

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 45

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 45

Theme: "The LORD God of Israel is the only One Living and True God!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 45:22-23 (KJV) "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 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."

INTRODUCTION

Habakkuk was shocked that the LORD said that He would send the Chaldeans i.e. the Babylonians when he prayed for punishment to fall upon his own people, the Israelites. He found it so hard to comprehend, because his estimation was that the Chaldeans were more wicked than the Israelites. Thus, how could God use them to punish His own people! Should not the punishment come upon the Chaldeans first since they were more wicked? The LORD's ways are not our ways! The LORD taught Habakkuk that He knows what He is doing and that the just shall live by

faith. This was the lesson Habakkuk learned from the LORD!

This chapter of Isaiah is a big shock to Habakkuk and perhaps even to some of us as God's children. In this chapter, the LORD called Cyrus, the Persian king, who later became one of the most powerful men in the world, His anointed. The Hebrew word for anointed is "Messiah". The LORD made this abundantly clear from the start of this chapter that Cyrus was His anointed. Cyrus does not know it yet and perhaps he might not even have been born. The Babylonians were the rising superpower in the Middle East at that time. The Persians were a non-entity. Here the LORD said that a new super power would come out of nowhere and dominate the world in that region. He is the LORD's anointed!

This means that Cyrus will do the will of the LORD. He does not know it. He probably will not be aware of it when he makes and executes all his laws and sends Israel back to the Promised Land. All that he will do in the future will be exactly according to God's plan for Israel! The absolute rule of God as the God of heaven and earth is demonstrated here for the believer's encouragement. Cyrus would consult his wisemen, who were idol worshippers, and he himself would probably be an idol worshipper as well but all these are of no consequence to the LORD God of Israel. These idols are not gods! These Persian wisemen are not wisemen at all. They all will do the will of the LORD whether they like it or not. Whether they are aware of it

or not is absolutely of no consequence to the LORD. All of them will say and do what the LORD wants them to say and do according to the very Word and will of God almighty!

This is still true today. There is nothing that escapes God. He not only controls every tiny little bit of the lives of every believer but also that of every unbeliever throughout the ages. A caveat must be made here. The caveat is that when sinful men do sinful things, they are held accountable for all the sins they commit in their lives on this earth. God tempts no one. If anyone is tempted and he succumbs to temptation, and by succumbing to temptation he sins, he is to be blamed and not God and not even the tempter. However, by his very act of sin, he fulfils the will of God. This is the sovereignty of God over all the earth!

OUTLINE

1. The LORD's anointed announced! (vv. 1-4);
2. The promotion of the LORD's anointed (vv. 5-19);
3. Look unto the LORD and be ye saved! (vv. 20-25).

COMMENTARY

The LORD's anointed announced!

— 44:1-4

Verse 1 – The LORD began Isaiah 45 with a shocker! He announced that He has some word to His anointed named Cyrus! The word for anointed has many meanings. It all

depends on who does the anointing as well as the nature of the anointing. In the case of Christ (the Greek form of the Hebrew word "anointed"), He was anointed by God to be the Saviour of the world. Hence His name was called Christ Jesus i.e. anointed Saviour since Jesus means Saviour. In the case of Cyrus, he was anointed by the LORD to do the LORD's will pertaining to Israel's future.

The scope of the anointing includes holding onto Cyrus' right hand. In other words, all decisions made by Cyrus will be controlled by the LORD for the right hand signifies power. The LORD will also ensure that the battles and conquests of Cyrus will succeed. Nations will be subdued by Cyrus. The LORD will loosen the loins of kings so that the kings will be easily defeated by Cyrus as they would be ill prepared. The phrase "loose the loins" means weak and without strength. The opposite is to "gird up your loins" which means readiness. The gates of the cities of these ill prepared kings will be opened like two leaved gates, wide open for the enemies to march in undefended. These two leaved gates would be kept open by the LORD and not shut. The enemies of Cyrus would be helpless against him.

Verse 2 – Cyrus will become invincible because of the LORD. The LORD will go before him and make crooked places straight. This means that He will make his path successful and with minimum or no hindrances to slow him down. The LORD will also break in pieces the gates of brass, which were seen as indestructible at

that time. If any king were to build their city gates out of brass, it becomes fire proof and almost unbreakable. But the LORD says that nothing on this earth will be able to stop Cyrus when he conquers. Bars of iron will be cut asunder i.e. into two. Bars were used to keep prisoners in as well as enemies out. But when the LORD helps Cyrus, even these man-made securities, which look impregnable to man, will be like feathers blocking off a typhoon.

Verse 3 – The LORD will then give to Cyrus the treasures of kings. These are called treasures of darkness because they are well hidden and not even the light of the sun can shine on them. But when the LORD gives victory to His anointed, there is nothing stopping Him, not even the hidden places of men. These treasures of darkness include the hidden treasures of secret places.

By these prophecies of the secret and hidden treasures, Cyrus will know that it is the LORD who has called him by name. He is none other than the God of Israel. He will not be mistaken that it was the gods of the Persians, who gave him the victories over all the kings. When a Gentile king like Cyrus can know and understand by the Word of God that His life was directed by the LORD, God of Israel, how much more ought the Israelites, who were in exile! Cyrus was just introduced into the world by birth whereas Israel could trace her beginnings to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With such a long history of the presence of the LORD, how could

Israel not know the LORD! How could Israel betray the LORD by turning to idols and rejecting Him!

Verse 4 – The LORD said that this prophecy of anointing Cyrus and the act of anointing him was for the sake of Jacob and Israel. Jacob was called the LORD's servant. The old rebellious nature of Jacob is emphasized here. No matter how rebellious Jacob was, he was still the servant of the LORD. This is done for Israel's sake. The name Israel reminds Israel of her spiritual responsibility. She is called the LORD's elect here. Israel has a chosen purpose and that is to bring forth the Messiah Saviour.

The LORD deliberately called Cyrus by name to show Israel that the LORD was in control of Israel. Israel will become a vassal state under Cyrus. Prophecies like these will bring comfort, that despite the loss of sovereignty, the LORD still regards her as His purpose and the purpose of God in her life and her existence is still on track. The Messiah would still come in God's time. The LORD had surnamed him as if He had given Him a name even though he does not know the LORD.

The promotion of the LORD's anointed — 45:5-19

Verse 5 – "I am the LORD" is a phrase that keeps appearing throughout the Old Testament at critical places to emphasize a particular point. In this instance, it is with reference to the king of Persia, Cyrus. The uniqueness of who the LORD is and that He is the only true God Potentate emphasizes His

greatness and His omnipotence. The reach or extent of His power is infinite. There is no boundary to the awesome power of the LORD. The LORD declares here that He girded Cyrus i.e. He was the One who made him king and gave him the wisdom and power to rule his kingdom and empire.

Once again, the LORD says that whether Cyrus is aware of the LORD's doing in his life is beside the point. He will not acknowledge that it is the LORD. Therefore there will be no record of it in Persian history of the LORD's deeds in Cyrus' life. In fact, he will probably attribute his might and conquest to his own gods! However, the fact that the LORD made mention through Isaiah's prophecy more than one hundred years before this comes to pass reflects the truth of the LORD's claim.

Verse 6 – The aim and purpose is that the whole world will know that there is only one living and true God and He is the LORD God of Israel! The phrase "from the rising of the sun and from the west" means the whole world as the sun rises from the east and sets in the west. The purpose is for the whole world to know the LORD.

This was the original secondary purpose of Israel's living testimony. The world was supposed to know the LORD through Israel's manner of holy living. Sadly Israel failed the LORD. The LORD has to witness to the world by Himself through the king Cyrus.

Verse 7 – The absolute power of God over all things is clearly stated by Him in this verse. The LORD declares that He formed the light. Light

is indispensable for life. Without it, nothing lives. Yet the LORD says that He made it. Without the LORD, light could not exist! In other words without the LORD, nothing lives. The LORD also created darkness. Darkness in this case does not refer to bad things. This is darkness as opposed to light. The absence of light is darkness. God made them both. The very fabric of man's existence, such as light and darkness that envelope the whole world, was made by the LORD. In other words, He made them all.

The LORD also made peace. Peace is the absence of war in this instance where there is tranquility. Everyone is at peace with one another in that they do not fight and kill one another. This is not a reference to the peace believers have with God. The context here is one of general grace rather than special grace which lead to salvation. The LORD also created evil. This means that even the evil that man do, including Satan, are all under His sovereign control. This truth has to be the logical conclusion. If the LORD can only control or is sovereign over "good things" then He is sovereign only over good things and cannot be said to be sovereign over ALL things! Therefore the LORD has to reveal to us that even evil is created by Him. This means that no one can do evil without His permission. However when the evil is done, the evildoer is held accountable for the evil committed. Just like Satan will forever be held accountable for all the evil that he has done since he was cast out of heaven by the LORD. He will be cast into the Lake of Fire because of his sin and evil. Yet, he

cannot do any evil without the LORD's permission. The LORD is the One who does them all.

Verse 8 – Addressing the heavens, the LORD commanded them to drop down righteousness. When the heavens drop down righteousness, it means that the earth would be covered with righteousness. This can only take place in the future during the millennium when Christ rules on earth in the new heaven and new earth. The phrase “let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation” means that salvation would be offered worldwide. When Christ reigns on the earth, this will become a reality. Do not confuse salvation being offered worldwide with the world coming to believe in Christ.

Let the righteousness of the LORD spring up together even as the earth opens and bring forth salvation. This means that there would be those who would be saved. The LORD has created them all. Verse 8 is a hopeful verse when salvation will become worldwide. As Israel languished with the thought of an impending exile, which will take place after Isaiah's time and during Jeremiah's time, they would be encouraged with such a prophetic revelation. At the same time, the LORD reveals that we need Him rather than He needs us to accomplish His will. Israel had more years of failing the LORD than years of obedience as they lived in the Land of Promise!

Verse 9-10 – Two woes followed immediately after this verse of prophetic global salvation was given. Woe to the ones who strive with his

Maker. The Maker is of course the LORD Himself. He made all things. The LORD used an illustration to demonstrate the great foolishness of anyone who dares to strive i.e. contend or quarrel with the Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. The potsherd is a broken piece of pottery. Man is likened to a piece of broken pottery. Let man strive with another man on the earth! But can he strive with the potter who made the pot? It is impossible. Can the clay ask the potter what are you making out of me? Of course not! The potter has absolute power to decide! Can the clay complain and say that the potter is not skilful (hath no hands) and his work is not nice? Of course not! The clay is a piece of clay at the mercy of the potter. How much more a potsherd which is nothing more than a broken piece of pottery and not even a full proper pot!

Woe also to the one who says to his father what begetteth thou? i.e. why did you make me the way I am? The LORD decides. The father has no say in the matter. To strive with the father is to strive with the LORD. The woman here refers to the mother. The child complains to the mother what she has brought forth as if she has control over the gender of the child or anything about the child such as his IQ or height! These kind of complaints point all the way back to the LORD for the LORD was the One in absolute control. What is highlighted here in this second woe is that of ingratitude, absurdity and impiety! The honour of parents by the children is a command that the LORD takes very seriously.

Verse 11 – The LORD turns His attention to Israel. He calls Himself the Holy One of Israel to remind Israel of His holiness and how Israel must also be holy before Him. He ensures this by also reminding Israel that He was her Maker. The LORD gave birth to Israel. Israel must never be ungrateful and question God as what verse 10 warns. Israel was asked by the LORD to ask Him what she wants to know concerning her sons and concerning the work of His hand. He wanted them to "command" Him. This seems to be a problem because in verse 9 the LORD warned anyone who dares to challenge what the LORD is doing on the earth let woe come upon him. It is like the pottery telling the potter what to do. Here the LORD asks Israel to ask him and find out!

There is a big difference between verse 9 and verse 11. In verse 9, it was a challenge out of arrogance. The LORD rebuked such an attitude; that man can dare to challenge God. In Verse 11, the LORD wants His own people to know the truth and in this context, the future of their sons and what the LORD plans to do in their lives and with them. This is what the revelation of God is all about. This is why the LORD wants to give to His people prophecies.

Verse 12 – A series of testimonies of what the LORD has done is revealed in the next few verses. The LORD declares that He has made the earth and created man and placed him on it to live. He made them all. Why would He not be concerned with the earth and the

people that He made? He placed man on this earth including Israel. The LORD's hands stretched out the heavens to what it is today. The LORD made the great vast expanse of the heavens that no man can fathom, not even with the best telescope. The LORD placed all the stars in the heavens. He made them all, in the heavens and in the earth.

Since the LORD God of Israel made them all, Israel can ask Him whatever she wants and the LORD would be more than happy to reveal all that is good for Israel to know.

Verse 13 – After explaining to Israel the sovereignty of God and this absolute power over all things in heaven and in earth, the LORD shifts His focus back to Cyrus. He goes back to His original revelation regarding Cyrus. The LORD (emphasis is the LORD) raised him up. The past tense is used even before Cyrus was born. This is a deliberate usage of the past to emphasize the certainty of the future event. He did this in righteousness. The righteousness of the LORD in chastising Israel for the rebellion that she had committed for so long is emphasized here.

The LORD will direct all the ways of Cyrus in terms of when he will reign and for how long and what he will and will not do. For example, he will not rise to power until the 70 years of Babylonian captivity of Israel is completed. He will build God's city, Jerusalem. He will provide the funds and give the command to protect the Jewish builders so that the enemies would not be able to stop the building.

This came to pass in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Cyrus will also let the Israelites return to the Land of Promise. The LORD controls the policies of the Persians in dealing with their captives. This is done freely and willingly. No payment would be asked. He would just let them go! The LORD has declared it. All these came to pass in later years exactly as the LORD has prophesied here.

Verse 14 – Cyrus will dominate when he rises to power. The Egyptians would serve him. The merchandise of the Ethiopians and Sabeans would come over to Persia when Cyrus is king. They shall all belong to him. Cyrus would be a rich and wealthy and powerful king when these kings pay him homage. They will do so in chains. They will become his captured slaves to do his bidding. They shall bow before him. They shall make supplication such as, "Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God." The people of old are not atheists. They believe in God. When the King of a nation rules and becomes powerful, the captured slaves would ascribe to the gods of that king as the powerful and unique one. This verse does not mean that the people become believers. They just simply pay homage to the gods of the Persians.

Verse 15 – The prophet Isaiah speaks here. He acknowledged that the LORD is indeed God, emphasizing His mighty power. He hides Himself i.e. His ways are higher than man's ways. Man has a difficult time understanding Him even His people.

This chapter reveals the greatness of God through the anointing of Cyrus! Isaiah was glad when he acknowledged that the God who is so awesome is the God of Israel and not any other nation's God. Are you not glad and thankful to God that the LORD is your God!

He is the Saviour of Israel. He will save Israel even though right now Israel was in ruins and soon Judah would be in exile. The immediate circumstances are very bleak to say the least but all is well as the future prophecies of the LORD reveals here.

Verse 16 – They shall be ashamed. Who is the "they" here? The "they" refers to the makers of idols. This would include all Jews and Gentiles who make idols! Isaiah wanted to warn as well as shame these idol makers. They will be ashamed because of what the LORD will do. They will all be confounded. These idol makers will find that their idols are absolutely useless. All the idols makers will be in confusion together. The greatness of the LORD through His prophecies reduces the idols and the makers of these idols to nothing!

Verse 17 – But Israel would be watched over by the LORD. She shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation. She shall not be confounded like the idol makers. Israel will return. Israel is a nation that the LORD has many plans for and unless and until these plans are fulfilled in Israel, Israel will be forever safe and secure. She cannot be destroyed by anyone! All who trusts in the LORD will

never be ashamed. The LORD will not break His word. He cannot fail. All His promises are yea and amen. They will also not be confounded i.e. wounded or hurt. Their trust in the LORD to protect them unto eternity is real and true. It is sure and certain. The phrase "world without end" means "until the end of time." All who trusts in the LORD will be kept safe into eternity.

Verse 18-19 – The LORD who created the heavens has said, "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. **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." Isaiah repeated what the LORD said for emphasis. The LORD made the heavens and the earth to be inhabited. He did not make it in vain. The LORD alone made them all and no one else!

The LORD has not spoken in secret for creation speaks in a language that all can understand (cf. Psalm 19:1-6). The LORD did not speak to Israel that she will seek the LORD in vain. The LORD will always speak the truth and what is always right and just. All that the LORD says is true and will surely come to pass.

Look unto the LORD and be ye saved! — 45:20-25

Verse 20 – The command from the LORD is to assemble yourselves and come and draw near together all the ones of Israel who escaped and

are not in exile. These remnants are commanded by the LORD to return to Him. They must not give up hope even though they were surrounded by hopelessness. They must understand that persecution and adversities are meant to drive God's people back to Him and not to drive them away from Him. The two commands here are to call Israel back to the LORD. The ones who set up the wood of their graven image have no knowledge at all. They are totally and completely ignorant. They might be sincere but they do not know what they are doing.

They pray to a god that can never save them. These idols cannot help or save them even from the problems of this life. How can these idols save anyone from sin and death! They are utterly and completely useless. Do not go to them for help. The remnants who escaped must come back to the LORD.

Verse 21 – Tell yourselves and bring near all your arguments even the strongest ones before the LORD. Let all these idol makers take counsel and come up with their best and most logical arguments before the LORD! Who hath declared these truths from ancient times? All the truths regarding the past such as creation have been declared by the LORD alone and no one else! They were all not around. There was no one around except the LORD God of Israel! The LORD was the only One who knows the truth.

There is no God beside the LORD. If there is God then He has to be eternal! But when the heavens and the earth were created none of these

idols were around. They were all made by man! Man was not around until the LORD made man on day six! If the makers of these idols were not around how can these idols exist! The LORD is a just God and a Saviour (literally "He saved"). There is none beside Him. He will always do what is right in the world especially in the lives of Israel. He will always be the only Saviour of the world. He will save Israel. Israel must return to the LORD.

Verse 22 – Using the imperative, the LORD commands Israel to look unto Him only and no one else! Since He alone is God and there is none beside Him there is nowhere else to look but unto the LORD God of Israel. If Israel will not look unto the LORD, Israel will not be saved. This is true of everyone. The LORD Jesus Christ is near to all but if one does not look to Him i.e. believe in Him and what Christ has done on the cross of Calvary, he cannot be saved! This offer is to all the ends of the earth. The reason is that there is no true God except the LORD.

Verse 23 – The LORD invoked His own Name in his sworn statement. This means that He will die if He does not keep His Word. He had already declared all His words. They cannot return to Him i.e. be taken back. They have gone out and the LORD put His name on the line. If the LORD were to ever fail in one tiny part of His many thousands of promises and prophecies, He will cease to be God!

These words have been declared in righteousness. Once declared they remain in force. All who

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will definitely be saved to the uttermost! This is what all who come to the LORD must believe. Faith is to believe in all the past deeds and future promises or prophecies of the LORD. The end result is that all who come to the Lord and believe in Jesus Christ will bow their knees and every tongue shall swear that the Lord is true and real! This would be evidenced in the lives of His children. They will tell the world that indeed the LORD is the One living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth! He is the God of Israel!

Verse 24 – The testimony of the ones who trust and believe in the LORD is that "in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." The LORD's work in the heart and life of the born again believer is described here. The person experiences righteousness in the LORD in his life. He also experiences the strength that the LORD gives to him as he endures the sufferings and persecutions that come with believing and serving Christ!

Men will come to Christ. They will see the transformed lives of His children and these will be used by the LORD to lead more men to Christ! The ones who are incensed i.e. angry with Christ will be ashamed i.e. humiliated and devastated by their foolishness. These are the implacable ones. There will be those who would come and there will be those who reject and attack Christ. There is no third group. Which group do you belong to?

Verse 25 – In the LORD alone shall all the seed of Israel be justified. There is no one else that Israel can turn to but the LORD. Israel will one day stand before the LORD just and righteous. Then they shall all glory in the LORD. Amen.

is the LORD who is at work in his life as well as in the life of all unbelievers? What effect does this revelation have in the lives of these people? Please explain.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 45:1-4

TUESDAY: Isaiah 45:5-19

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 45:1-25

THURSDAY: Isaiah 45:1-25

FRIDAY: Isaiah 45:1-25

Discussion Questions

1. Can you explain the doctrine of election? Can the doctrine of election be used here regarding Cyrus? How would you explain to someone who says that he does not want to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour because he has not been chosen? Please elaborate.

2. Who are the only people on earth who can see and understand that it

3. Do you regard the church's testimony as a privilege? Who is indispensable in the church? Please explain.

4. How does the truth that your Heavenly Father is the God of the heavens and the earth, and the fact that He made them all, impact your life of testimony and service unto the LORD? Please elaborate.

prepared to lose these material things to make sure Christ is seen in you? Share please.

5. Can the LORD do His will in the lives of those who are against Him and hate Him? Should the people whom God uses to accomplish His Will be considered believers? If they are doing God's will as unbelievers, would they be said to be doing spiritual work? Please explain.

8. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?

6. What is the difference between general (creation) and special revelations (the Bible)? List them.

7. How important is your testimony to you? Would you do anything and whatever it takes to ensure that your testimony for Christ is not jeopardized? What about the loss of loved ones, face, rewards, money, pride, etc.? Are you