

ISAIAH 45 | *Cyrus Called by Name*

Cyrus Called by Name

1 Thus says Yahweh to his anointed (מְשִׁיחַ), to Cyrus (פֶּרְסִי), whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations (גוֹיִם) before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:¹

2 I will go before you and level the exalted places. I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places,² that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name. I name you, though you do not know me. 5 I am Yahweh, and there is no other. Besides me there is no God. I equip you, though you do not know me, 6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am Yahweh, and there is no other. 7 I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am Yahweh who does all these things.

Righteousness Above and Below

8 Shower, heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness. Let the earth open, that salvation (יִשׁוּעַ) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) may produce fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout. I, Yahweh, have created (בָּרָא) it.

Potty Questions

9 Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, What are you making? or Your work has no handles? 10 Woe to him who says to a father, What are you begetting? or to a woman, With what are you in labour?

Things to Come

11 Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel and the one who formed (יָצַר) him:

Ask me of things to come. Will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? 12 I made the earth and created (בָּרָא) man on it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. 13 I have stirred him

¹ Cyrus (and Darius) conquered the city of Babylon in 539 bc. **Da 5:30-31** 30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. 31 And Darius the Mede [Cyrus's co-ruler] received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

² Yahweh will allow Cyrus to capture much gold and treasure from the Babylonians. Cyrus will then supply that gold and treasure to Jews who will return to Israel and rebuild the Jerusalem temple.

[Cyrus] up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level. He shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,³ says Yahweh of hosts.

The Wealth of Egypt

14 Thus says Yahweh: The wealth of Egypt⁴ and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabean, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours. They shall follow you. They shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you saying: Surely God (אל) is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.

Shame for the Idol-Makers

15 Truly, you are a God who hides himself, God of Israel, the Saviour. 16 All of them are put to shame and confounded. The makers of idols go in confusion together. 17 But Israel is saved (ישע) by Yahweh with everlasting salvation (תְּשׁוּבַת עוֹלָמִים). You shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.

Yahweh Speaks Out Loud

18 For thus says Yahweh, who created (ברא) the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty; he formed it to be inhabited!):

I am Yahweh, and there is no other. 19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness. I did not say to the seed (זרע) of Jacob, Seek me in vain.⁵ I, Yahweh, speak righteousness (צִדְקָה). I declare what is truthful (מִישָׁרִים).⁶

Another Debate with the Idol-Makers

20 Assemble yourselves and come. Draw near together, you survivors (פְּלִיט) of the nations (גוֹיִם)! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a god that cannot save (ישע). 21 Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, Yahweh? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior. There is none besides me.

Every Knee, Every Tongue

22 Turn to me and be saved (ישע), all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23 By myself I have sworn. From my mouth has gone out in righteousness a

³ See *God's Grace*.

⁴ Israel will again plunder the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will be forced to recognise again Yahweh is God.

⁵ Yahweh doesn't play tricks on us. He says what he means and means what he says.

⁶ See *God's Truth*.

⁷ “[S]urvivor from danger; ...designates someone who has managed to survive a battle” (*HALOT*, 932).

word (דָּבָר) that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall swear allegiance.⁸

All Israel Justified

24 Only in Yahweh, it shall be said of me, are righteousness (הַצְדִּיקָה) and might (עֹז). To him shall come and be ashamed all who were angry against him. 25 In Yahweh all⁹ the seed (זֶרַע) of Israel shall be justified (צִדִּיק)¹⁰ and shall glory (הִלֵּל).

⁸ **Php 2:9-11** 9 Therefore God has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

⁹ Again we see Paul's Israelology comes from Isaiah. **Ro 11:25-26** 25 Lest you [Gentile believers] be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers and sisters. A partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob.

¹⁰ “[T]o be in the right, be right” (*HALOT*, 1003).

Commentary

1. Isaiah 45.

- a. Theme: The transcendent God who, unlike the idols, does not need to be carried (see ch. 46), who created the universe for a purpose, and who knows history from start to finish, should be trusted by Israel and the nations to carry out his promised salvation in whatever way he chooses.¹¹
- b. Key word: righteousness.
 - (1) God's righteousness is on full display in this chapter.
 - (a) **Is 45:8** 8 Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness (קִדְּוָה, LXX: δικαιοσύνη). Let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness (הַקִּדְּוָה, LXX: δικαιοσύνη) may produce fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout. I, Yahweh, have created it.
 - (b) **Is 45:13** 13 I have stirred [Cyrus] up in righteousness (קִדְּוָה)....
 - (c) **Is 45:19** 19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness. I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, Seek me in vain. I, Yahweh, speak righteousness (קִדְּוָה). I declare what is true.
 - (d) **Is 45:23-25** 23 By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone out in righteousness (הַקִּדְּוָה) a word that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance. 24 Only in Yahweh, it shall be said of me, are righteousness (הַקִּדְּוָה) and strength. To him shall come and be ashamed all who were angry against him. 25 In Yahweh all the seed of Israel shall be declared righteous (קִדְּוָה, LXX: δικαίω) and shall exult (LXX: ενδοξαζομαι).
 - 1) **Ro 8:30** 30 ...And those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified (δικαίω) he also glorified (δοξάζω).
- c. New Testament link:
 - (1) Paul based his main argument in Romans on these chapters in Isaiah.
 - (a) **Ro 1:16-17** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, The righteous (δίκαιος) shall live by faith.

2. Cyrus.

- a. See *Cyrus*.

3. Cyrus Called by Name (Is 45:1-7).

- a. **Is 45:1-7** 1 Thus says Yahweh to his anointed (מָשִׁיחַ), to Cyrus (פֶּרְסִי), whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations (גּוֹיִם) before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: 2 I will go before you and level the exalted places. I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name. I name you, though you do not know me. 5 I am Yahweh, and there is no

¹¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 213.

other. Besides me there is no God. I equip you, though you do not know me, 6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am Yahweh, and there is no other. 7 I form light and create darkness. I make well-being (וַיִּשְׁׁוּ) and create calamity (וַיַּעַר). I am Yahweh who does all these things.

- b. Yahweh carries on speaking to Cyrus the Great (v. 1), who will rescue the Jewish people approximately 150 years later in 539 bc.
- c. Cyrus is Yahweh's anointed (מָשִׁיחַ), whom Yahweh grasps by the right hand (v. 1).
 - (1) Amazingly Yahweh calls Cyrus **his anointed**. This title had previously been reserved for priests, prophets, and kings of Israel.¹²
 - (2) Like David and Yeshua, Cyrus is called a shepherd-messiah.
 - (a) **Is 44:28** 28 ... Who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose, saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and of the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.
 - (3) Because Israel in exile had no king, Cyrus functioned in a sense as her anointed king. Like the ultimate Messiah, Cyrus would have a twofold mission: to free the people, and to bring God's judgment on unbelievers.¹³ Remember Cyrus is Yahweh's third servant, and Messiah is his fourth servant.
 - (4) Thought an unbelieving Gentile emperor, Cyrus is a type of Messiah. Like Messiah, he is God's chosen instrument through whom God's gracious purposes are accomplished and God's sovereignty is revealed to the world.¹⁴
 - (5) When Donald Trump became the American president in 2016, some called him the "new Cyrus."
- d. Cyrus will subdue nations, strip kings of their weapons, and open doors. Yahweh will go before Cyrus to humble the proud, break bronze, and cut through iron (vv. 1-2).
 - (1) Cyrus conquered Media in 549 bc, Lydia in 546 bc, and Babylonia in 539 bc.
 - (2) "Cyrus's conquests were neither a matter of historical chance nor a matter of Cyrus's sterling qualities, but the result of the specific providence of Israel's God."¹⁵
 - (3) See *Cyrus the Great*.
- e. Yahweh will give Cyrus access to secret treasures so that Cyrus will know Yahweh is God and has called him by name (v. 3).
 - (1) Yahweh will allow Cyrus to capture much gold and treasure from the Babylonians. Cyrus will then supply that gold and treasure to Jews who will return to Israel and rebuild the Jerusalem temple.
 - (a) **Ezr 1:7-11** 7 Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of Yahweh that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in

¹² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 200.

¹³ John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1099.

¹⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 201.

¹⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 201.

the house of his gods. 8 Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 10 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

- (2) God wants Cyrus to recognize who it is who has commissioned him.¹⁶ This Cyrus does. Surely Cyrus became aware of Isaiah’s prophecy.
- (a) **Ezr 1:2-4** 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Yahweh, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.
- f. Yahweh calls Cyrus by name, not on account of Persia, but on account of Israel (v. 4).
- (1) “If it is true that God is not limited in his choice of historical instruments for the achieving of his purposes, it is also true that this breathtaking freedom never abrogates his ancient promises.”¹⁷ See *God’s Freedom*.
- (2) “It is because of Cyrus that an Israel survived through whom the Christ could come for the salvation of the world.”¹⁸ Cyrus’s activities toward the Jews, superintended by God, are an important part of the biblical story.
- g. Yahweh calls and equips Cyrus even though Cyrus does not know him (vv. 4-5).
- (1) Probably Cyrus was not a believer and did not acknowledge Yahweh as the one, true God.
- (2) However, “[i]t is not necessary for the Creator to have the permission of someone’s faith before that person can be given a front-rank position in God’s plans.”¹⁹
- (3) Possibly Cyrus came to believe in Yahweh after the his conquest of Babylonia.
- h. This is so all humanity may know Yahweh is the only God (v. 6), the one in charge of the universe and its history (v. 7).
- (1) People are to realise that God is in charge of all that happens—light, darkness, prosperity, and disaster. He is free to do whatever he wants to do to achieve his purposes.

¹⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 201.

¹⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 202.

¹⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 203.

¹⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 202.

- (2) Notice the progression in “knowing.” First, Cyrus knows (v. 3). Second, Israel knows (v. 4). Third, the world knows (v. 6).²⁰
- (3) All this prefigures Messiah Jesus. Just as God fulfilled his promise to send the third servant, Cyrus, to save Israel physically, so he will fulfill his promise to send the fourth servant, Messiah, to save Israel and nations spiritually and physically.
 - (a) Cyrus could never be confused with the ultimate Messiah, because he is not from Israel or the line of David.

4. Righteousness from Above and Below (Is 45:8).

- a. **Is 45:8** 8 Shower, heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness. Let the earth open, that salvation (יְשׁוּעָה) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) may produce fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout. I, Yahweh, have created (בָּרָא) it.
- b. Yahweh has created the universe to bring forth salvation and righteousness (v. 8).
 - (1) Here, righteousness is defined as “divine activity that brings about the triumph of righteousness.”²¹
 - (2) Notice God causes righteousness to envelope the environment from above and below. Salvation and righteousness are the ultimate destiny of our world!

5. Potty Questions (Is 45:9-10).

- a. **Is 45:9-10** 9 Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, What are you making? or Your work has no handles? 10 Woe to him who says to a father, What are you begetting? or to a woman, With what are you in labour?
- b. It is dangerous for a man to strive against God, like a clay pot arguing against the potter who made it (v. 9), or like a child questioning his parents in bringing him forth (v. 10).
 - (1) How shocking for Israel to hear that her deliverer would be a pagan king who did not even know Yahweh.²²
 - (2) “What are you making” is not a question seeking information but a means of calling to account. The potter is called on to explain and justify his creation.²³
 - (3) But a pot has no right to question the potter. Nor does a child have the right to question why his parents brought him into the world. In the same way Israel has no right to question God her Maker, the world’s Creator, in his plan to raise up a Gentile king to save her.²⁴

²⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 203.

²¹ Muilenburg, quoted in John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 206.

²² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 208.

²³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 209.

²⁴ John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1100.

- (a) **Is 29:16** 16 You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, He did not make me? Or the thing formed say of him who formed it, He has no understanding?
- (4) Given God is God, we must be careful what what questions we ask of him.
 - (a) “Why are you managing history like this? I could handle it much better!”
 - (b) “What are you doing God? What are you trying to accomplish? The world is such a mess!”
 - (c) Is a seven-year tribulation really the best way for God to end this phase of history? The answer is yes. God knows what he is doing.
 - (d) “If God says that such and such a thing is going to happen, who is in a position to say whether that is a good idea?”²⁵

6. Things to Come (Is 45:11-13).

- a. **Is 45:11-13** 11 Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel and the one who formed (יצר) him: Ask me of things to come. Will you command me concerning my children [Israel] and the work of my hands? 12 I made the earth and created (ברא) man on it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. 13 I have stirred him [Cyrus] up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level. He shall build my city and set my exiles (גְּלוּיֹת) free, not for price or reward, says Yahweh of hosts.
- b. Yahweh challenges mankind to ask him about future events (v. 11).
- c. No one can order Yahweh around when its comes to his chosen people, Israel (v. 11). After all, he is the Creator of the universe (v. 12).
 - (1) “God’s hands have stretched out the heavens, and he calls out their host on command (40:26); so who on earth is in a position to command him concerning the work of his hands? Note the contrast here with 44:9–20, where the hands of human craftsmen make the gods. Here the hands of God make humans.”²⁶
 - (2) “History is solely in the hands of the Creator. The great Persian emperor, like the earth and the stars, exists and comes forth at the command of God alone.”²⁷
 - (3) Today’s world leaders were all raised up by God to play their part in the great story of history.
- d. Motivated by righteousness, Yahweh will raise up Cyrus and smooth a path for him (v. 13).
 - (1) “[O]ne of the dramatic differences from the Cyrus Cylinder is that whereas there Cyrus’s virtues, strength, and leadership skills are put forward as the reasons for Marduk’s choosing him, here they do not even enter into the picture. The three reasons given (vv. 3, 4, 6) have solely to do with the nature and character of God.

²⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 209.

²⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 210.

²⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 210.

It is not human perfectibility on which the world's hope rests, but the grace and the providence of God."²⁸

- e. At no cost, Cyrus will rebuild Jerusalem and free the Jewish exiles (v. 13).
 - (1) This reminds of Messiah Jesus who at no cost to us freed us from sin and death and will establish the new Jerusalem (Re 21:9-27). Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Messiah Jesus alone.

7. The Wealth of Egypt (Is 45:14).

- a. **Is 45:14** 14 Thus says Yahweh: The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you (fem. sing.) [Israel] and be yours. They shall follow you. They shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you saying: Surely God (לֵאלֹהִים) is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.
- b. Egyptian, Cushite, and Sabean servants, with their wealth, will come over to Israel follow her because they will recognise the one true God is in her midst (v. 14).
 - (1) This is literally true.
 - (a) **Ps 68:31** 31 Nobles shall come from Egypt. Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God.
 - (b) **Ps 72:10** 10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.
 - (c) **Is 18:7** 7 At that time tribute will be brought to Yahweh of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land [Cush] the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of Yahweh of hosts
 - (d) **Acts 8:27-39** 27 And there was an *Ethiopian*, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was *in charge of all her treasure*. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, Go over and join this chariot. 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, Do you understand what you are reading? 31 And he said, How can I, unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth. 34 And the eunuch said to Philip, About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Yeshua. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptised? 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

²⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 200.

- (2) This is also typically true. These nations are typical representatives of all nations who will willingly humble themselves to Israel and Israel's God.
- (a) **Zec 14:16** 16 Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.
- (b) **Mal 1:11** 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says Yahweh of hosts.

8. Shame for the Idol-Makers (Is 45:15-17).

- a. **Is 45:15-17** 15 Truly, you are a God who hides (סתר) himself, God of Israel, the Saviour. 16 All of them are put to shame and confounded. The makers of idols go in confusion together. 17 But Israel is saved (ישע) by Yahweh with everlasting salvation (תְּשׁוּעַת עוֹלָמִים). You (masc. sing.) [Israel] shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.
- b. The God of Israel, the nations recognise, is a God who hides himself (v. 15), but that doesn't mean God is absent or powerless.
- (1) "[T]here are times when, because of human unbelief, God does hide himself until frustration brings us to our knees and to a willingness to believe...."²⁹
- (a) **Is 8:17** 17 I will wait for Yahweh, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.
- (b) **Is 54:8** 8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says Yahweh, your Redeemer.
- c. Idol-makers will be put to shame and confused (v. 16).
- (1) "Given the profusion of idols around the world, and given the greatness of the nations and cultures that have worshiped them, it is surprising that God is not to be found in any of them. That he is not is shown by the fact that none of those idol-gods can save those who have made them. They are not God at all."³⁰
- (2) Political parties, ideologies, and our chosen tribe cannot save us. We will be put to shame and confused if we trust in these things.
- d. Israel, by contrast, will be eternally saved. She will not be put to shame or confused forever (v. 17).
- (1) People who persist in idol-worship will be ashamed, but believing Israelites will never be ashamed and will enjoy God's salvation forever.³¹
- (a) **Ro 9:33** 33 As it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.
- (b) **Ro 10:11** 11 For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

²⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 216.

³⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 217.

³¹ John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1100.

- (c) **1 Pe 2:6** 6 For it stands in Scripture: Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.
- (2) Our salvation is not temporary, but eternal!
 - (a) **Heb 5:9** 9 And being made perfect, he [Yeshua] became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him [by believing in him].
- (3) Paul says in several places that although he has suffered much because of the gospel, he has never lost confidence in the ability of Jesus to deliver him in the end.³²
 - (a) **Ro 1:16** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for [eternal] salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - (b) **Php 1:19-20** 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Messiah this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Messiah will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.
 - (c) **2 Ti 1:12** 12 But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
- (4) When the world shames us for our Christian beliefs, we must make the choice not to be ashamed, for we know we have eternal salvation by grace through faith in Messiah Jesus.

9. Yahweh Speaks Out Loud (Is 45:18-19).

- a. **Is 45:18-19** 18 For thus says Yahweh, who created (ברא) the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty; he formed it to be inhabited!): I am Yahweh, and there is no other. 19 I did not speak in secret (סֵתֶר), in a land of darkness. I did not say to the seed (זֶרַע) of Jacob, Seek me in vain.³³ I, Yahweh, speak righteousness (צֶדֶק). I declare what is truthful (מִישָׁרִים).³⁴
- b. Yahweh is the one who created the universe. There is no other (v. 18).
- c. He created the universe to be inhabited by living creatures, especially man (v. 18).
 - (1) Theologically, this is hugely important. God created heaven and earth for the purpose of life, especially human life. The world is not meaningless, but meaningful.
- d. His promises to Israel are well-known and open to verification (v. 19).
 - (1) “Openness-to-examination” is the fundamental mentality of historic Christianity.³⁵
 - (2) Under fideism, one has no firm basis to ground one’s commitment. One is lost in a world of religions and philosophies not knowing if what he or she believes is true.

³² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 217.

³³ Yahweh doesn’t play tricks on us. He says what he means and means what he says.

³⁴ See *God’s Truth*.

³⁵ Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*, 349.

All religious thinking becomes equal guessing! A fideist will never be able to answer the fundamental question, “How do you know you are not deceived?” “How can you be sure that you are not mistaken?” In the light of fideism, no beliefs are justifiable or defensible. One is forever lost in the wilderness of subjectivism.

- (3) See *Biblical Worldview* and *Apologetics*.
- e. He speaks righteousness and is straight (v. 19).
- (1) God invites us to verify his character for truthfulness. That’s one reason he gives us predictive prophecy and eyewitness testimony. God does not want us to be gullible fools.
- (2) **Lk 1:1-4** 1 As many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the message, 3 it seemed fitting for me as well—having investigated everything carefully from the beginning—to write it out for you in consecutive order... 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things of which you were informed.
- (3) See *God’s Truth*.
- f. Summary:
- (1) “Chaos did not exist before God, and God did not bring a meaningless chaos into existence. Rather, the preexistent God created the cosmos specifically for human habitation. Since he is the only God, his purposes are the only normative explanation for existence. Furthermore, since the universe was created for the purpose of human habitation, it is incumbent on God to reveal that purpose to humans, and that is precisely what he has done. Israel (*Jacob*) did not discover God through manipulation of the spirits in secret places of darkness. Rather, God has initiated the conversation, speaking clearly in ways that can be clearly verified. Thus it has been shown in history that God speaks the plain truth. This is not the case with the gods (43:9; 44:7, etc.).”³⁶

10. Another Debate with the Idol-Makers (Is 45:20-21).

- a. **Is 45:20-21** 20 Assemble yourselves and come. Draw near together, you fugitives (פְּלִיטִים) of the nations (גּוֹיִם)! They have no knowledge (יָדַע) who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a god that cannot save (יִשַׁע). 21 Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, Yahweh? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior. There is none besides me.
- b. Yahweh orders the fugitives of the nations to gather for another debate (v. 20).
- (1) Israel’s Babylonian exile has raised a serious question. Has not the God of Israel been thoroughly discredited? Should not Israel adopt the gods of her captors?³⁷
- (2) פְּלִיט: “survivor from danger; ...designates someone who has managed to survive a battle” (*HALOT*, 932).

³⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 218.

³⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 220.

- c. Idol-worshippers have no knowledge. Their idols and false gods cannot save (v. 20).
 - (1) **Is 44:9** 9 All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame.
- d. The idol-worshippers can present no case (v. 21).
- e. Yahweh declared what would happen long ago, clearly demonstrating he is the one, true, righteous God (v. 21).
 - (1) Isaiah spoke these words around 650 bc, and they were fulfilled in 539 bc. They certainly were from of old by the time they were fulfilled.³⁸
 - (2) This is the fourth time Isaiah has made this point.
 - (a) **Is 41:22-23** 22 Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome, or declare to us the things to come. 23 Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods. Do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified.
 - (b) **Is 41:26-27** 26 Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforehand, that we might say, He is right? There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed, none who heard your words. 27 I was the first to say to Zion, Behold, here they are! and I give to Jerusalem a herald of good news.
 - (c) **Is 43:9-10** 9 All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. 10 You are my witnesses, declares Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.
 - (d) **Is 44:7-8** 7 Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, because I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. 8 Fear not, nor be afraid. Have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock. I know not any.”
 - (3) The God of the Bible is a covenant-keeping God who makes historical promises to real people and keeps them. This is how we know he is the true God.
 - (4) “This is a radically exclusivist message.”³⁹
 - (a) **1 Ti 2:5** 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Messiah Jesus.

11. Every Knee, Every Tongue (Is 45:22-23).

- a. **Is 45:22-23** 22 Turn (פנה) to me and be saved (ישע), all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23 By myself I have sworn. From my mouth has gone out

³⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 222.

³⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 221.

- in righteousness a word (דָּבָר) that shall not return (שׁוֹבֵר): To me every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall swear allegiance (שָׁבַע).⁴⁰
- b. Yahweh invites all people to turn around and be saved, for he is the true God (v. 22).
- (1) פָּנָה: “to turn to one side, head in a particular direction (in a geographical or topographical sense)” (*HALOT*, 937).
 - (2) Yahweh is Saviour of Israel because he is the Saviour of the world. Israel’s only Saviour is also the only Saviour of the whole earth.⁴¹
 - (3) God’s heart has always been for the nations, not just Israel.
 - (a) **Is 66:18-19** 18 For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, 19 and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.
- c. Yahweh makes a solemn vow: to him every knee will bow and every tongue swear allegiance (v. 23).
- (1) שָׁבַע: “to swear, to make a statement, to give a pledge, under oath, invoking God, a commitment to do good” (*HALOT*, 1397).
 - (a) LXX: ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τῷ θεῷ.
 - (2) Believer will come voluntarily and eagerly. Unbelievers will come reluctantly and by force. Our destiny depends on our attitude about Jesus, the Lord.
 - (3) Paul quotes this verse twice in his letters.
 - (a) **Ro 14:10-12** 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
 - (b) **Php 2:10-11** 10 ...So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord (κύριος), to the glory of God the Father.
 - 1) Note every tongue will confess not just that Jesus is Lord, but that he is Yahweh himself.

12. All Israel Justified (Is 45:24-25).

- a. **Is 45:24-25** 24 Only in Yahweh (בַּיהוָה), it shall be said of me [Isaiah?], are righteousness (צְדָקָה) and might (עֹז). To him shall come and be ashamed all who were angry against him. 25 In Yahweh (בַּיהוָה) all the seed (אֲרָע) of Israel shall be justified (צָדִיק) and shall exult (הִלֵּל).
- b. Only in Yahweh are righteousness and power (v. 24).
- c. All who oppose him will come to him in shame (v. 24).
- d. In him all Israel will be saved and experience honour (v. 25).

⁴⁰ **Php 2:9-11** 9 Therefore God has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

⁴¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 220, 225.

- (1) “The Israelites who have trusted in God to do right (v. 24) will be shown to have been right in that trust (v. 25).”⁴²
- (2) **Ro 11:25-27** 25 Lest you [Gentile believers] be wise in your own sight, I [Paul] do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers and sisters: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way *all Israel will be saved*, as it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob; 27 and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

13. Application.

- a. Let God manage history the way he sees fit.
- b. Be prepared to be surprised how God brings about salvation for us.
- c. Don’t challenge God with arrogant questions.
- d. Turn to the one, true God, Yahweh of Israel. Bow the knee to Yeshua.
- e. Don’t rely on self-righteousness but on imputed righteousness.
- f. Understand the link between Isaiah and Paul.

⁴² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 223.