

Cyrus, God's Anointed

Isaiah 45

Isaiah 45 picks up where Isaiah 44 left off—Speaking of the Persian King Cyrus, about 170 years before Cyrus is born (44:28–45:1).

42 times the Lord refers to Himself with the person pronoun “*I*” in Isaiah 45-46. Notice these reoccurring phrases:

- “...*saith the LORD...*” (45:1, 11, 13, 14, 18)
- “...*I the LORD...*” (45:7, 8, 19, 21)
- “...*I am the LORD...*” (45:5, 6, 18) / “...*I am God...*” (v. 22)
- “...*no God...*” (45:5, 14, 21)
- “...*there is none else...*” (45:5, 6, 14, 18, 22).

➡ It is clear from these verses that God is reaffirming HE IS GOD and there is NO OTHER GOD besides Him. He is God and has NO EQUALS. There is ONE GOD and ONE WAY OF SALVATION.

➡ Most of Isaiah 45 is God’s Word to Cyrus (before he is born).

I. The **SELECTION of God** (vs. 1-6, 13).

A. Cyrus’ **COMMISSION** (v. 1—The Lord’s “*anointed*”—“set aside” or ordained for God’s purpose.) See 44:28; 45:13.

B. Cyrus’ **CONQUERING**: “...*subdue nations...*”— He subdued 46 nations¹ (See also verse 14).

- “...*loose the loins of kings...*” (see Dan. 5:6).
- “...*two leaved gates...*” - double gates of Babylon.
- “...*the gates shall not be shut*” - The gates were found open and Cyrus’ army entered Babylon without a fight.
- v. 2—Techniques God would use to give Cyrus the victory.

1. v. 3—“Jewish tradition holds that when Nebuchadnezzar was about to die, he determined to hide his vast riches from his successor. He ordered his treasures to be encased in brass vessels and buried in the Euphrates River. When the time came for Cyrus to order the rebuilding of the Temple, God

¹ Among which were the Medes, Babylonians, Lydians, Carians, Caunians, Lysians, Bactrians, Sacae, Parthians, Hyracanians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, Arians of Herat, Zarangians, Arachosians, Satagydiens, Gandarians

revealed to him where the treasures of Nebuchadnezzar were hidden.”²

2. v. 4—God raised up Cyrus for Israel’s sake. [See footnote³ for “*servant*” references.]

C. Cyrus’ **COMPREHENSION** (vs. 4-5—“...*though thou hast not known me*”). Cyrus was not aware at first he was performing God’s pleasure (44:28). He found this out later (vs. 3-6, 14 cf. 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:1-4).

The Jewish historian, Josephus, notes that Isaiah’s prophecy had a great influence on Cyrus. He was impressed to read what God wrote about him over 170 years before he was born! What if you picked up a book written over a century before you were born that called you by name and gave details of what you would do!?

- v. 6—Knowledge of God from east to west—“*from the rising of the sun* [in the east] *and from the west* [where the sun sets] (cf. Hab. 2:14).

II. The **SOVEREIGNTY of God** (vs. 7-12, 18).

A. Seen in His **CREATION** (vs. 7-8, 11-12, 18).

- v. 7— “*I form THE LIGHT...* (see Gen. 1:3, 14-16).
- v. 12—“*I have made the earth, and **created** man upon it* [not evolution].
- “...**stretched out the heavens**” [like a curtain—Isa. 40:22; Ps. 104:2]. Astronomers at NASA claim the universe is “*expanding*.”⁴

1. A **conundrum** (v. 7—“*I form THE LIGHT and create DARKNESS...*”)

Persians believed in a god of light and a god of evil (Zoroastrian dualism - as in “*Star Wars*”). God claims He is the ONE God who is responsible for both light and darkness.

² Sorenson commentary, *Understanding Isaiah*

³ “**Servant**” references in Isaiah: Isaiah (20:3); Eliakim (22:20); David (37:35); Israel (41:8-9; 43:10; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3); Christ (42:1, 19 [see Lessons 41-42]; 52:13-14; 53:11 [cf. Acts 8:32-35]).

⁴ <https://www.cnet.com/news/universe-is-expanding-faster-than-we-thought-and-no-one-knows-why/>

- v. 7b—“*Evil*” [trouble or calamity—Job 2:10]. God did not create sin (Hab. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:13; Tit 1:2; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5). But He assures there are consequences to sin (Jer. 18:10-11; Amos 3:6).
 - v. 11—The God who made the universe is also the Maker of Israel.
 - v. 11b—God authenticates of His message by describing things yet to happen.
2. A **challenge** (v. 11c—“...*command ye me.*”). Since God knows all things, there is nothing you can ask God that will stump Him.

God commands us. But here is an incredible challenge for God’s people to command Him (1 John 5:14-15).

➡ There have been a few men in the Old Testament who took God up on His challenge...

- Joshua (Josh. 10:11-14).
- Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:14-15; James 5:17-18).

3. A **contradiction?** (v. 18—God “**FORMED the earth...**” Yet, Genesis 1:2 says, “**And the earth WAS WITHOUT FORM...**”)

The word “**was**” is an action verb (not passive) and requires an object. The grammar and the cross reference between Genesis 1:2 and Isaiah 45:18 signify something happened that caused the earth to be “*without form and void.*”

➡ **QUESTION:** Would a *perfect* God create something that is “*without form and void*”? A formless void in the midst of darkness does not show the handiwork of a *perfect* God. When God made man, He made man with FORM (Gen. 2:7).

- a) Isaiah 45:18 says God created the earth “*not in vain* [empty], *he formed it to be inhabited.*” Probably inhabited by Lucifer and “*the sons of God*” (Isa. 14:13-15; Ezek. 28:13-16; Job 38:4-7).

- b) See 2 Peter 3:4-7. The context is “*the beginning of the creation*” (v. 4), not Noah’s flood.
- c) There is a *discontinuity* whereby the original earth (Gen. 1:1) has been drastically changed several times to the way the earth is today and will be in the future.⁵ [See *Seven Cosmic Phases of the Earth* by Clarence Larkin.]

- d) 2 Peter 3:5—“*the heavens were OF OLD*” refers to the condition of the earth in Genesis 1:1-2. 2 Peter 3:7—“... *the heavens and the earth which are NOW...*” The condition of the earth NOW. Note a “**gap**” between 2 Peter 3:5 and 2 Peter 3:7. The earth was “*overflowed with water*” between 2 Peter 3:5 and 2 Peter 3:7.
- e) 2 Peter 3:5-6—“...*the earth standing **out** of the water and **in** the water: Whereby the worth that **THEN WAS**, being **overflowed** with water, **perished.**” Peter depicts the earth like a fishing bobber “*standing **OUT** of the water and **IN** the water.*”*



⁵ The condition of the earth in Genesis 1:1; Genesis 3; Genesis 6-9 has undergone several dramatic changes. We have little knowledge of what the earth was like in Genesis 1:1. The earth underwent great change in Genesis 1:2, followed by another change after Adam sinned (3:17-19). There was an enormous change after Noah’s flood (2:5-6; 8:22; 9:2-3, 13-16, 20-21). Life span became shorter after the flood (Gen. 5-12).

To be “*overflowed*” is to push something down under the water and the water flows over the sides of the object. God overflowed the earth with water between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Therefore we read, “*the spirit of God moved upon the face of the WATERS*” (Gen. 1:2).

- ➡ **What happened** between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2? The most likely explanation is the fall of another *anointed* being, Lucifer (Ezek. 28:14-18), and “*the sons of God*” followed by a cataclysmic overflowing flood.
- Lucifer’s throne and rebellion (Isa. 14:12-15). Lucifer became Satan and shows up in Genesis 3:1. Therefore his fall must have occurred somewhere between Genesis 1:1 and 3:1—Most likely between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.
 - The outcome of sin and rebellion always results in CHAOS and darkness.
 - A formless void cannot form itself! The Spirit of God must MOVE (Gen. 1:2).
 - Darkness cannot turn itself into light. God must provide the light (Gen 1:3). Genesis 1:3-31 is a *recreation*, or *re-forming*, of the original creation of Genesis 1:1. Notice the word “*replenish*” (Gen. 1:28). “*Replenish*” means to “fill up again” or “restore” (cf. Gen. 9:1).

- B. Seen in His **CHOICE** (vs. 9-10, 13-14). Jewish exiles objected to God’s choice of Cyrus, a Gentile king.
1. God has affirmed “*I am the Lord*” three times (44:24; 45:5; 45:6). He repeats it three more times to justify His authority to use whomsoever He wants (45:18, 21, 22).
 2. To strive with God is futile (vs. 9-10). Israel is warned not to question God about why He does what He does (Jer. 18:1-10; Rom. 9:20, 21; Ps. 2:9).
 - v. 9—The potter moulds the clay with his hands. The statement, “*He hath no hands,*” expresses the idea that the potter lacks understanding or what he moulding doesn’t make any sense (referring to God using Cyrus.).

- A Christian may sometimes question what God is doing—
“God, You don’t understand my situation—What You’re doing doesn’t make sense!”
 - v. 10—Children sometimes blame their parents for their problems (cf. Ex. 20:12).
3. Verse 13 is a reference to Cyrus (as a type of Christ). The God who made the heavens and the earth (v. 12) also raised up Cyrus. Cyrus will *“build my city, and he shall let go my captives...”* The releasing of captives to return to their homeland is a complete reversal of previous Persian policy.
- v. 14—Gentiles from Africa will recognize God is with Cyrus / Israel.

III. The **SALVATION** of God (vs. 15-25).

- v. 15—*“...thou art a God that hidest thyself...”* (cf. Mt. 13:44⁶; Dt. 31:17-19; Isa. 57:17). Jesus has hidden His face from the nation Israel, his treasure, since their rejection of Christ until He returns at the second advent. Then they will be saved.
 - v. 16—*“all of THEM...”* [Gentiles, in distinction from Israel].
- A. The **SURITY** (vs. 17-19). God’s promise Israel shall be saved with *“an everlasting salvation,”* at the second coming. [See v. 25 cf, Rom. 11:25-27; Jer. 30:10-11; 46:27-28].
1. v. 19—Jesus said, *“I spake OPENLY to the world...and in secret have I said nothing”* (John 18:20; Acts 26:26). Whatever God says can be known and can be trusted (Rom. 10:6-8)!
 2. v. 19b—A bonafide offer to seek God. God would never tell a man to seek Him if he could not find God. It is never vain to seek the Lord IF a man is honest and willing to follow Him (55:6-11; Dt. 4:29; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:13; Acts 17:27).
 - vs. 20-21—Addressed to the Jewish remnant that escaped from the Gentiles (Cf. 44:9-18 - last lesson).

⁶ Israel, Christ’s treasure, has been hidden from Christ in the world among the Gentiles since the first century (James 1:1). He will reveal Himself, as Savior, to Israel at the second advent,

B. The **SAVIOR** (v. 20b-21). Idols cannot save (v. 20b). Only God can save (v. 21).

- Double emphasis! “...*there is NO God else beside me; a just God AND a Saviour; there is NONE beside me.*”
- Note the reference to the deity of Christ—“*a just **God AND a Saviour**...*” (cf. 43:10-11).
- v. 24—“...***in the Lord** have I righteousness...*” not in myself (Isa. 64:6 cf. Rom. 3:22; 4:22-25; 10:3; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

C. The **SIMPLICITY**. v. 22—Cf. Num 21:8-9; John 3:14-15. Hymn: “*Look and Live.*”

I’ve a message from the Lord, Hallelujah!
The message unto you I’ll give,
’Tis recorded in His Word, Hallelujah!
It is only that you “look and live.”

Chorus:

“Look and live,” my brother, live,
Look to Jesus now and live,
’Tis recorded in His Word, Hallelujah!
It is only that you “look and live.”

➡ God used this verse to lead Charles Spurgeon to Christ.

D. The **SUBMISSION** (v. 23). The day is coming, “*That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*” (Cf. Rom. 14:11; Phil 2:10—every knee, Satan included).

SUMMATION: Notice how Isaiah 45 ends like Isaiah 46!