

### The Great Confrontation in Isaiah 41

THE CHAPTERS from 41-52, unlike chapter 40, contain specific names and deal with particular situations. In most of their contents the question of Israel's deliverance from exile is clearly involved.

As chapter 41 begins, God is imagined as addressing all the nations, including even the people of distant Greece ("coastlands," or "isles"), and calling upon them to recognize the powerful activities of the true God. While a cursory reading of verse 1 would make it appear that it is the people of the various nations who are being summoned to answer His charges, it will become apparent that His attack is particularly against their gods.

(1) Keep silence before me, O coastlands: let the people renew their strength; let them speak; let us come near together to judgment. (2) Who raised up a man of righteousness from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as dust to his sword, and as wind-driven chaff to his bow. (3) He pursues them, passing on in safety, by a way that he had not entered with his feet. (4) Who has performed and accomplished it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.

The summons in verse 1 is given in view of a specific situation which God claims to have brought into existence. The next verses describe the coming of a great conqueror whose activities strike fear into the hearts of many nations. Another reference to this conqueror occurs in verse 25, where practically all commentators agree that the reference is to the coming of