

Formed to Be Inhabited

SERMON

by

Everett C. DeVelde

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TEXT: Isaiah 45 (45:18-19)

PROP: The earth was created independently as a habitation for people from whom God chose and saved his own. We therefore should not believe the nebular hypothesis, but we must worship and serve YAHWEH alone.

Isaiah 45 (ESV)

Cyrus, God's Instrument

45 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations 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, the LORD,
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 the LORD, 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 the LORD, and there is no other.
7 I form light and create darkness,
I make well-being and create calamity,
I am the LORD, who does all these things.
8 "Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;
let the earth cause them both to sprout;
I the LORD have created it.

- 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 labor?’ ”
- 11 Thus says the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed 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 man on it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.
- 13 I have stirred him 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,”
says the LORD of hosts.

The LORD, the Only Savior

- 14 Thus says the LORD:
“The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,
and the Sabeans, 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 is in you, and there is no other,
no god besides him.’ ”
- 15 Truly, you are a God who hides himself,
O God of Israel, the Savior.
- 16 All of them are put to shame and confounded;
the makers of idols go in confusion together.
- 17 But Israel is saved by the LORD
with everlasting salvation;
you shall not be put to shame or confounded
to all eternity.
- 18 **For thus says the LORD,
who created 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 the LORD, and there is no other.
- 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 the LORD speak the truth;
I declare what is right.
- 20 "Assemble yourselves and come;
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!
They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save.
- 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, the LORD?
**And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me.**
- 22 "Turn to me and be saved,
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 word that shall not return:
'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.'
- 24 "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength;
to him shall come and be ashamed
all who were incensed against him.
- 25 In the LORD all the offspring of Israel
shall be justified and shall glory."

This is a most unusual chapter in God's Word. That Cyrus, king of Persia, should be called a messiah (anointed one) of God would have been shocking to Israel who had heard the term applied only to a person within Israel. Indeed this mention of Cyrus predated his actual reign by 200 years. It was during his reign that a decree was issued allowing the exiles to return to Israel after the end of the Babylonian captivity. Isaiah

foretold this use of Cyrus to accomplish God's sovereign will in the restoration of Israel and the protection of the Messianic line of David. God preserved the line of David through whom Jesus was born even through this period of deportation. God goes on to reveal his power and sovereignty in a most amazing way. **In this chapter of Isaiah there are a number of direct references to God's work of creation.**

As we see the beauty of God's handiwork around us we should remind ourselves of the reason for our existence. We need to ask ourselves where we came from and why are we here. It seems that the world around us is very interested in such questions. Our nation is currently being softened up to accept a multi-billion dollar manned expedition to Mars in order to shed light on the origin of life on earth. A current theory is that life began on Mars and was exported to earth and because the earth was more hospitable to Mars life forms, complex living organisms evolved at a faster rate into what we see today. It is believed that the earth is 4.5 billion years old but present life forms have only been evolving over the last 65 million years.

Furthermore, there must be many other earth like planets in the universe and therefore countless other life forms must have evolved. Then too, this is not the only universe. There are countless other universes or galaxies observed in the heavens, the earth being in one of them known as the Milky Way. With the Hubble telescope orbiting around the earth where there is no smog or atmosphere to distort the view of the heavens it is said that we can now see much deeper into space perhaps 15 billions of light years and that we are able to see the origin of the universe, indeed that we can now see god.

The view of the origin of the universe that pervades modern science is known as the *Nebular Hypothesis* or "big bang" theory. All the matter or mass in the universe was originally compressed into one small part of space and exploded into clouds of "gas" which condensed into stars. These gas clouds or stars moved away from the site of the explosion in all directions. After billions of years our sun threw off clouds of gas and dust which evolved into the planets in our solar system and then our earth threw off the moon. The original earth was a ball of fire which subsided into profuse volcanic activity finally cooling into a water covered planet with one area of dry land. After more millions of years the tectonic plates comprising this area of dry land moved into the position of the continents we presently know. And during this time life forms were spontaneously generated in the sea, came out of the sea to dry land and evolved into the life forms we know today.

This is a brief sketch of the theory of the origin of the earth that is held by the majority in science today, however, the Bible instructs us in a very different view of the origin of all things. With regard to the earth -

I. God created the earth independently and uniquely.

The earth on which we live is not the result of random processes taking place over billions of years. Just as it is impossible for something to come from nothing, just so it is impossible for something that is designed with atomic structure to come from chaos and random purposeless substance without a designer. The automobile you drive and the cell phone you carry could not exist apart from a designer. God is the designer and creator of all that exists in the material universe and without such a designer the material universe and all that is in it could not exist.

"For thus says the Lord, who created 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 the Lord, and there is no other. 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 the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right." (Isaiah 45:18-19, ESV)

18 כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה בּוֹרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים יֵצֵר הָאָרֶץ וְעָשָׂה תוֹא כּוֹנֵנָה לֹא-תִהְיֶה
בְּרֵאשִׁית לְשֵׁבֶת יֵצְרָהּ אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד:
19 לֹא בִסְתֵר דִּבַּרְתִּי בְּמִקְוֹם אֶרֶץ חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא אָמַרְתִּי לְגֹרֵעַ יַעֲקֹב תִּהְיֶה בְּקִשְׁיוֹנִי אֲנִי יְהוָה
דֹּבֵר צְדָק מִגִּיד מִישָׁרִים:

YAHWEH, who is the Living and True God, formed the earth separately from all the rest of his creation for the express purpose of habitation. This means clearly that the earth was not the random result of a big bang. This also means that the earth is the only place in all the universe where people live and this is true because the place of man's habitation was not a random event but a specific event for a specific reason. That is, it has order and design. God formed the earth directly. **He did not create the earth using second causes.** That is to say he did not create the original material for the big bang and let things evolve on their own from there.

In Genesis chapter 1 we read the same thing, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:1-2, ESV) Here the earth is created separately and distinctly from the heavens or the rest of the universe. The Hebrew word בְּרָא means that God created the earth from nothing therefore it did not originate from pre-existing matter. The earth at this point was by itself and we note that it was far from being a ball of fire that excised from the sun. At this point there was not even any light. The rest of creation occurred on successive days all of which had the characteristic of evening and morning. It began

on day one יום אֶחָד, as the Hebrew literally reads and continues successively through the sixth day and this is not in any way the *Nebular Hypothesis*. Ordinal numbers are always definite in Hebrew so we translate not “a second day” or “a third day” etc., but “the second day” and “the third day”, etc. Thus the Sun Moon and stars are not created until “the fourth day”. My point is that the earth was created uniquely by God and independent of any other entity in the universe.

Let us notice from our text in Isaiah 45 some other things that God created directly and not through second causes such as the big bang. *"that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things."* (Isaiah 45:6-7, ESV) *"Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him: "Ask me of things to come; will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host."* (Isaiah 45:11-12, ESV)

From these verses we see that God **directly** made light and darkness, peace and calamity, the earth and man on it, and the heavens and all their host. None of these came to be by random, time consuming processes. God simply commanded and it was done. *"For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm."* (Psalm 33:4-9, ESV)

This means that the earth and the universe that God created was mature and already functioning in all its parts. That is to say, **God created all things with initial conditions**. God did not make the universe and the earth with “apparent age” as if to deceive us but he made it mature and already functioning and as such it necessarily looks old to us. In the same manner God made Eve from the rib of Adam while he slept. Eve was formed in a few hours and presented to Adam as a mature adult. God made Adam as a mature adult complete with all the adult knowledge he needed to survive in God’s beautiful earth. Indeed God made all the creatures of the earth by the word of his power living in already mature and functioning ecological systems. If the creatures of the earth including Adam and Eve had to evolve at the same time as their ecological systems were evolving, they never would have survived. If it is impossible for a particular animal to evolve, think of the impossibility of both male and female evolving at

the same time and in the same place so they could reproduce their species, and their ecological systems in which they lived and on which they depended for survival evolving at the same time.

God does not hide his creation from us, it is all there for us to study. As he says, "*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 the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right." (Isaiah 45:19, ESV)

When astronomers view the heavens using the Hubble telescope, they are not really looking deeper into space. What they are really able to do is see fainter light that is already there. They assume that because it is faint (among other things) that the source of the light is farther away. However, if we assume that the True and Living God is infinitely powerful it is reasonable to believe that God created the stars some 10,000 years ago with their light already impinging on the earth. With our newer and better telescopes we can simply see more of these stars. God created the light that we call starlight and all that is involved with a mature universe and a mature earth. Indeed the Bible teaches us that God is a Spirit, infinite eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, justice, and truth.

What does all this mean to us and how shall we apply it to our lives? As God says in this text when we see the work of his hands we must worship Him and no one else for YAHWEH alone is the infinitely powerful creator. Israel's constant problem was that they worshipped images made of metal, stone or wood not the True and Living God. And we too in effect worship a false God when we say that matter is eternal or that it appeared spontaneously with atomic structure with an inherent ability to evolve into intelligent, rational living beings.

II. God chose a people for himself to inhabit the earth.

The people that inhabit the earth are not the result of random, willy-nilly evolutionary processes taking place over long periods of time. "*For thus says the Lord, who created 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 the Lord, and there is no other. 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 the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right." (Isaiah 45:18-19, ESV)

God created the earth from nothing in order to be inhabited by his people. The unbelieving Cyrus was to permit the chosen people of God to return to Jerusalem to rebuild it. "*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.' ¹ (Isaiah 44:28, ESV) He raised up Cyrus for the great benefit of his chosen people, *"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. I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me,"* (Isaiah 45:4-5, ESV)

Indeed God chose us to be in Christ before he even created the earth. "even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love" (Ephesians 1:4, ESV) The whole plan of redemption was decreed by God before he made the earth and that means that his only begotten Son would love those whom the Father gave him unto salvation before he even made them. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, ESV) This obviously makes the earth unique in the entire universe. Apart from the inhabitants of the earth only the angels, both good and bad, were created. There are no other created beings anywhere else in the universe and the earth alone is the habitation of living things.

Why should we seek to find evidence of life on Mars or anywhere else for that matter but the earth alone? What a waste of time and resources. The expedition to Mars is being sold to us as the means to find out where life came from. Supposedly we even have a piece of a meteorite from Mars containing bacteria fossils. This is very far from being proven but even so the Bible clearly indicates that life forms inhabit the earth alone.

Why are we here? Why did God create the earth to be inhabited? As our catechism states, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." God created us and placed us on the earth and chose us to be in Christ for his own glory. Verses 8-10 of our text in Isaiah 45 state, *"Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the Lord have created it. 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'? Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?'"* ² Do you see that it is the earth alone that brings forth salvation and God created it uniquely and independently for that purpose.

"You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what

is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:19-24, ESV)

III. God saved his people powerfully and sovereignly.

People are not saved from an eternity in hell or from a wretched existence on earth as the result of their good works or concern for their fellow man. Nor did their lot improve nor are they saved by government programs or entitlements. *"Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me."* (Isaiah 45:21, ESV)

Eight times in Isaiah God refers to himself as a Savior. God created mankind and his own people among them to save them from their sin, to bless them with every spiritual blessing from the heavenly places and to bring glory to himself. For example --

"For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you." (Isaiah 43:3, ESV)

"I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior." (Isaiah 43:11, ESV)

As Paul put it in the Areopagus in Athens, *"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,"* (Acts 17:24-26, ESV)

God made us to save us. He made us to be glorified in us. This is directly contrary to purposeless evolution and "big bang" theory. And what should be our response to all of this? In the words of our text, *"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every*

tongue shall swear allegiance.’ “Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.” (Isaiah 45:22-25, ESV)

That God expressed his infinite power in establishing the earth and saving his people, should bring us to our knees before the true and living God in worship. How can we not worship such a God. We should find our help and our strength in God. We should glory in him. Hear what Paul says --

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:14-19, ESV)

The earth was created uniquely and independently as a habitation for his chosen people and it was to the earth alone that God sent his beloved Son to die for their sins. We therefore should not believe theories such as the *Nebular Hypothesis*, but we must worship and serve the TRUE AND LIVING GOD alone who created the heavens, the earth and every thing in it, in a moment of time by his infinite power.