

Isaiah 45:1-25

“Look To Me & Be Saved”

Paul wrote to Timothy, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”¹ There is a sense in which Isaiah 45 is saying/showing in historical narrative form, what Paul summed up in a single sentence in 1 Tim 1:17.

He declares that God “hides” Himself yet does not *speak in secret*. He’s *invisible* to you & me, but speaks openly... We read last week in Rom 1, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,”² Design, demands a designer. Be it our car, our clothes, our computer, we concede the design demands a designer. You may not *see* the designer, but what’s been created *demand*s a designer by its very *design*. So to w/everything in this world. The trees, animal life, aquatic life, insect life, human life, the sun the moon the stars... their glorious design *demand*s a Divine Designer.

It's one of the ways God makes Himself known to man. The design of creation points you to the Creator. Another way that God reveals Himself is through His *word*. & He proves that you can trust His word by speaking of things that have yet to take place so that when they come to pass, you’ll know that God has spoken it. We call it, prophecy.

& We’re in the midst of an *incredible* prophecy, right here in our present passage in the book of Isaiah. God is calling out the name of a *pagan* king who will set His people free to rebuild & reinhabit Jerusalem (though they won’t even go into captivity for over 100 yrs from this point). But He’s telling them that Babylon will one day carry them away, & a *Persian* king by the name of Cyrus will conquer *Babylon*, hear of this passage that prophesies of him, & set the captives free to return to their land. And He speaks in tremendous detail... Again, why does God share all this information in advance? So that you & me, we *know* that we can trust His word. *God is not a man, that He should lie. If He speaks it, you can trust it... & This is important! Because God has made you many promises in His word! Not the least of which is everlasting life by grace through faith in J.C. ... Let’s turn our attention to the passage at hand.*

Vs 1-3

Believe me when I tell you that there are all kinds of things, we could take the time to develop & discuss in this short section of scripture.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Ti 1:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 1:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As a pastor, it's a prayerful & somewhat painstaking process trying to determine what parts of a passage you're going to develop in the time span you're allotted to teach God's word... But as I said in passing last week. In part my mission is to whet your appetite so that you'll take the time to study a bit further on your own. (I can't do all the work for ya ☺).

But when you combine that last couple of Vs of Ch 44 along w/what we read here in Ch 45, it becomes quite staggering if you take the time to let it soak in. God takes hold of this Persian/pagan king & calls him His "shepherd" & His "anointed".

& The idea is that God is appointing & empowering him to serve & accomplish His purposes on the earth, & fulfill His promise to His people. *Even though* (as we'll see in Vs 4) he (Cyrus) has not *known Him*. & God gives all this detail of what's going to happen before it happens so that Cyrus (& anyone else for that matter) will be unable to deny that the God of heaven has ordered it so...

I mean, imagine someone coming along in 1816 & saying, "There will come a man, Donald Trump by name. People won't like how he speaks or what he says when he tweets, but he'll shake up the establishment nonetheless... ☺ World leaders will respect him, but many from his *own* nation will reject him..." It's that kind of thing we're seeing here only w/much more detail & greater insight from the Divine perspective.

& Honestly, we have to say, that *in* this there's not much of a scriptural precedence. We might say that God is really operating "outside the box" in this one. Typically, when God wanted to do a work of deliverance for His people, He would raise up a deliverer from *among* His people to deliver them. But not here, not w/this one... Truth be told, there's so much that we really don't understand about how God orchestrates & facilitates the events of human history. What we do know is that ultimately, they will serve His glory.

But God says, "I have held your right hand..." (The right-hand symbolizing power & authority). Essentially God is saying, "You didn't realize it at the time, but the reason you were so successful in every military campaign you launched, is because I went *before* you & gave the victory *to* you."

& I believe this to be true in each of our lives. There we are, out living our lives, every now & then the stars seem to line up, we get a "W" in life & it's on to the next one. But when we stop (after the years go by) to look back & reflect, we see God's hand in the whole thing. He was going before us, granting favor *to* us... We got that promotion, or that right person walked into our lives... Perhaps you were really ill & the right specialist entered the equation & your life was spared...

& As you look back, you see that God was holding your hand through it all, putting you in the right place at the right time & it's simply *impossible* to deny...

God says, "Cyrus, the reason you've been able to subdue nations is because I've raised you up, gone before you & given you great success." According to an ancient Greek historian (Xenophon), Cyrus subdued the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, the Lydians, Carians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, the Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, Sacians, Paphloagonians, Maryandines, and many other nations. He also had a dominion over the Asiatics, Greeks, Cyprians, Egyptians... You get the idea, he "subdued" *nations!*

He says that the armor of kings would be weak, that he would open for him the double doors, that gates will not be shut... This is exactly how he defeated Babylon... Babylon, according to another Greek historian (Herodotus) had walls over 300' high & 80' thick. Impenetrable. There was a moat that surrounded it, inner walls after that. Food for years stored in the granaries.

In fact, it was thought to be so impossible to invade that when the Medo-Persian armies began to encamp against it, Belshazzar (the king of Babylon) thought he'd defy them by throwing a giant party for 1,000 of his lords while they were all outside. (You can read of the event in Daniel Ch 5). He even commanded that they go fetch the articles from the temple in Jerusalem (which Nebuchadnezzar had overthrown) to use for the party... & As you know, that's when the hand of a man appeared out of nowhere & began to write on the wall (you've heard the phrase the writing is on the wall).

Belshazzar's armor was "loosed", his knees began knocking together & long story short, Daniel (who was an old man at that time) interpreted the writing for him & told him that he was going to die that night... The way Cyrus conquered the city was to divert the Euphrates river (which ran through the city) into a swamp so that his army could come in under the walls, under the iron bars. Inexplicably (outside of the intervention of God) the inner gates of the city were left open that night (probably because the soldiers were all drunk) & Cyrus took the city w/essentially zero resistance...

He probably thought he was somewhat lucky & a bit of a military genius... But when he was shown this passage, it was clear. God says, "You didn't do that, I did that for you... I opened the way for you to go where otherwise you'd never be able to. Gave you wealth you'd have never otherwise apprehended, & I put it in writing 200 yrs before it was going to happen." Why? "That you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel." ("I've done this for you, now you're going to do something for Me.")

Vs 4-7

He says, “Listen, contrary to popular opinion, there’s not localized deities. These people serve *this* “god”, those people serve that “god”, & they contribute the goings on of the area to the god of that territory, that nation (whatever). God says, “No, I’m the only true God & all the goings on... the buck stops w/Me.” He says, “I form the light & create darkness, I make peace & create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

The way we say that today is like this, * “God is in control.” It’s not “yin & yang” equal opposite forces of good & evil. God has no opposite. Satan is not the opposite of God, there’s only one God & there is no other... Now, we touched on this last week. It’s easy to acknowledge the fact that God is in control when everything is going good. But God is just as equally in control when things are going bad. & That’s when we need to believe it all the more! God *allows* temporary suffering, setbacks & unsettling events in the accomplishing of His eternal purposes in our lives. Call it pruning, call it refiner’s fire, call it being purified, poured from vessel to vessel... Not everything that stretches us, unsettles us & shakes us up is from the devil! (But this is what we talked about; we don’t have the privilege of believing what we want to about God. We can’t “craft” our own God... Like Job said, *“Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?”*³ We’re either going to trust Him, or we’re not... We either believe He’s good or we don’t.

We’re either going to believe He has our eternal best interest at heart, or we’re not. So again, in the words of Job, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”*⁴ It’s a hard pill to swallow, I get it. But if God can further His eternal purpose by allowing His own Son to die a wicked, unjust death on a cross, then He knows how to use the adversities He allows into our lives for our eternal good & His eternal glory... The Lord told Ananias that He would show Paul all the things that he must *suffer* for My name’s sake... It’s not ours to reconcile or rationalize His ways, it’s our to trust in Him. *

Ok, God girded (or equipped & prepared) Cyrus for all these victories, even though Cyrus didn’t know Him... How much more should God be able to use & move through the lives of those who *do* know Him, who have put their trust & faith *in* Him? -- & How easy it would’ve been for Cyrus to think that God chose him because he was so great, so smart, such a strong leader or something. In reality, God says, “My choosing you had nothing to do w/you, My focus was on My people. God gave Cyrus the kingdom so that His people would be set free.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Job 2:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Job 13:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So that the whole known world would know (Vs 6) "...that there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, & there is no other..." & We'll see in just a couple minutes that Cyrus acknowledged the Lord when he released the people of God to return to the Promised Land.

Vs 8

Be it down from the heavens or up from the earth, God can send blessing from any/every direction. & I love the fact that we see salvation & righteousness spring up together. Because this is always the case. When God bring salvation into your life, He brings righteousness as well. They spring up together in the Person of J.C.

Vs 9-10

This is God's way of saying, "Look, I can do what I want & you're in no position to argue w/Me about it." The commonly held thought here (& it may very well be correct) is that some of the Jews were upset that God would use a pagan king rather than raise one up from His own people to deliver them!

*God says, "Look, I can do what I want!" "Woe to him who strives w/his Maker!" You want to strive w/the other cracked pots (people) of the earth, the potsherds (broken pottery), go ahead, but the clay has no right to strive against the creative means of the Master Potter... You ever feel like you're spinning in circles? Being poked, prodded, pushed around a bit? Remember what we just developed? God is the One who makes peace & creates calamity. He's molding you, transforming you, forming & fashioning you, from glory to greater glory as by His Spirit into the image of His Son... Do yourself a favor. Don't fight w/God. Because if you win, you've lost. You demand your way, & God gives it to you, you're in trouble... Better to say, "Father, if it be Your will, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not my will, but Your will be done."

God's goal in each of our lives is to make us like Jesus. Some of us have some rough edges on us. Some areas that need "rounded off" or "taken down" a bit. & Because God loves us, He's willing to refine us, purify us, pour us from vessel to vessel, to work the clay into a vessel of honor... We love how that sounds, but we don't like how it feels...Ours isn't to question God, it's to honor Him, obey Him & submit our lives to Him.

Does the begotten child have a say in coming to being? Or to say to the woman (not birthing person... woman) "What have you brought forth?" Sometimes the woman may wonder... 😊 or ask, "What have I brought forth!?" 😊 The point here is that it's both foolish & counter-productive to question God or accuse Him of some unjust action in how He chooses to fashion & form our lives or bring about His plan. *

Vs 11-13

We've spent extensive time in recent studies developing the fact that God is our Creator. For now, I'll direct my focus on a couple of other quick points. #1 When God says (in Vs 11) "you command Me." Don't be confused there. He's not saying that He's like a Genie & you can just tell Him to do whatever you like. Let's not forget, the point of prayer isn't to get our will done in Heaven, but God's will done on earth. This is similar to Matt 7:7-11 or Mark 11:24 (I'll let you look those up later) 😊.

The next thing is here in Vs 13. God says that Cyrus will not only release His people but that he would support the work of rebuilding as well. He wouldn't do it for a price nor for reward, but from the conviction upon his heart from the Lord. – So let's turn quickly to Ezra 1 & we'll read it together.

Vs 1-4

So not only did Cyrus release the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem, he took up an offering for the work as well, just as God said He would do. & He made the decree that the nations would know, this was his doing & not to harass the Jews on their return trip home.

Vs 14-17

Vs 15 is the Vs that I referenced in our time of introduction. Isaiah says, "You are God, who hide Yourself." It's not referring to being hidden from the sinner who is seeking Him. The bible is clear, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."⁵ But let's recall the context. God is Spirit, you can't see Him as compared to all these little idols that men were carving for themselves. God won't hide Himself from the one who seeks for Him... But He is the invisible God. Again, Paul references that fact in Rom 1, that which is visible (creation) testifying to the reality of His invisible attributes. His power & might being clearly seen in that which is created.

But we want to give God praise that He saves (Vs17) with an *everlasting* salvation... "you shall not be ashamed or disgraced, forever & ever." Salvation isn't a temporary benefit. God gives us life *everlasting*.

Vs 18-21

So, Vs 19 is verifying what I mentioned to you about Vs 15. Invisible, yes. But God does not speak in secret. You will not seek Him in vain. If you seek Him, He will be found by you. Again, Heb 11:6, "he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."⁶ If you seek the Lord (diligently), God will reward that, not hold on out or *disparage* that.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Je 29:13]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Heb 11:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So, there is wisdom in seeking the Lord. Foolishness in idolatry. You have to carry your own god (Vs 20), your god becomes a burden rather than a blessing, you pray to a god who cannot save, rather than worship the just God & Savior who saves us w/an everlasting salvation! He is both *just* & the *justifier* of all who have placed their faith in Jesus...

Vs 22-25

If Vs 22 & 23 aren't underlined in your Bible, make it so! For God so loved the *world*... *"Look to Me, & be saved, *all you ends of the earth!*" It's the gospel in a nutshell, the plan of salvation! God could not have made it any easier, any simpler! All you have to do is "Look" to Him! The idea is to look *away from* whatever has your attention & look *to* Him. It's repentance, "Turn to Me!" God says, "& Be saved!" Notice the focus, you're *looking to, turning to God*. You're not looking to yourself, trusting in yourself, you're not looking to the church, or your pastor, you're not looking to rituals, rites, religion or good works... Turn your eyes upon *Jesus!* Look full in *His* wonderful face...

There is assurance there, "& Be saved!" It's not, & you might be, or perhaps you could be, or if I *feel like it* then maybe... *you will be saved!* & The good news of the gospel is for all, "all you ends of the earth!" "*Whoever* calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved..."

There's nothing you can do to earn it, you can only trust God for it, "Look to Me, (turn to & trust in Me) & be saved." It's a gift... & as such you can't earn it, or work for it. You can only humbly (& w/heartfelt gratitude) receive it. *

(For those of you interested, this is the Vs that was bring preached when Charles Spurgeon got saved. He slipped in a little Methodist church of about 13 people on Sunday, January 6, 1850 [15 yrs old]. The snow was falling heavy, it was bitterly cold so rather than go to the church he was planning on, he went into this little Methodist chapel & sat down in the back... **Evidently the pastor was detained by the weather so about 5 minutes after the service was supposed to start a deacon stood up, turned to this text & read Isaiah 45:22. He didn't really know what to say, so he just kept repeating the passage, thundering it out... He spoke about the cross, of Jesus on the tree, dying for sinners saying, "Look unto Me!"** Then he pointed to Spurgeon & said, "That young man there looks very miserable!" & He said, "There is no hope for you, young man, or any chance of getting rid of your sin, but by looking to Jesus;" 'Look! Look, young man! Look now!' ... & as you know, he *did* look & God used him in a radical way! ... But we must look to Him, for He is God... & there is no other. **Close**

“I have sworn by Myself.” When God confirms an oath, who does He swear by? Typically, you will swear by something greater than yourself. There’s none higher than God, so He swears by His own holy name & character.

& What does He swear? That the day is coming when every knee universally will bow *before* God & every tongue will confess that He *is* God & that righteousness & strength & salvation are in the Lord alone.

& Anyone who has taken any other position will be ashamed... We’ll end w/this. Paul quotes this in Philippians Ch 2 & applies it to Jesus which is overwhelming Biblical evidence for the deity of Christ. But he writes, * *“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*⁷ Mark my words, (which is God’s word). Every knee will bow before Him... & confess that J.C. is Lord. Righteousness & strength are in Him. You can do it now, it’ll make for your *salvation*. Or you can do it when we stand before Him & it’ll add only to your humiliation & condemnation... Look to the Lord, & be saved... *

Prayer Points

God we thank You for the richness of Your Word. For the simplicity of the gospel. You’ve done it all. May we look *to* & trust *in* You, & only You. You alone are worthy of all honor, power, glory & praise... We humble our hearts before you, we confess that J.C. is Lord, righteousness & strength are in Him alone & we thank You for your love & the precious gift of everlasting salvation.

If that’s not real to you. If you don’t know the Lord, you’ve never truly looked *to* the Lord that you might be saved, believe on J.C. today. Look away from the religion or the distracting cares of this world, turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, & the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory & grace...

⁷ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Php 2:8-11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.