

Isaiah 45 14-25 August 26

14 Thus says the LORD: "The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush And of the Sabeans, men of stature, Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; They shall walk behind you, They shall come over in chains; And they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, *saying*, 'Surely God *is* in you, And *there is* no other; *There is* no other God.' "

15 Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!

16 They shall be ashamed And also disgraced, all of them; They shall go in confusion together, *Who are* makers of idols.

17 *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.

18 For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.

19 I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

20 "Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You *who have* escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god *that* cannot save.

21 Tell and bring forth *your case*; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? *Who* has told it from that time? *Have* not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; *There is* none besides Me.

22 "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.

23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

24 He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him *men* shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.

25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel Shall be justified, and shall glory.' "

Remember our outline?

44:24 – 45:8 God accepts final responsibility for everything that happens

45:9-13 God warns us not to take offense at all

45:14-25 God calls us to embrace him as God

Well we are on part 3. God calls us to embrace him as God.

Do you really believe God knows what He is doing?

You might have any number of things happening in your life. Do you really believe God knows what He is doing? Do you really think **God knows how to arrange your life** to give you the circumstances you need most to become the person He wants you to become? Do you trust Him in the day to day circumstances of your life to provide you with what you need? How about if it is **you** that caused the problems? Can you trust that God **still** is in control? Maybe you screwed up. Could God still be in control? Could God still know what He is doing?

In our text God has already put Cyrus in power as the deliverer of His people. Now look what is happening.

14 Thus says the LORD: "The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush And of the Sabeans, men of stature, Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; They shall walk behind you, They shall come over in chains; And they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, 'Surely God is in you, And there is no other; There is no other God.' "

This is all part of the process of Cyrus being the heathen deliverer chosen by God. Does God really know what He is doing? Well, look at the results. God used this heathen king to get skilled labor and assets to God's people. They were placed in the service of a people who had no status on their own. These peoples will serve Cyrus and, in Cyrus's service, will serve God's people.

But more than forced service, look what happens. The Holy God calls these Sabean people to Himself. In service **to Israel** they are led to **Israel's God**. Surely only God can do this. Only God can call to Himself a people through such an imperfect means. This is evangelism at its truest. Here are people living for God, making much of their God, leading other people to God.

That is what we are called to. We can relax because **we cannot make this happen**. But we should also be on our guard because **God is willing to save and desires to save**. Maybe there are people in our lives who He put there so we could witness to them about the goodness of our God.

Look what these foreign servants say. There is no other God. It is important that **God's people believe that first**. It is important that **we live** like there is no other God. What we say has to be backed by how we live. Are we satisfied in God? **If not**, how do we expect to lead **others** to Him? **If we are**, how can we **not help** to lead people to Him?

15 Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!

If you were to take a survey today and ask what people are going to take over

the world, what do you think the survey results would be? How many people are likely to answer the question by saying- Christians? Christians are destined to rule this world. Nope. Christians will not be the logical choice to most of the world. Why? God is hiding Himself. He is not displaying His awesome power. He is not displaying to His world that His people are the most blessed people in the world. No. In fact it looks just the opposite. But it does not matter how it looks. Our God is our Savior. Our God will win. And His people are the most blessed people.

Think about how Christ lived. Did he appear to be the most powerful human who ever lived on the planet? Did He impress people with how he lived? Well, some regarded Him as being truthful, and wise, and from God. Some regarded Him as having great spiritual power. But no one regarded Him as a source to be reckoned with in terms of political rulers. He may have been a political obstacle, but He was not regarded as a force that would bring a military might on one's power centers.

We serve a God who is content to hide Himself. We serve a God who is content to remain in the background saving people's souls. He is not yet booting all the leaders out of office and replacing them with His people. He is not yet rendering their weapons useless. He is not yet putting their military troops in their tombs, along with everyone who rejects our Savior. Those days are coming but they are not yet.

Have you ever considered that the seeds of the world to come are here in every true church? We represent the kingdom of God on earth. We have lots of flaws. We are not impressive at all. But we all recognize the rightful ruler. We call upon Him for salvation. We love Him and serve Him because He alone is worthy. That is the hidden power of God on earth. We are destined to overcome and ultimately rule this planet. And what a wonderful existence that will be for every human who is left.

16 They shall be ashamed And also disgraced, all of them; They shall go in confusion together, *Who are makers of idols.*

Well, this describes the ones who **will not** be left.

What does God say about idols?

Exodus 20:2-6 (NKJV)

2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;

⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,
⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Obviously God takes worship of idols seriously. And it does not matter if it is carved on wood or created in our imaginations. Idolatry is the competing factor to the worship of the one true God. It is the thing that steals us from true worship of God and service to God. God will punish those who cling to their idols. God will punish those who will not voluntarily submit to the one true God.

Isaiah has been pointing out regularly the plight of idol worshippers. They will be disgraced and ashamed. They shall go in confusion together. There is nothing uncertain about those in charge of the idol industries if they will not repent. It doesn't matter who they are. It doesn't matter what their idols are. It doesn't matter if they are figurative or literal. It doesn't matter if they are a block of wood or an ideology. It doesn't matter if they believe in their own lies or are hucksters. They are going to be exposed and they are going to be ashamed. Sometimes we must watch for a long time for these people to fall. Many of them will not taste the fruit of their labors until after they die. But we are assured that it will happen.

There really is no need to envy the wicked. None of them have anything of lasting value.

And here is the direct opposite of the idol worshippers.

¹⁷ But Israel shall be saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.

Even if our God hides, He promises an eternal outcome. Do you want the most secure position in the universe? Do you want a secure destination that you cannot possibly lose? Do you want to know that ultimately you will never be ashamed or disgraced, even though in the short term you are likely to be ashamed and disgraced often?

That is what our God offers His people. Temporarily we are likely to be laughed at, scorned, looked at as losers and fools. There are pleasures we could pursue but we say no to because we love God. There are costs we could avoid but we pay them because we love God. In the world's eyes we may be idiots of all idiots. But long term we cannot lose. We are sure to be rewarded with an everlasting reward.

The people Isaiah was addressing were living in an idolatrous environment. These people would have been outsiders in an idol worshipping land. They

would not be allowed by God to worship the popular gods. They could not give themselves to the stuff that all the popular people and successful people were giving themselves to. They could not allow themselves to do those things that would gain the approval of their fellow citizens. But it was worth the wait.

18 For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other.

The most important word in this verse is the word **The**. Maybe it should be in capital letters. I am THE Lord and there is no other. That is the main point. And that would have been the easiest point for God's people in exile to miss. They were the vanquished. The gods of the victors would be praised by the victors. But God did not want His people to believe those lies.

God, **the only God**, the God of Israel, created the heavens and the earth and established it. There are many atheists who truly believe that the precise parameters that were needed to sustain life on our planet happened by sheer chance. At the same time these people are not likely to believe that the next new technological breakthrough will happen by a bull dozer pushing around computer scrap in a junk yard. But they do believe in the mystical happenstance of a planet being formed by complete coincidence that would sustain life. I cannot muster a faith that strong and that blind.

Our God offers no apologies for their offended sensibilities. God says, no. It is me. I did that. I am THE God. I am the only God. I am the true God. I am your God. And I am the God of anyone who will follow me and anyone who will not. I am the nightmare for anyone who chooses to endorse a false God. I do not accept alternate opinions. I do not grant the benefit of a doubt. I am THE God and there is no other.

Now it is interesting that He says He did not create it in vain.

This word for vain is the word used in Genesis 1:2 where it says that the earth was without form. The word is a negative word. It represents chaos, confusion and disorder. God did not create the world for that. That describes much of the process of how people describe **evolution**. But that is not **creation**. That is not how God does things.

God says the He intentionally created the world with a purpose. And the purpose was that it be inhabited. Again this is where our world gets it wrong. It makes sense that people who believe that time and chance created life would value all life equally. A cockroach and a human have equal value. There are no rules to go by because there is no creator to give the rules.

But we believe in a creator and that Creator is very clear on His priorities. The only beings created in the image of God are human beings. Everything else is subservient to the welfare of human beings. While the people from PETA might be sincere, they are wrong. They are coming from a position that has no source of morality and they try to force their ideas of morality onto anyone that opposes them. It is evil and silly at the same time. Our God created. Our God, therefore, is the source of morality. And only our God has the right to tell us how His creation should be used. And He does.

Our world is not what the school books tell us it is. Our world was created intentionally by God for it to be inhabited. That is why it spins as it does and where it does. That is why it has the climates that it does. That is the **why** of our planet that world has so much trouble figuring out. There is a God and He **did create**.

19 I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

We have a God who reveals Himself. Last week we discussed how we have no boxes big enough to place that God in. And this is true. But at the same time we can understand what He has told us about Himself. It is not everything about God. But it is everything about God **that we need to know**.

This creator God has not been silent. The nonsense that our world comes up with, the false morality and the imaginary offenses are not our marching orders. Our God has clearly revealed His will as far as we need to know it. And we have the glorious opportunity of living according to it. There is nothing vain about it. There is nothing **no purpose**.

We look at the world around us and we see vanity by the boat loads. We watch how humans choose to carry out their relationships and we have to wonder what they are smoking that would cause them to choose paths that are so obviously and logically leading to disaster. Maybe we even have experience with that ourselves.

But our God has revealed paths that are right. When we seek Him based on what He has revealed to us, we are not subject to that same vanity, that same futility. When we seek Him according to His word we will find Him. We will be successful. And when He follow His ways of doing things they will be right. They will not be purposeless like what the world offers.

Will you surrender your life to His word? Will you accept that only he, and not you, knows how you should live?

20 "Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You *who have*

escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god *that* cannot save.

²¹ Tell and bring forth *your case*; Yes, let them take counsel together.

Who has declared this from ancient time? *Who* has told it from that time? *Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.*

You and I are surrounded by things that appear to work. They appear to grant an advantage. There are marketing strategies that have statistics. There are relational maneuvers that appear to work. There is the worship of all kinds of things that appear to give people what they want. Money appears to give happiness. Being in love appears to give euphoria. Being popular appears to grant status people crave. These things are all temptations for Christians. It looks like they will offer us what we want and feel we need. But only God tells us the truth.

All of the **alternatives** to living according to the revelation of God have something in common. **They cannot save.** They are in vain. They never deliver what they promise. They don't provide the meaning for life that we crave. The nations, the media, our culture, have no knowledge. The idol worshippers keep trying and trying something that will never work. They look to their pursuits for their salvation, but their saviors will always only let them down.

Verse 21 goes on with the things that the idol worshippers are taunted with. God is saying, go ahead. Give it your best shot. Explain life. Explain the future. Explain the meaning of existence. Have at it if you are so smart. And one thing will be sure. It will not work. It will not explain life as it really is. It will not save. It will not produce an earthly utopia. It will not satisfy.

There is only one source of ultimate truth about creation. It is the creator. There is only one source of ultimate truth about human beings. It is the Lord of the human beings. There is only one God. There are not 2 or 10 or 1000. God is not in every tree and every rock. No. There is one God.

So what is it that we should do? We need to escape from the grasps of their idols. We need to get it into our heads that there is nothing there for us that our souls crave. Odds are that many of us have had to learn that lesson the hard way. We sought happiness in ways we thought would work. And by doing so we learned the definition of vanity. It simply does not work. It simply does not satisfy. It does not provide our souls what they need.

So our God tells His people to assemble together, you of like mind, you who know the truth about this world, you who have seen through the lies of

idolatry, you who have escaped the grasp of this world's propaganda. Come together.

And do what?

²² "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is no other.*

This is God's end game. It **has been** from the beginning and **it will be** for eternity. You can take all the human suffering in the world and you will find in the end that it will all have served a useful purpose in preparing human beings for an eternity with God. The end goal is the salvation for eternity of human beings. God will save His people.

This is it. This is what we need to call people to. Look to God and be saved. This is what our unbelieving acquaintances need. This is what we need. This is what everyone needs. We need to orient all our attention to the one true God and surrender to His Lordship. We need to look with faith to the one who died in our place. We need to believe in Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no other name. But there is **always** salvation in the name of Jesus. God is offering this to us as He always does.

It is interesting too that the salvation held out is for individuals. It is the individual who looks to God and is saved, even though the call goes out to the ends of the earth.

²³ I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.*

Look at this. Here is one of the most comforting verses in the Bible. That is how I look at it at least.

We have seen that God desires that all people be saved. That is the type of **God that God is**. And yet not all people **will be** saved. That is the kind of **people that people are**. But there is one thing true of every human being. There will be a day, and it is just like this day. It will be a day of reckoning. It will be a day of judgment. And on that day every single human being will recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord. Some will be falling at His feet in worship. It will be the best day of their entire lives. They will see the one they have loved. They will see the one on whom they placed their faith.

But there will be others. They will be all the people who were too busy for God, or too smart for God, or too proud for God, or too selfish from God. And they will be admitting the exact same truth as all the worshipers. They will all be saying **Jesus is Lord**. But these people will say it to their own horror, or embarrassment or humiliation. It will provide them no solace. They will be

forced to say it because it is true. Their whole lives may have been built on disbelief of this fact, but they will confess it none the less.

This is the victory day for all believers. This is the day that the truth will be known. The mockers of God will no longer be mocking. They will no longer have their smug demeanors as they put out their smart aleck comments about the foolishness of following Jesus. That day will be a very bad day for the mockers of God. And we should do all we can to help those people avoid that day. We should warn them so they do not have to face that incredible humiliation of being wrong about **every single thing of importance** in this life.

We need to understand. **This day will happen.** This is the day that will prove that a believer's envy of the wicked was sheer foolishness. This is the day that will prove that every faithful action was the wisest of all possible choices. This is the day that we will relish every faithful act we performed and we will despise every disobedience that we ever committed. This is the day that will prove to every worldling that the people of God were the real heroes of this life. They were the geniuses. They were the people to be envied. But the world was too blind to see it.

This is the day that we will see how smart it was to **trust God to settle the score.** We will see the wisdom when we trusted all of the vengeance we desired to our Master.

What a glorious wonderful day this will be for every believer. And what a gut wrenching day this will be for every mocker of God.

²⁴ He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him *men* shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.

²⁵ In the LORD all the descendants of Israel Shall be justified, and shall glory.' "

Oh what a wonderful day this will be. Everything shall be set straight. All the martyrs will be the heroes. All the killers of believers will be the villains. The wording is interesting. All shall be ashamed who are incensed against God. Have you ever come across a person who actively and blatantly hates God? According to scripture all people who hear the gospel but reject it hate God. But some are more expressive than others. Those who are most expressive of their hatred of **the very idea of God** are likely to be the most ashamed. They will be seen as utter fools. The proof of God will be unavoidable. And the fact that they were terribly and eternally wrong will be completely obvious. These people are to be pitied now. They are racing to their own damnation, their

own embarrassment, their own humiliation. We can reserve our anger. Pity is called for. And love.

Do you realize the position believers are in? We are in a position of strength. Oh, it doesn't look like it. It isn't political or military or physical strength. But we are in a position where we cannot possibly lose that which matters most. Maybe we should act like that. Maybe we should approach others with that kind of confidence and boldness. Even if they seem to have things together and have things the way they like them, they need salvation. They need the security we have. And maybe if we talk to them about the souls, they might see it.

Oh that God would do His work through us of bringing people to Himself. So on the day described in this passage we will have friends who will confess that Jesus is Lord and it will be the greatest thrill their soul has ever known.