

ISAIAH 45

“LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED!”

King Cyrus was nominated, at the close of the foregoing chapter, to be God's shepherd – the man whom the Lord would use to set His captive people free from Babylonian slavery. More is said to and about Cyrus in this chapter – not merely because he was to be instrumental in the release of the captive Jews; but also because, in that role, he was to be a picture of the great Redeemer. The release of the Jews was to be a foreshadow of our great redemption from sin and death, which Christ effected! In this chapter, we are told of the great things that God would do for Cyrus, so that he might be put into a capacity to release God's people (verses 1-4). Hereby, God would give proof of His eternal power and Godhead, as well as of His universal and incontestable sovereignty (verses 5-7). There is a prayer, in verse 8, for the hastening of this deliverance; and then we have a warning to the unbelieving Jews, who quarreled with God for lengthening their captivity (verses 9-10). Encouragement is given to the believing Jews who trusted in God and continued in prayer – assuring them that the Lord, in due time, would accomplish this work by the hand of Cyrus (verses 11-15). Another pronouncement of doom is given to the worshipers of idols; and comfort is promised to the worshipers of Jehovah, who keep their eyes upon Christ the Mediator, Who is our righteousness and strength (verses 16-25). Here again – just as in many other parts of Isaiah's prophecies – there is much of Christ and His Gospel-grace!

King Cyrus was God's chosen instrument for the great work of liberating the exiled Jews, and reinstating them in their own homeland. But let us not forget that God also has a plan for our individual lives as well! We are all conscious of an element in life that we ourselves cannot account for. Other people have started life under better auspices and with larger advantages than we have; but somehow they have dropped behind in the race, and are nowhere to be seen. Our health may have never been robust, but we have had more working-days in our lives than those who were trained as athletes. We may have been in perpetual peril – traveling incessantly and yet never being involved in a single accident, while others have been shattered in their first journey from their doorstep. Why have we escaped, where so many others have fallen? There is not one of us who cannot see points in the past where we have very nearly been goners; we have passed along the brink of precipices at nightfall, and we have been horrified in the morning to see how nearly our footprints had been to the edge! Over and over again, we have been within a hair's-breadth of taking some fatal step by

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ God speaks of raising up Cyrus to deliver His people from Babylon – verses 1-4
- ❖ He calls for obedience to His Almighty power – verses 5-10
- ❖ He speaks of the settlement and establishment of His people – verses 11-19
- ❖ He foretells the conversion of “all the ends of the earth” – verses 20-25

yielding to some imperious temptation, or by striking a bargain with the devil. But as we look back over the pathway of our lives, we see how marvelous it was that we were actually saved from entering into “that” marriage, or from remaining in the company of “that” friend, or from making “that” investment, or from traveling on “that” train! So we see that there is something to be explained in the lives of human beings, which they themselves cannot account for. They describe their consciousness of this “anonymous element” by terms such as “luck,” “good fortune,” or “chance.” But these are merely attempts to silence the appeals of their common sense. Believers know better! It is *the Lord* Who has guided us and preserved us – whether or not we realized it at the time. It was He Who opened those doors of opportunity; it was He Who smoothed those rough places, so that we did not stumble; it was He Who unlocked gates of brass, which had threatened to bar our way. This is one of the luxuries of our older years – to see, in retrospect, all the pathways by which He has led us. God cannot desert those for Whom He has spent so much! He will finish what He has begun. He will safely lead you over crags and torrents, until the night is gone. He will not let one good thing fail. And when it comes time for us to stand upon the verge of the eternal world, we will see just how much our Savior has redeemed us from all evil!

It is important to remember that King Cyrus was only a picture of a Greater King Who was yet to come! He was a foreshadow of the anointed Messiah, and the Great Shepherd of the nations, Whose special mission was “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” Jesus Himself says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved!” (verse 22) Several characteristics of this salvation are suggested and unfolded in this chapter. First, it is a *simple* salvation. By that, we mean that it is plain, clear, distinct, and intelligible in its terms. Even the lisping child upon his mother’s knee may listen to and understand its Divine simplicity: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). It is also a *free* salvation – not only clear and unambiguous in its terms, but also uncumbered and unconditioned in its offers. What are these? “*Look and live!*” “*Look unto me!*” Moreover, this is a *righteous* salvation, for it is a salvation which has been secured in accordance with the principles of everlasting righteousness. Jesus lifted up on the cross was the atoning Sacrifice for sin, paying the penalty demanded by God’s broken law. He says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved!” Justice and mercy now stand in perfect harmony (Ps. 85:10). Love can only hold out her scepter of mercy when she stands at the side of the throne of justice. May our souls be driven from all earthly supports, so that our feet may be planted upon Jesus, the only sure Foundation!

Lord Jesus, we pray for grace to keep our eyes always looking to You; for salvation from sin – simple, free, and righteous – is found in You alone! Amen.