

A Trek Through Isaiah 38 - 45:9-25

Bruce Pike

June 9, 2024

For this week: Yahweh's people and His purpose (part 1) 45:9-25

Context

- The book of the Servant (38 - 55): How will God's people be redeemed from captivity?
- Structure

The Great Deliverance: the Work of Cyrus (44:24 - 48:22)
Cyrus: builder and conqueror 44:24 - 45:8
Yahweh's people and His purpose 45:9 - 46:13
Free but not yet home 47:1 - 48:22

- The great deliverance is the work of Cyrus: rescue from political bondage.
 - Cyrus' commission
 - The reaction of God's people, and His resolve
 - The fall of Babylon and the return of God's people to Jerusalem.
- Yahweh's people and His purpose
 - Outline
 - The rebels and the Holy One of Israel 45:9-13
 - Unchanged purpose for Israel 45:14-25
 - Appeal to the rebels 46:1-13

The rebels and the Holy One of Israel 45:9-13

Challenging the quibblers 45:9-11

Isaiah 45:9–11 (LSB)

9“Woe to the one who contends with his Maker— An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth!
Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands’?”

10“Woe to him who says to a father, ‘What are you begetting?’ Or to a woman, ‘With what are you in
labor pains?’”

11Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me about the things that are to come
concerning My sons, And you shall commit to Me the work of My hands.

- V9-10 What they were doing wrong: Israel was upset that a pagan king should be their deliverer. They had no place questioning Yahweh.
 - Israel was aghast that their deliverer should be a pagan king.
 - Isaiah addresses those who would object to God’s plan.
 - Two pictures
 - V9 Woe to the clay that speaks back to the potter.
 - V10 Woe to the child who speaks back to the parents who begat him.
 - Do either of those have a right to question what their Maker does?
- V11 What they must do: Israel is commanded to ask Yahweh what is to come and to acknowledge that He has brought it about.
 - May be “Ask Me...commit to Me”: rather than grumbling, acknowledge Me as God: ask what is to come, leave the future in My hands.
 - May be “Will you ask Me...will you command Me?”: sarcastically asking the grumblers if they are God.

Yahweh's purpose 45:12-13

Isaiah 45:12-13 (LSB)

12 "It is I who made the earth and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands, And I commanded all their host.

13 "I have awakened him in righteousness, And I will make all his ways smooth; He will build My city and will let My exiles go, Without any payment or reward," says Yahweh of hosts.

- V12 What Yahweh has done: Yahweh created the earth and heavens and commands all their hosts.
 - From v11
 - Israel's Holy One
 - Israel's Creator
 - I who made the earth and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands, And I commanded all their hosts
 - Creator of all things
 - Creates and sustains.
 - Contrast 44:9-20 where men make gods.
- V13 What Yahweh will do: Yahweh will awaken Cyrus and make his ways smooth. He will accomplish His plan: to rebuild Jerusalem and let the exiles return there.
 - I have awakened him in righteousness
 - Yahweh is accomplishing His purpose using His designated one
 - Righteousness: right for the circumstances
 - God's people should be encouraged.
 - I will make his ways smooth
 - Enabling the designated one to achieve what is intended for him
 - He will build My city and will let My exiles go
 - What Yahweh will accomplish through Cyrus
 - Without any payment or reward
 - Cyrus will receive nothing.
 - God did not bargain with him.

Unchanged purpose for Israel 45:14-25

- Here the prophet answers the assertion that the Davidic promises are lost.
- Structure
 - Two sections (v14-17, v18-25)
 - Each starts with "Thus says Yahweh" and ends with the triumph of Israel.
 - V14-17 deal with the centrality of the nation Israel in Yahweh's plan
 - V18-25 speaks of co-equal Gentile membership in the Israel of God.

Israel recognized as God's people; the nations transformed 45:14-17

Isaiah 45:14–17 (LSB)

14Thus says Yahweh, "The fruit of the labor of Egypt and the profit of Ethiopia And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you; they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: 'Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.'"

15Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior!

16They will be put to shame and even dishonored, all of them; The craftsmen of idols will go away together in dishonor.

17Israel has been saved by Yahweh With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or dishonored To all eternity.

- V14 Nations transformed: The nations will come to Israel because they realize that Yahweh is the only God and Israel is His chosen people.
 - You, yours. Feminine. The nation Israel
 - The fruit of the labor of Egypt and the profit of Ethiopia And the Sabeans, men of stature,
 - All nations
 - They do not come in weakness or defeat.
 - They bring wealth and merchandise.
 - They maintain their stature
 - Will come over to you and be yours;
 - They come sincerely
 - Nationality is set aside
 - They will walk behind you;
 - Taking second place
 - Following Israel's ways
 - they will come over in chains And will bow down to you.
 - Come humbly
 - Not literal chains
 - They will make supplication to you.
 - They come earnestly
 - Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.'
 - The reason for their coming
-

- V15 Wonder: Isaiah exclaims his wonder at a God whose ways are beyond finding out, and who will bring the nations to Himself.
 - Spoken by Isaiah in response to what he has seen
 - Truly, You are a God who hides Himself. God's ways are beyond knowing. He is doing something new.
 - O God of Israel. Has not abandoned His people
 - Savior. Of all nations
 - As Paul in Ro 11:33 after speaking of how God will deal with Israel: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
- V16-17 alternative destinies.
- V16 Idol-makers: The makers of idols will go away in shame.
 - All of them.
 - No exceptions
 - put to shame
 - Guilty and naked
 - Dishonored...go into dishonor
 - Man's wisdom made foolish
- V17 The Israel of God: The Israel of God (Jews and Gentiles) will be saved and will not be put to shame or dishonor forever.
 - Israel has been saved ...
 - From the context refers to all the nations who come to the God of Israel
 - With an everlasting salvation;
 - Through Yahweh's eternal faithfulness to His people
 - by Yahweh.
 - Better "in Yahweh". He is their salvation.
 - not be put to shame or dishonored
 - Contrast the idol worshipers in v16

World salvation explained 45:18-25

- Four aspects of Yahweh as world Savior, and a summary.

Isaiah 45:18–25 (LSB)

18For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it; He established it and did not create it a formless place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am Yahweh, and there is none else.

19"I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a formless place'; I, Yahweh, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright.

20"Gather yourselves and come; Draw near together, you who have escaped from the nations; They do not know, Who carry about their graven image of wood And pray to a god who cannot save.

21"Declare and draw near with your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has made this heard from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, Yahweh? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.

22"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

23"I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

24"They will say of Me, 'Only in Yahweh are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.

25"In Yahweh all the seed of Israel Will be justified and will boast."

- V18 The God of creation: He created the heavens and the earth. He formed the earth to be inhabited. He acted alone.
 - For.
 - V18-25 elaborate the world salvation of V14-17
 - created ... formed ...established
 - God's actions as Creator.
 - he did not create it a formless place,
 - Formless. *tohu*: formless, meaningless.
 - But formed it to be inhabited
 - His intent is one world, one people, one God

- V19 The God of revelation: He speaks righteousness openly.
 - I have not spoken in secret
 - Hidden
 - [I have not spoken] in a land of darkness
 - Obscure or hard to find
 - I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a formless place'
 - tohu: formless, without meaning
 - How God did speak
 - Truth...what is right
 - Declared
 - If Israel had understood God's word, they would have known that God intended world-wide salvation.
 - Gen 12:2-3 promise to Abraham: ...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed
- V20-22 The God of salvation: He calls the nations to recognize (1) their gods cannot save them (2) only He is God (3) They can come to Him and be saved.
 - Pronouns indicate three parties
 - I, Me: Yahweh
 - You, yourselves: Gentiles
 - They, them: Those who worship idols
 - V20a Call to the nations to assemble.
 - You who have escaped from the nations.
 - those who remain after the conquests of Cyrus; who have an opportunity to be saved.
 - V20b-21a Worthlessness of idols and idolaters
 - No knowledge
 - Worship idols made of wood; must be carried
 - Pray to a god who cannot save
 - V21b The only Savior
 - Nations called to consider
 - Made this heard. Abrahamic covenant: many descendents.
 - Yahweh declares and then does.
 - The only God and the only Savior
 - Both righteous and a Savior
 - As Ro 3:26 ...just and the justifier
 - V22 Appeal
 - Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!
 - Direct offer of salvation
 - To individuals of all nations

- V23-24 The God of sovereignty: To Him every knee will bow. Those who bow willingly will find righteousness and strength. Those who bow unwillingly will be put to shame.
 - I have sworn by Myself;
 - God swears by Himself (the most holy thing) to indicate to His people that His word will come to pass.
 - The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness
 - His righteous purpose. As V8
 - And will not turn back
 - Will accomplish its purpose
 - That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.
 - Actions and words
 - Universal submission
 - Quoted in Ph 2:10 about Christ.
 - Not universal salvation; includes voluntary and involuntary submission.
 - They will say of Me, 'Only in Yahweh are righteousness and strength.
 - They. True believers who voluntarily submit.
 - righteousness. Justification
 - Strength. For sanctification.
 - And all who were angry at Him
 - the ones whose submission was forced.
 - angry. Provoked to rage by forced submission
 - They will be put to shame.
- V25 Summing up: In Yahweh his people from all nations will be justified and will boast.
 - In Yahweh. Placed first for emphasis: the only One in whom salvation is found.
 - The seed of Israel
 - believers from all nations whose submission is voluntary.
 - justified. Saved.
 - boast. In Yahweh.

References

Scripture quotations are from The Legacy Standard Bible, Copyright © 2021 by the Lockman Foundation A Corporation Not For Profit, La Habra, California, all rights reserved.

Calvin, John, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah*, Baker Books, 2009

Henry, Matthew, *An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Blue Letter Bible, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Isa/Isa_000.cfm

Motyer, Alec, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, Intersity Press, 1999

Oswalt, John, *The Book of Isaiah*, Eerdmans, 1986

Stevenson, Peter, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, BJU Press, 2003

Young, Edward, *The Book of Isaiah*, Eerdmans, 1972