

Isaiah Chapter 45

Verses 1-4: Isaiah continues to emphasize the origin of his message, stating, "Thus saith the Lord". Yahweh Himself has set an open door of conquest before Cyrus. The Persian king is called by the designation "anointed" (meshiach, messiah). This is the only place in Scripture where a Gentile is so designated. The term originated with the Israelite custom of anointing kings and leaders.

Cyrus is given this title only in the sense that he will deliver the Jews from Babylonian bondage. "I have even called thee by thy name" indicates that Cyrus has been deliberately named in advance to reassure the Jews the "God of Israel" indeed is still in control of human events.

Verses 1-2: "Open ... gates ... shut": Probably this was a reference to the many gates in the city wall of Babylon which Cyrus entered with relative ease. The inner gates leading from the river to the city were left open, as were the palace doors. Herodotus, the Greek historian, reported that the openness of the city was so great that the Persians were taking prisoners as they moved to the palace in the center.

Isaiah 45:1 "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;"

"His anointed": This word is the one translated from the Hebrew by the transliteration, "Messiah". It is the word used for the messianic Redeemer King (in Psalm 2:2 and Dan. 9:25-26), but here refers to Cyrus, as the king set apart by God's providence for divine purposes. Though not a worshiper of the Lord, the Persian monarch played an unusual role as Israel's shepherd (44:28), and God's anointed judge on nations.

God has chosen Cyrus to do a job for Him. To speak of a heathen as His anointed is strange. We usually think of men, such as Moses, as being anointed of God. All of mankind are the creation of God, whether they are Israelites, or not. Mankind chooses whom he will serve, but all are God's creation.

This verse explains why God has anointed him. It is so that he might subdue the nations. When God opens the gates, and sends you through those gates, you cannot fail. The right hand has to do with the spiritual side. The whole world will know, that the victories Cyrus has, are of God. There will be no doubt that God is God.

Isaiah 45:2 "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:"

God has called him to this path. It is God who will clear the way for him, also. Historians tell us that the gates of Babylon were of pure brass. Perhaps, that is what is meant here.

The bars of iron were hinges they opened with. The doors were, probably, wooden covered in brass to make them appear to the world to be very strong. God could move any gate He chose, however strong.

Isaiah 45:3 "And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel."

“Thou mayest know”: God intended Cyrus to be aware that the God of the Jews was giving him victorious conquests. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, who indicated that Daniel influenced Cyrus with the prophecy of Isaiah, the king did know that the God of Israel was with him.

The "treasures of darkness", to me, mean the treasures of the people who are living in darkness. The treasures of the unsaved might be another way of putting it. They probably had places of hiding for their wealth, as many people have safes today.

Even though Cyrus is not an Israelite, he is going in the name of the God of Israel. God wants Cyrus to know beyond a doubt who He is. Notice the fact, that God called him by his name. The LORD, He is God.

Isaiah 45:4 "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

“Jacob ... has not known me”: For His servant Israel’s sake, the Lord raised up Cyrus, calling him by name, even though Cyrus did not have a personal relationship to Him. At some point, Cyrus certainly became aware of the true God and His sovereign control over human affairs, perhaps through the influence of Daniel (Ezra 1:1-4).

It is a strange thing for God to call someone who is not an Israelite to win the battles for Him. Again I say, God created us all, and He can choose whomever He wants to for any task. The statement "thou hast not known me" tells us that He was not a Hebrew.

The main lesson in this verse is that God loves all His creation. He loved this man so much, that He individually surnamed him.

Verses 5-12: The phrase “I ... create evil” refers to physical evil or calamity rather than moral evil. God is in no way pictured in Scripture as the author of sin. “Drop down, ye heaven ... pour down righteousness” is a prayer for God to intervene in human history. Thus, righteousness is pictured as coming down from above and springing up from beneath simultaneously.

Isaiah 45:5 "I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"

Cyrus did not know God, and how could he know there were no other? The LORD leaves no doubt who is calling Cyrus to this job. One of the benefits Cyrus will get from this is to know the One True God.

I believe this is repeated several times to show the importance of who is sending Cyrus, and preparing him for this job. Who are we to question God about who He calls for any job?

Isaiah 45:6 "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else."

“From the rising and from the west”: This expression, meaning the whole earth, points to the fact that through the eventual, final regathering of Israel (of which Cyrus’ exploits were a foretaste), the whole earth will know the Lord alone is God. (43:10; 44:6).

From this verse, it appears that God wants all the heathen, as well as the Israelites, to know who has done this thing through Cyrus. God will manifest Himself in this and settle the issue that He is, in fact, God and there is no other.

Isaiah 45:7 "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things]."

Notice in this, that the light already exists and is being manifest in whatever way God chooses. Darkness is the absence of light, so anytime the light is removed, you have darkness. Jesus is the Light of the world.

The absence of peace is evil. Everything positive in this life is good. The negatives of life are on the dark side, or evil. Negatives, of this nature, are the absence of a positive. God is Creator of all things. Possibly, these people thought there were two gods, who each controlled good, or evil.

Many people believe something similar to that today. They give too much power to Satan. Satan's power is limited to what God allows him to have. Satan is under the power and authority of God. God controls everything, because He is the LORD.

Isaiah 45:8 "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it."

“Righteousness ... salvation ... righteousness”: Eventually the Lord will cause righteous goodness to prevail throughout the world, just as He has promised Israel that it would (verse 13; Hosea 10:12).

Righteousness and salvation is not a product of mankind. They are a gift from God. This righteousness pouring down from heaven is like a spiritual awakening that comes to the people. Our land is in great need of a spiritual awakening now.

When Israel went into idolatry and got into trouble, they would cry to God for forgiveness. God heard their prayers, and forgave them, and poured out His blessings upon them. They must receive God's righteousness by accepting His salvation. Righteousness and salvation are products of each other.

Just as righteousness is a gift to mankind from God, so is salvation. Man cannot save himself; God must give it to us.

Verses 9-10: "Woe ... woe": Figures of the potter and the clay and of parent and child show how absurd it is to contend with God over His plans for the future. This anticipated the objections by the Jews against:

- (1) Their captivity and restoration by a pagan king; and
- (2) Ultimately God's sovereign plan to redeem Gentiles as well as Jews worldwide (Romans 9:20-24).

Isaiah 45:9 "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?"

The Israelites thought they were the only ones to be used of God. They did not understand God using a heathen man for this job. Who are they to question the God who made them?

We might ask ourselves the same question. Who are we (the created), to question God who created us? It is a very dangerous thing for the created to question the Creator.

"Potsherd" means pottery made from the earth. Every man was formed from the dust of the earth, whether Hebrew, or heathen. The God who formed you has control of you. He can make you into whatever He wants you to be. It is not our place to question.

Isaiah 45:10 "Woe unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?"

A person should not disrespect their father and mother, because they are the two of them. The father and the mother are one flesh in the child they produce.

Isaiah 45:11 "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me."

"Ask me of things to come": The Lord commands Israel to seek information about what He will do for the nation in the future, for He will reveal it.

The word "Holy" is the key word in this Scripture. It goes so far, it is hard to explain. It is not enough to say without fault. It also means beyond temptation. It means perfect, upright, righteous, and sacred both ceremonially and morally. Even this is not enough, but our vocabulary and knowledge are too small to explain the fullness of the word "Holy".

To call Him, the Holy One, sets Him aside from all mankind. Look with me, at who the sons of God are.

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Galatians 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Those of us who call Jesus Christ our Savior are the sons of God. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son, but we are the adopted sons. Since God is the Maker, He can do with Israel as He wishes. Jesus did all the work for all of mankind on the cross. We are the works of His hands.

Verses 12-13: "I who made ... He shall build My city": As the omnipotent Creator, God can save the nation through Cyrus as He has promised.

Isaiah 45:12 "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, [even] my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

This is the opening statement to the creation. If you do not believe this statement to be true, then you are wasting your time reading the Bible. God is the same in every book of the Bible. The last book verifies this.

Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

God is the Maker or Creator of it all. God prepared the world for the habitation of mankind. His last and greatest creation was mankind in His image. God spoke the whole thing into existence.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Isaiah Chapter 45 Questions

1. What was strange about speaking of Cyrus as God's anointed?
2. All men are God's creation, each of us chooses whether we will _____, or not.
3. The whole world will know that the victories Cyrus has are of _____.
4. The gates were of _____.
5. The bars are of _____.
6. What was, probably, false about the brass doors?
7. What does the author believe the "treasures of darkness" to be?
8. For whose sake did God call Cyrus to battle?
9. What statement lets us know he is not a Hebrew?
10. What is one benefit Cyrus will get from this?
11. What is meant by, from the rising of the sun, and from the west?
12. Who formed the light?
13. What is darkness?
14. Negatives of this nature are an absence of the _____.
15. What false idea do some people have about Satan?
16. Righteousness and salvation are not a product of _____.
17. They are a _____ from God.
18. What was the righteousness being poured down from heaven like?
19. They must receive God's righteousness by accepting His _____.
20. Woe unto him that striveth with his _____.
21. What is a "potsherd"?
22. What is one good reason to respect your father and mother?
23. What is the key word in verse 11?
24. What does it mean?
25. How are the Christians sons of God?

26. What is the special name that only those who believe in Christ can call Him?
27. What is the work of His hands?
28. What is a statement that we all must believe, if we are to benefit from the Bible?