiah brings all of this to the attention of these faithful people in Judah.

### **III. His Care**

None of the events surrounding God's people in Israel were taking place by chance. The horrifically sinful kings of Israel did not usurp their authority and power from God. He put them in their place at this particular time. These evil rulers were leading this nation of Judah into the way of sin. And for that reason God would destroy even this nation and its rulers. But there was a

divine reason behind what was happening. There was a reason Nebuchadnezzar would lead God's people away captive into Babylon. There was a divine reason God's faithful would return again under Cyprus some seventy years later. And that divine reason was Christ. Christ had to come and Christ had to die. All the events that were taking place in the nation of Judah were being led by God to fulfill His will as regards our salvation. And all those events are still directed by God in this way. Christ will come again at the end of time. All the rulers and judges of this world are being used by God to bring about the coming of Christ. Our God reigns!

And that means we are in His constant care. He loves us and will always protect and care for His people. He will lead us through the floods and the fire. He will guide us even in persecution. But He will always care for us. Surely He will. Verse 24—there are three “yea’s” used in the first few phrases. Notice: “Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth.” Those yeas are better translated “surely.” Surely all these things come to pass. There is no doubt. And of a surety they come to pass for our sakes. Surely our God is faithful!

#### **THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

*November 17, 2013  
No. 3698*

*The Strong and Holy One  
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear radio friends,

### **Introduction**

The two verses we examine in today's broadcast conclude our study of Isaiah 40. In Isaiah 40: 25, 26 we read, “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.” It is not as if Isaiah teaches us everything that can be known of God in this chapter, but these two verses do have something important to add yet about the God whom we serve. In our text for today Isaiah makes one last comparison between God and man. He asks the same questions in verse 25 that he asked in verse 18: “to whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?” But there is added one important feature in this verse that is not found in verse 18: God asks these questions *as the Holy One*. In other words, this last comparison between God and man is that of God's holiness as opposed to man's

sinfulness. Then, to cap off this chapter, Isaiah speaks of the strength of God—another one of His attributes, His power or omnipotence. This, then is what we have before us today.

### **I. Incomparable Holiness**

God places His people before the question: “to whom will ye liken me?” The implied answer is: no one. God stands in a class all by Himself. He cannot even be defined. To whom shall I be equal? Not the greatest of men can stand alongside of God. He alone is Creator and all else is creature. But, as we noticed, there is something unique about these questions of verse 25. They are asked of us by the Holy One. God refers to Himself as the Holy One. This name of God calls our attention to His holiness. The thought behind these questions, then, become this: no one is God's equal in holiness. No man can compare to God in His holiness. Now, that means we need to compare man and God as far as this attribute of holiness is concerned. The term “holy” has