

GROWING IN FAITH



Second Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth; who frustrates the omens of liars, and makes fools of diviners; who turns back the wise, and makes their knowledge foolish; who confirms the word of his servant, and fulfills the prediction of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, "It shall be inhabited," and of the cities of Judah, "They shall be rebuilt, and I will raise up their ruins"; who says to the deep, "Be dry— I will dry up your rivers"; who says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose"; and who says of Jerusalem, "It shall be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."

- Isaiah 44:24-28

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GOING DEEPER

Scholars refer to Second Isaiah as chapters 40-55 in the book of Isaiah. It was written by someone who had obviously studied Isaiah and was greatly influenced by the 8th century prophet.

Who is someone that has deeply influenced you in your life and that you look to as someone worth modeling your life after? What is it about that person that is worth modeling? Group leader - see if there are any commonalities between the answers given. Does it make a difference to you that we don't actually know who wrote this part of the book of Isaiah?

Second Isaiah was written during the Babylonian exile while the Hebrew people were in a foreign land looking for hope.

Have you ever found yourself in unfamiliar territory in your life? What was that like? How did you find hope in the midst of uncertainty? What do you think of when you hear someone say "9/11" today? What would you have thought of before 2001? How can historic events like 9/11 or the Babylonian exile change our view of the world?

Second Isaiah makes the first truly monotheistic statements in the Bible.

Previous authors believed that God was the only God worth worshipping, but none of them claimed that there was no other God.

What difference does it make if God is the God of all nations and the only God vs. the God of one nation? If we believe there is only one God what does that mean for other religions?

God chooses to use Cyrus of Persia to do his work and let the Jews return home to rebuilding the temple. Cyrus was known for lacking morals, was a foreigner, didn't believe in God, and was ruthless, yet he was called "anointed".

Do we really believe God can work through anyone to bring about His will? Does this say more about the nature of the individual or the power of God?