

Carried by God

Isaiah 46:3-4



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Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from before your birth,
carried from the womb;
even to your old age I am he,
and to gray hairs I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and will save.



Carried by God: Outline

1. God is superior to idols.
2. God carries his people.



1. God is superior to idols

(Is. 46:1-4)



(A word about idolatry)

- Idolatry starts in the heart.





To detect our idols, we must begin by realizing that Old Testament idols were concrete, physical expressions of new loyalties and commitments that had been established in the human heart. The prohibition against idolatry is ultimately about “idols of the heart.”

Edward T. Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, p. 48



(A word about idolatry)

- Idolatry starts in the heart.

Ezekiel 14:3 Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them?



(A word about idolatry)

- Idolatry starts in the heart.
- Anything we put into a place of higher importance than God is an idol.





“The human mind is, so to speak, a perpetual forge of idols. There was a kind of renewal of the world at the deluge, but before many years elapse, men are forging gods at will. ...The human mind, stuffed as it is with presumptuous rashness, dares to imagine a god suited to its own capacity;





as it labours under dullness, nay, is sunk in the grossest ignorance, it substitutes vanity and an empty phantom in the place of God. To these evils another is added. The god whom man has thus conceived inwardly he attempts to embody outwardly. The mind, in this way, conceives the idol, and the hand gives it birth.”

- John Calvin, *Institutes Bk I ch 11*



(A word about idolatry)

- Idolatry starts in the heart.
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1 John 5:21

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.



1. God is superior to idols

- God's assessment of idols



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- God's assessment of idols:
 - They can't answer prayer.



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And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for [Baal] is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:27-29)



1. God is superior to idols

- God's assessment of idols:
 - They can't answer prayer (1 Kings 18:27-29)
 - They can't speak/see/hear/smell/feel/walk (Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18)



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Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.



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“You resemble what you worship.”



Isaiah 40:18-20

To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?

An idol! A craftsman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and casts for it silver chains.

He who is too impoverished for an offering
chooses wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skillful craftsman
to set up an idol that will not move.



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 - They can't move (Is. 40:18-20)



Isaiah 41:7

The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith,
and he who smooths with the hammer him who strikes the anvil,
saying of the soldering, “It is good”;
and they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved.



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- God's assessment of idols:
 - They can't answer prayer (1 Kings 18:27-29)
 - They can't speak/see/hear/smell/feel/walk (Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18)
 - They can't move (Is. 40:18-20)
 - They are weak (Is. 41:7)



Isaiah 42:8

I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.



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 - They can't move (Is. 40:18-20)
 - They are weak (Is. 41:7)
 - They are made (Is. 42:8)



Isaiah 44:12-20

The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. Then it becomes fuel for a man.



Isaiah 44:12-20

He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!” And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”



Isaiah 44:12-20

They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?” He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”



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 - They can't answer prayer (1 Kings 18:27-29)
 - They can't speak/see/hear/smell/feel/walk (Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18)
 - They can't move (Is. 40:18-20)
 - They are weak (Is. 41:7)
 - They are carved (Is. 42:8)
 - They are lies (Is. 44:12-20)



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 - They are weak (Is. 41:7)
 - They are carved (Is. 42:8)
 - They are lies (Is. 44:12-20)
 - They must be carried and cannot save (Is. 45:20; 46:1-2,5)



Isaiah 45:20

“Assemble yourselves and come;
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!

They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save.”



Isaiah 46:5-10

⁵ “To whom will you liken me and make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be alike?

⁶ Those who lavish gold from the purse,
and weigh out silver in the scales,
hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god;
then they fall down and worship!

⁷ They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it,
they set it in its place, and it stands there;
it cannot move from its place.

If one cries to it, it does not answer
or save him from his trouble.



Isaiah 46:5-10

⁸ “Remember this and stand firm,
recall it to mind, you transgressors,
⁹ remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose.’



Isaiah 46:1-2

Bel bows down; Nebo stoops;
their idols are on beasts and livestock;
these things you carry are borne
as burdens on weary beasts.
They stoop; they bow down together;
they cannot save the burden,
but themselves go into captivity.



Isaiah 46:3-4

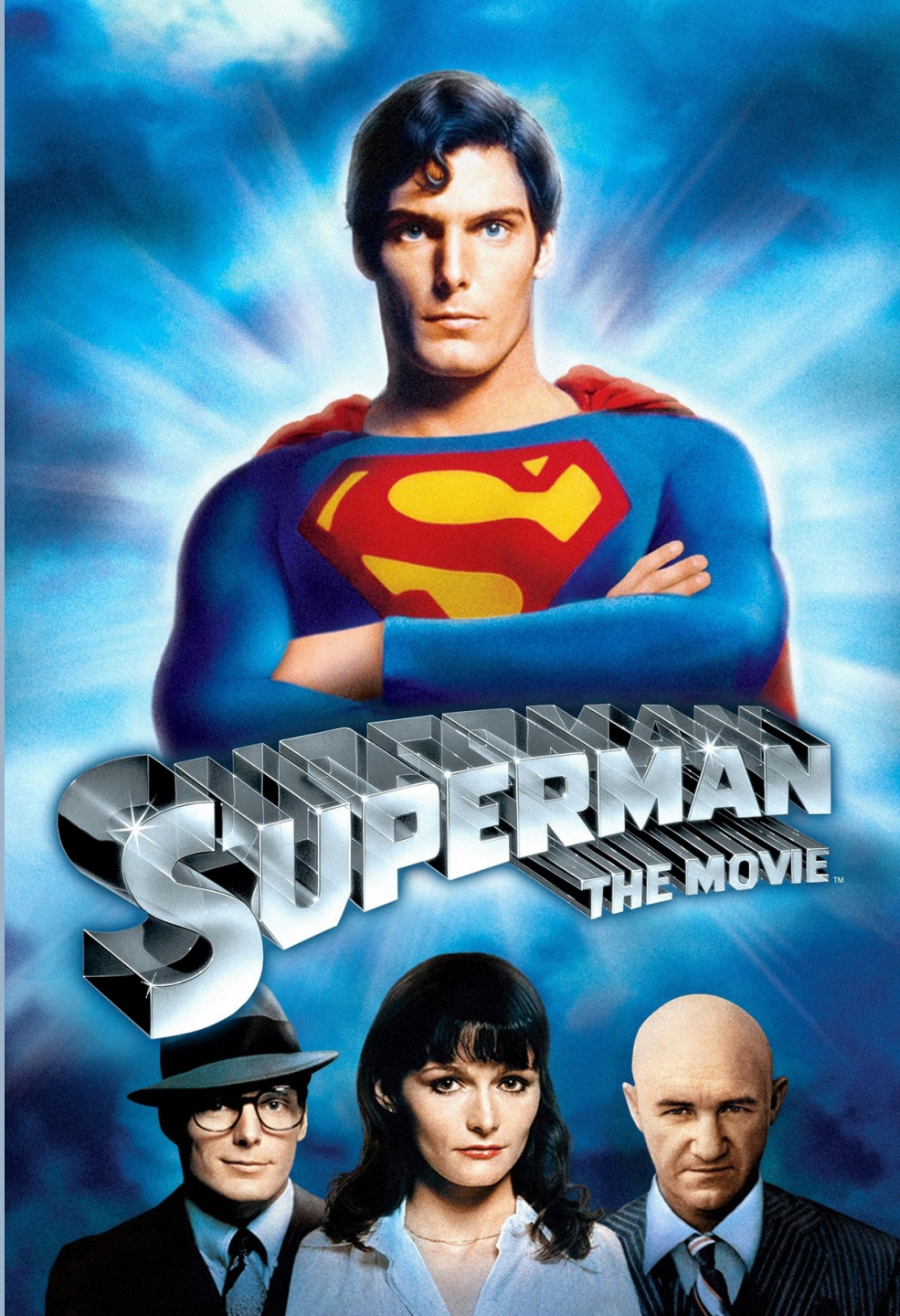
Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from before your birth,
carried from the womb;
even to your old age I am he,
and to gray hairs I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and will save.



2. God carries his people

(Is. 46:3-4)





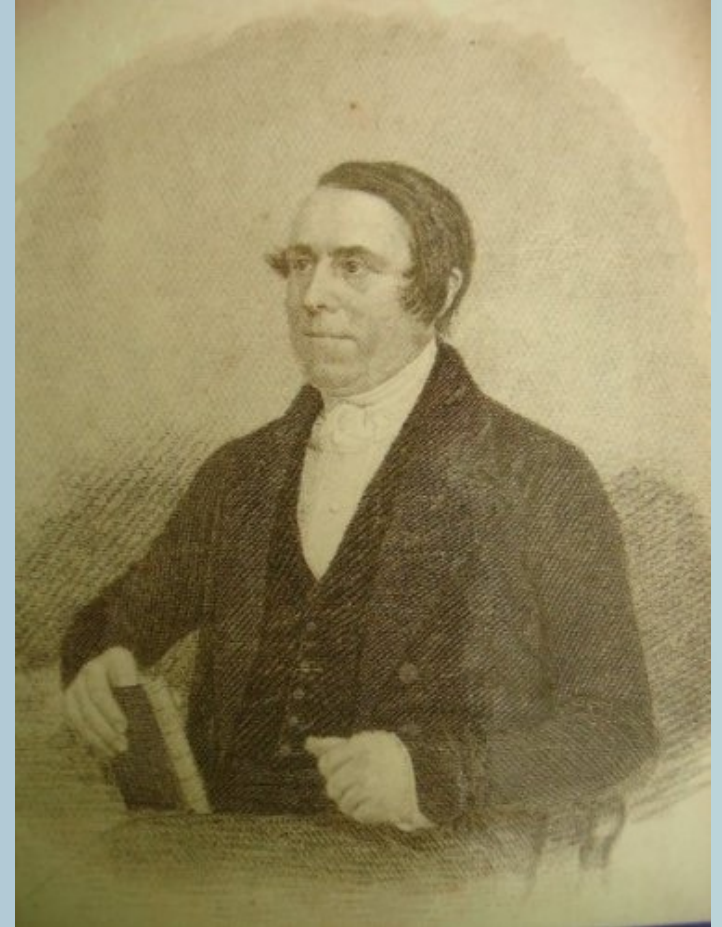
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I have made, and **I will bear;**
I will carry and will save. *(emphasis added)*



2. God carries his people

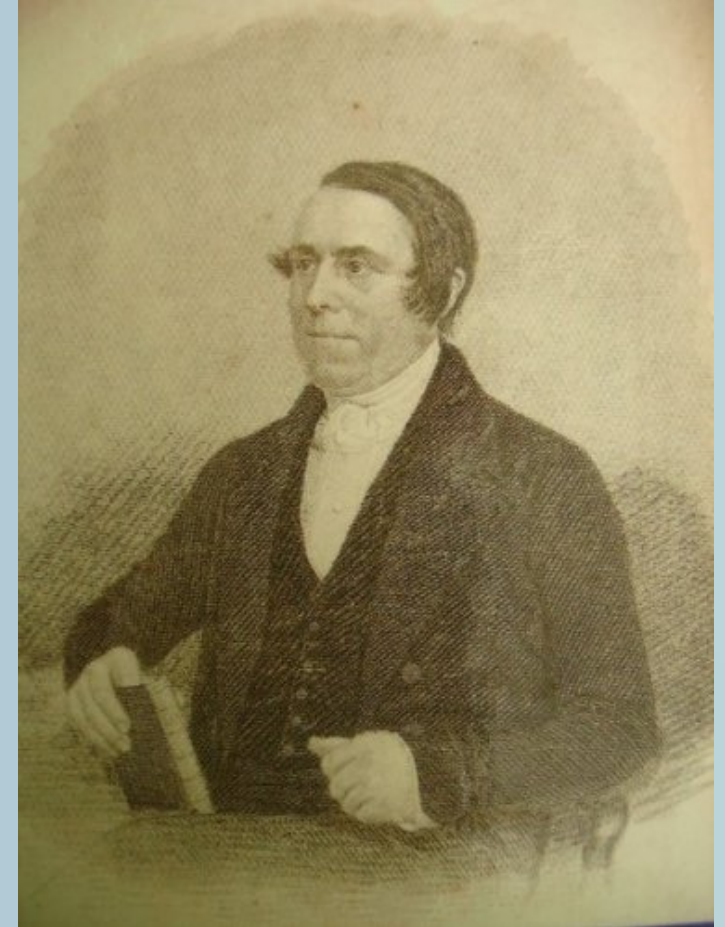
God is a parent, a kind and tender-hearted parent. He is peculiarly attached to His people — they are dear to Him, precious in His sight. They are His portion. He prizes them above all creation. He is strong to sustain, to defend, and support them. His strong arm, tender heart, and watchful eye — are all employed for them — and especially so in old age.



James Smith

2. God carries his people

The aged believer is as a child. He is weak. He feels exposed and defenseless. He is timid and fearful. But the Lord, as a tender parent, engages to take him up in the arms of His power — and carry him in the bosom of His love! Like a tender lamb in the shepherd's bosom, on a cold and frosty night, borne across a bleak and snow-covered common — so the believer, in the winter of old age, shall be carried in the bosom of his God, across the bleak and cheerless desert of time.



James Smith

2. God carries his people

It is not just the supply of one or two pressing needs, but all your wants, as they grow from day to day through all your days.

The care of Providence runs parallel with the line of life: 'Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.' (Isaiah 46:3-4).



John Flavel

2. God carries his people

So would I persuade you, reader, to record the ways of Providence, from first to last, throughout your whole course to this day, that you may see what a God He has been to you.

-John Flavel

The Mystery of Providence (1678)



John Flavel

2. God carries his people

Deuteronomy 1:30-31

The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.



Carried by God: Summary

1. God is superior to idols.
2. God carries his people.

➔ ➔ How do these truths apply to us? ← ←



Carried by God: Application

→ Self-examination related to idols and wrong worship in your own life.





LOOKING TO JESUS

WITH BRIAN G. HEDGES

“Listen to this sentence and fill in the blank: “Jesus plus _____ equals happiness for me.” Fill in the blank in your own mind, and whatever is in that blank is your idol. It’s the thing that you put before Jesus. If you can say, ‘Jesus plus nothing equals happiness for me,’ then you know that you’ve really put him first in your life.”



Carried by God: Application

- Recognize the idols and wrong worship in your own life.
 - Confess your idolatry to God.
 - Turn to worship Jesus instead.



Carried by God: Application

- Recognize the idols and wrong worship in your own life.
 - Confess your idolatry to God.
 - Turn to worship Jesus instead.
- Thank God for carrying you.





Ada Ruth Habershon

Those He saves are His delight;
Christ will hold me fast!
Precious in His holy sight,
He will hold me fast!

He'll not let my soul be lost,
His promises shall last,
Bought by Him at such a cost,
He will hold me fast!

He will hold me fast!
He will hold me fast,
For my Savior loves me so,
He will hold me fast!



Carried by God

Isaiah 46:3-4

