

Kept by a God, Beyond Comparison

Isa 40:18-28 ¹⁸To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? ¹⁹The workman molds an image, the goldsmith overspreads it with gold, and the silversmith casts silver chains. ²⁰Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution chooses a tree that will not rot; He seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a carved image that will not totter. ²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. ²⁴Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble. ²⁵"To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? ²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

It is evident that God through the prophet Isaiah wants His people to have an exceptional awareness of His most glorious being. He desires to reveal His greatness because men by nature are unable to comprehend or come to a proper awareness of who God is on their own. Instead men are prone to make gods from their own imaginations and wicked hearts. And thus the prophet asks, "*To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?*" Isa 40:18

When we hear such questions as this we are made aware that God wants His people to be a thinking people. Our devotion to God is not to come from some feelings or mere emotions but from an awareness of His greatness based upon a revealed knowledge. Last Sunday in the previous verses we learned that God is so great that He measures the whole of His creation as a very small thing. He looks upon the whole of mankind as less than nothing. He reminds us that He did not and does not stand in need of us in any manner. And now He proceeds through His prophet to ask a series of questions.

A. To whom will we liken God and with what likeness will compare Him?

1. We are given a description of idol/image making.
 - a. You can use the best of materials
 - b. But one can only conclude that even when made of the best material man can afford yet, having eyes they see not, ears they hear not, mouths they speak not.
2. God would have us understand that it is impossible to form an image that could have any likeness or resemblance to God.

Deut 4:12 And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.

Deut 4:15-19 "Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

3. Calvin commented on this verse thus, "In order to know God, therefore, we must not frame a likeness of him according to our own fancy, but we must betake ourselves to the Word, in which his lively image is exhibited to us."
4. The pagan and pretenders desire pictures and images.

*Jer 10:8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; a wooden idol is a **worthless doctrine**.*

- a. Contrasted with the God who had no need of us at creation or in upholding all things by the word of His power.
 - b. Any god that is the mere product of man's mind or artistry is useless.
5. The true believer is most satisfied with the Word and the Sacraments.

B. The next questions asked reveals that men need to be mindful of that knowledge they have known since creation from creation itself. - *Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not **understood from the foundations of the earth?***

1. Creation clearly reveals the greatness and glory of God.
2. God has not left Himself without a witness of His might, wisdom and power.

a. In His daily providence.

Acts 14:17 Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

b. In the greatness and glory of His creation.

*Rom 1:18-20 ". . . who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because **what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.** For since the creation of the world His **invisible attributes are clearly seen,** being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

3. It is only when men suppress the truth in an unjust manner.

- a. The Greek here is a word that can be used when a judge makes an unjust judgment.
- b. That is, the evidence reveals that God is and God Himself makes them aware of His existence.
- c. But they choose to ignore the evidence and rule in an unjust manner that God does not exist.

4. Finally Isaiah points out that the whole of world history reveals that man is powerless.

Isa 40:23-24 He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

C. The final question is from God Himself and directs us to look at the heavens above and ask "*To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?*" **says the Holy One.**

1. We are directed to look to the heavens above and consider "Who has created these things"

"Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number.

- a. Men prefer the foolishness of the "Big Bang" theory.
- b. That is all things came from nothing by time and non-existing chance.

2. And then Isaiah by revelation tells us that God - - - *calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing."*

- a. Thousands of galaxies containing billions of stars
- b. God knows them all by name for He created each one by the word of His power.
- c. *Not one is missing* - The word translated "missing" literally means "Not one is outside the care and controlling power of God".
- d. It is a Hebrew word that is used regarding a Shepherd keeping perfect watch over his flock.
- e. Billions and billions and billions of stars and not one exist outside the providential care of God.

CONCLUSION: Why are we told this - To make us aware that we are kept by a loving Redeeming, Savior/Shepherd's care.

We are never outside the loving, protecting care of our all-powerful, all-knowing Redeemer.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.