

Is. 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;
Is. 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:
Is. 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.

Now the Lord speaks specifically to Cyrus. He makes it clear that it is He who will empower Cyrus to become the mighty ruler that he becomes. He has been *anointed* (set apart for holy use) by God to bring about fulfillment of His plans for the nation of Israel.

“I will loose the loins of kings” – This is a phrase that is a very detailed prophecy regarding the response of Belshazzar to the handwriting on the wall on the night that Babylon was conquered. Notice that it is God that causes Belshazzar to experience such fear—not Cyrus.

Daniel 5:6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

“to open before....not be shut” – In my studies of prophecy, I have learned that Belshazzar was so confident that Babylon was impenetrable that he didn't even bother to make sure the gates of the city were closed. The palace gates were open as well. After damming the Euphrates River, the armies of Cyrus were able to cross the riverbed and enter the city without hindrance.

Verse two seems to be emphasizing that whatever impediments or obstructions Cyrus might encounter in his battles, God would personally intervene to remove them.

I'm not sure exactly what verse 3 means. It could be a reference to the powers that Cyrus attributed to other gods. God would make known to Cyrus that YHWH, the God of Israel, was the source of those powers and possessed the authority to give to whom He chose. It would seem that Cyrus eventually learned this truth.

Ezra 1:1-2 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Is. 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.

There was a reason that God brought Cyrus to power—to accomplish His purposes for the nation of Israel. Again, emphasis is given to the fact that Israel had been sovereignly chosen by God to be His servant. They may not serve willingly—but they would serve. Their position as God’s servant was not a lowly position; it was an honored position. God had called Cyrus specifically by name long before he was ever born.

This is an amazing truth. God doesn’t create without purpose.

I can also read this verse with a different emphasis. God is identifying Cyrus by name so far in advance as another proof to the nation of Israel that their God is THE God.

Is. 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:

Is. 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.

Long before Cyrus was born, God declared Cyrus by name and established His purpose for bringing him to power. Isaiah’s prophecy was preserved in written form. When this prophecy came to pass about 200 years after the fact, the known world at that time had proof that the God of Israel, Who could declare the future in such detail, was THE God.

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

“create” = to create; (qualified) to cut down (a wood), select, feed (as formative processes):—choose, create (creator), cut down, dispatch, do, make (fat).

“light” = illumination or (concrete) luminary (in every sense, including lightning, happiness, etc.)

“darkness” = (literally) darkness; figuratively, misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness

“peace” = safe, i.e. (figuratively) well, happy, friendly; also (abstractly) welfare, i.e. health, prosperity, peace

“evil” = bad or (as noun) evil (natural or moral):—adversity, affliction, bad, calamity, + displeasure(-ure), distress, misery, wretchedness

I thought it would be useful to see these definitions in thinking about this verse. I am reminded again that Isaiah is a Hebrew poet, and that Hebrew poetry is repetitious. It would seem that the words *light* and *peace* are paired, as are *darkness* and *evil*. In context God has been talking about the fact that He is the only God and that Cyrus is His chosen servant. He is also making the point that Cyrus’ prosperity was directly related to benefiting the nation of Israel. As I look at the definitions of the paired words, the emphasis seems to fall on happiness

and prosperity on the one hand and misery and destruction or adversity on the other. God is the One that decides who and what is necessary to accomplish His purposes—especially pertaining to the nation of Israel.

God created the angels and man. He created them good. Satan chose to rebel against God, and so did man. Through Satan and men evil has continued to proliferate on planet earth. What God created good became evil; therefore, God created both. (My simplistic explanation.)

Still thinking—As I was reading through this section again, I thought about the fact that God is light.

1 John 1:5 "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

The light was "formed," and the darkness "created." God "made" or brought about (from the Hebrew) peace and "created" evil. I still think this is all connected to Satan's rebellion. When Satan sinned, maybe God created darkness as a contrast and identifying characteristic of that rebellion. It makes sense to me that God had to create distinguishing characteristics between Himself and those that reject Him, between being in His presence and theirs.

Is. 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.

Isaiah seems to be painting a word picture. Even in delivering a message to Cyrus, God is still talking to His people. It is His plan to shower His people with righteousness and salvation; in fact, He declares that their righteousness and salvation will go hand in hand (together). Though the time is yet future when God will deliver His people and they will turn to Him in righteousness that will result in their salvation, it is considered done in the mind of YHWH. It will come to pass. He knows the end just as surely as the beginning.

Is. 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?

Is. 45:10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

Striving against God, the Creator, is sure to result in misery and sorrow. Isaiah is comparing men to pieces of pottery. The word picture—Can clay question the potter as to what he is making and for what purpose? Can the pottery claim to exist without having a creator? In reference to Cyrus, the point is being made that God can establish whomsoever He desires in positions of power. This, in turn, implies that He also determines who will be weaker vessels.

In his poetic style, Isaiah gives another word picture. The child has no right to question the father or the mother as to why he was born and why he is like he is.

As I continue to look at this verse, maybe it is a child questioning his parents regarding the birth of another child.

In both illustrations the potter has no right to question the potter regarding his choices regarding its design or purpose, nor does the child have the right to question the authority or purposes of his parents. God is obviously being referenced as both potter and parent.

Is. 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.

God is basically saying, “Do you have the right to question Me regarding my parenting of Israel or regarding how I choose to use any person of My creation?”

This is a question that comes up often in one form or another as men try to reconcile tragic or devastating events on planet earth with the concept of a loving God. In asking the question they are questioning His righteousness and His authority over His creation. In asking the question they are revealing their lack of understanding of the Creator just as surely as did Job. The problem is that most (in contrast to Job) refuse to humble themselves and acknowledge that God is righteous in ALL He does or allows and that He has complete authority over His creation. They cling to their own so-called wisdom and understanding in daring to question the righteousness of God.

Is. 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.

The obvious answer is—No. I AM the Creator. I AM in control. I AM the authority in heaven and on earth.

Is. 45:13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

Again, God emphasizes that Cyrus will be raised to a position of power and authority for God’s holy purpose. God will prosper Cyrus as he comes up against the nations. Cyrus will spearhead the building of Jerusalem by releasing the Jews held captive in Babylon. In fact, scripture states (in Ezra 1) that he not only freed the captives, he commanded that they rebuild the city. He also saw to it that they had the financial resources necessary to accomplish their purposes. He went even further by returning the stolen temple vessels to the returning captives.

This verse goes on to say that he will not have to be bribed or bought. He will act in response to the LORD’s influence on his heart.

Is. 45:14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and

they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.

At first read it would seem that God still seems to be directing His remarks to Cyrus. As I continued reading, I noticed that the focus seemed to shift to the deliverance of God's people and the rebuilding of Jerusalem—and, in turn, the nation. In the millennial kingdom we know that Israel will assume the position of honor among the nations. The nations specifically mentioned here, all in Africa, are shown as willingly positioning themselves as servants to God and His people. (Why these nations were singled out, I don't know.) This seems to be referencing the situation that Isaiah describes in more detail in chapter 60.

Isaiah 60:14-17 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

These nations will position themselves as servants of Israel because they fear Israel's God. They will finally recognize that He is the ONLY God.

Is. 45:15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

These words seem to be expressing the thoughts of these gentile nations about God.

- He is hidden. The Hebrew word for *hidest* states "by covering, conceal." This went against the worship practices of most nations at that time; they worshipped idols. God has ever required that His people turn to Him in faith.

Hebrews 11:1&6 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen....But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

He reveals Himself through His prophets and His actions on behalf of His people, as well as judgment on the wicked—but not in physical form (except to come as the man Jesus to become our sin sacrifice).

- He is intimately connected to the nation of Israel.
- He is the Savior, the Deliverer, Defender, and Avenger of His people.

Is. 45:16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together *that are* makers of idols.

Once the nations understand that God is THE God, they will experience shame and amazement that they ever put their faith in idols.

Is. 45:17 *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Once Israel is restored in righteousness and salvation, their position is secured forever. They will never again experience shame or confusion or dismay due to the focus of their faith and worship because it will be centered on YHWH.

Is. 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: *I am* the LORD; and *there is none else*.

Again, emphasis is given to the fact that YHWH God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In looking at the Hebrew for *established*, the phrases “provide, make provision and make ready” stood out to me. He made every provision necessary for the benefit of man because He made it to be inhabited by man.

The Hebrew for the word *vain* jumped out at me because of some fairly recent studies in Genesis. It is the same word used in Genesis 1:2 for the phrase “without form.”

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void....

It means “to lie waste; a desolation (of surface), i.e. desert; figuratively, a worthless thing; adverbially, in vain:—confusion, empty place, without form, nothing, (thing of) nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness.” In other words, for the earth to be “without form and void” something had to have happened to bring that about; God didn’t create it that way. I believe it was the fall of Satan. (See journal on Genesis 1.)

Again that statement—I AM YHWH and there is no other.

Is. 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Although God has chosen to conceal Himself physically, He has been very outspoken through His Word and His prophets. God promised Abraham that He would make him a great nation with great blessing.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou

shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

That promise was confirmed to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-6) and again to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15). That promise was unconditional. God does not make a promise and then change His mind about keeping it. God speaks with total righteousness (what is right and just); He speaks only the truth.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Is. 45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

The first half of this verse has a companion in the book of Zechariah.

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Although it seems that the focus of the context at this point seems to be on the time when Israel is restored in righteousness and salvation, there have always been other peoples seeking alignment with God's people. At the very beginning of Israel's identity as a nation when the Exodus from Egypt took place, it was a mixed multitude (Exodus 12:38). There were those that recognized that the false gods represented by idols in no way compared to the God of Israel.

The body of believers comprising the "church" is the ultimate mixed multitude of spiritual Israel. During the tribulation, as God is accomplishing His purposes for the nation of Israel, many people from other nations will align themselves with the God of Israel and will enter into the millennial kingdom alongside restored Israel.

It's important to note that God is saying boldly and unequivocally that He is the only God with power and authority to provide salvation to His people. No false god has power or authority of any kind that can act for the good of those that follow them. Their only power comes from foolish men who choose to live their lives in accordance with the teachings with which they are identified.

Is. 45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

In this verse God seems to be addressing those who have escaped from the nations. He is urging them to get their idolatrous friends together and give an example from even one of their "gods" of a prophecy comparable to those that God has declared. God has made prophecies from ancient times and many have

been fulfilled to the letter. Some are yet to be fulfilled, but the future will prove them to be just as accurate. YHWH is declaring that He is the ONLY God; there is no other god, no other being capable of declaring the future, who is always just, and who is able to be a Saviour to His people. (see verse 15)

Is. 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and there *is* none else.

Based on the evidence, God is urging all the peoples on the earth to turn to Him in faith for salvation. God has singled out Israel as a nation of privilege among the nations, but His desire is that ALL men come to repentance.

2Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

This is the sixth time in this chapter alone that God has repeated this truth—I AM God and there is no other (verses 5, 6, 14, 18, 21 & 22).

Is. 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

There is no power greater than God to swear by, so He swears by Himself. He is the greatest witness to His own truth. The things that He declares will happen are true and will come to pass just as He said without fail in every detail. This is another prophecy that is yet future—"That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" that He is God and there is no other (is the implied message as I read it). This prophecy is repeated in the New Testament in reference to Jesus—another declaration of the Father and Son as One.

Philippians 2:10-11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Is. 45:24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Every person that has ever or will ever live on planet earth will be made to acknowledge YHWH as The source of righteousness (rightness and justice) and strength (might and power). Every man will come to God in shame, repentance, and faith or in anger that will turn to shame and end in eternal damnation.

Is. 45:25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

The time is coming when the remnant of Israel will turn to YHWH in righteousness and salvation and will be justified (declared clean—just as if they had never sinned). That will result in the return of Messiah as King of kings and Lord of lords. In His millennial kingdom they will enjoy the glory that God intended for them from the beginning.