



ISAIAH 45

GOD’S SHEPHERD, CYRUS ~ YAHWEH, THE HOPE OF THE NATIONS

In the last verse of chapter 44 Isaiah names a future king of Persia who would shepherd the remnant of God’s people and oversee the rebuilding of Jerusalem. All this came to pass. The LORD calls Cyrus by name before he has even been born and before the kingdom over which he will reign has risen to power. Cyrus is warned in advance not to argue with God. Cyrus will respect God’s purpose and plan, and will co-operate with it to rebuild Jerusalem. God promises that, when Israel has been saved by the LORD, he will give over to Cyrus the idolatrous Egyptian kingdom and other southern nations. When God so powerfully brings to pass the purpose he has long ago announced, as he did in the case of Cyrus, all peoples of the earth should acknowledge him, every knee should bow to him.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 45:1 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.</p>	<p>a 45:1 Or “Messiah (Anointed One).” The Septuagint reads “To Cyrus, my Christ.” Cyrus becomes an amazing picture of Jesus, the Anointed One (Acts 10:38). Both Cyrus (44:28) and Jesus (Heb. 13:20) are called shepherds who will perform all God’s pleasure (John 8:29). God takes the right hand of both Cyrus and Christ (Heb. 10:12–13) and subdues nations before them (Ps. 2; Phil. 3:21). Both Cyrus and Christ have open doors before them (Rev. 3:7–8) and are given the treasures of darkness (Matt. 27:45), the hidden riches of secret places (Mark 1:35; Col. 2:3; Rev. 2:17).</p> <p>b 45:1 Cyrus, the Persian king, is mentioned twenty-two times in the Bible. His name means “the rays of the sun.” God calls him his “shepherd” (44:28) and his “anointed one.” On October 12, 539 BC, he conquered Babylon and its king, Nabonidus, and his son Belshazzar (Dan. 5:25–31). It is possible that Daniel, after the fall of Babylon, showed Cyrus the prophecies of Jer. 25:11–12 and 29:10.</p> <p>c 45:1 That is, God is about to take Cyrus as a “partner to accomplish heaven’s purpose.</p> <p>d 45:1 Or “The belts of their kings I will loosen,” a Hebrew idiom for disarming or dethroning. Babylon was taken in one night by Cyrus. Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was killed. See Dan. 5:1–31.</p> <p>e 45:2 Or “every swelling,” a possible metaphor for what looms up in front of you.</p> <p>f 45:3 The Hebrew wording allows for this possible translation: “I, Yahweh, who calls you by your name, the gods (judges or mighty ones) of Israel.” The word for “gods” is elohim (plural) and is translated in some verses as “judges.” See Ps. 82:1, 6.</p>	<p>God’s Shepherd, Cyrus</p> <p>Isaiah 45:1 This is what Yahweh says to his anointed one, a Cyrus, b whose right hand I have grasped as my servant c to conquer nations and dethrone their kings. d For I will open doors before him and no fortified gate will remain closed. ² I will march out in front of you and level every obstacle. e I will shatter to pieces bronze doors and slice through iron bars. ³ I will give you hidden treasures from dark, concealed places and wealth waiting in secret sites so that you recognize me, for it is I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name! f ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name and give you a title of honor. But you don’t even know me.</p>

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.

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.

g 45:6 There are four reasons God chose and favored Cyrus, the heathen king: (1) So that Cyrus would acknowledge the greatness of God. (2) To accomplish God’s purpose with Judah (Ps. 78:68–72). (3) So the nations would see that Yahweh is the only true God. (4) So Jerusalem would be rebuilt.

h 45:7 This is the Hebrew word shalom and can be translated “prosperity, bliss, wholeness, completeness, “health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord.” Shalom comes from a root verb meaning “to be complete, perfect, and (paid in) full.”

i 45:7 Or “woe, disaster, calamity (judgment), affliction, disturbance, distress, misery, trouble.”

j 45:8 The Hebrew word for “salvation,” yasha’, is nearly identical to the Hebrew name Yeshua (Jesus).

k 45:8 Or “and blossom with mercy” (LXX).

l 45:9 Or “Your work has no hands (or handles).” This is a way of saying, “What you’re doing with me shows that you have no skill, like someone who has no hands forming me!”

m 45:11 Or “Ask me about things to come concerning my children.”

n 45:13 Although God has raised up Christ and us in righteousness, the context here points to Cyrus.

o 45:14 Or “Ethiopia.”

p 45:14 A people group once living in the southern parts of Arabia (modern-day Yemen).

q 45:15 Or “a God who keeps himself hidden.” These words of Isaiah show us that God must be revealed by his Spirit to each heart.

r 45:18 Or “He did not create it a chaos.

⁵ I am Yahweh, the only God there is, and you’ll never find another. I will strengthen you for victory, even though you do not intimately know who I am. ⁶ Yet through you everyone will know who I really am. Those from the rising sun in the east to the west, everyone everywhere will know that I am Yahweh, the one and only God, and there is no other. **g** ⁷ I create light, and I make it dark. I make bliss, **h** and I create adversity. **i** I am Yahweh who does all these things.’

⁸ “Shower down righteousness, O heavens above. Let the clouds drip with deliverance! Let earth’s womb open and bear salvation’s **j** fruit, with righteousness rising up beside it! **k** I, Yahweh, have created all of them!

⁹ Shame on the one who argues with his Creator, like one clay pot among other pots arguing with the potter. Should the clay say to the potter, ‘What in the world are you doing with me? Your hands are clumsy’? **l** ¹⁰ Shame on the one who complains to a father, ‘Why in the world did you conceive me?’ Or to a mother, ‘Why in the world did you bring me to birth?’”

¹¹ Listen to what Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, the One who shaped him, has to say: “Why do you question me about the destiny of my children **m** or tell me what to do with my children and what I have made? ¹² I created the earth and populated it with people. With my own hands, I spread out the cosmos and then commanded the starry host to shine! ¹³ I am the one who raised him **n** up in righteousness! I will make all his paths straight and level. He will build my city and release my exiled people, not because he was bribed or hired to do it, declares the Almighty Yahweh!”

Yahweh, the Hope of the Nations

¹⁴ This is what Yahweh says to Cyrus: “Egypt’s wealth, Cush’s **o** treasures, and the tall Sabeans **p** will all be handed over to you. In chains they will walk behind you. They will be brought before you and they will bow down and address you reverently, saying, ‘Truly God is with you. He alone is God, and there is no other.’”

¹⁵ Truly, O God of Israel, the Savior, you are a God who hides himself.” **q**

¹⁶ All the idol-makers will be ashamed and disgraced, and each one will walk away in confusion. ¹⁷ But Yahweh saves Israel with everlasting salvation. You will not be put to shame nor disgraced for all eternity.

¹⁸ This is what Yahweh says, heaven’s Creator, who alone is God. He created the earth, shaped it, and established it all by himself. “He made it fit and orderly and beautiful **r** for its inhabitants. He says: “I am Yahweh, and there is no other god.”

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<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.’</p> <p>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.</p> <p>²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.”</p>	<p>s 45:25 Or “will be made right again.” See Rom. 11:26–27.</p>	<p>¹⁹ I didn’t whisper in secret, in a realm of darkness. I didn’t say to Jacob’s tribes, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I am Yahweh! I speak the truth and declare to you what is right!</p> <p>²⁰ “Come together! Assemble yourselves! Draw near, you refugees from among the nations. Those who parade their powerless wooden idols have no revelation knowledge. They keep on praying to gods who cannot save them. ²¹ Declare what is to be and state your case. Go ahead and take counsel together. Who knew all about this and declared it long ago? Was it not I, Yahweh? There is no god apart from me. I am a righteous God and a Savior. There is no one you can compare to me.</p> <p>²² So turn your heart to me, face me now, and be saved wherever you are, even from the ends of the earth, for I alone am God, and there is no other. ²³ I make this solemn oath to you in my own name; this word sent from my mouth in righteousness will not return unfulfilled: ‘Truly every knee will bow before me and every tongue will solemnly swear allegiance to me!’</p> <p>²⁴ All will say of me, ‘Yes! Only in Yahweh do I find righteousness and strength!’ And all who were angry with me will come before me and regret it!”</p> <p>²⁵ In Yahweh, all of Israel’s offspring will triumph s and shine!</p>

Bible Knowledge Commentary

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- **45:1-4.** Besides issuing a decree permitting the captives to return home, Cyrus also avenged God’s wrath on the nations. Amazingly the Lord called Cyrus His anointed. The word “anointed” referred to the relationship Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David, had with God (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:6). Since Israel in exile had no king, Cyrus functioned in a sense as her king (the anointed one) to bring about blessing. Like the Messiah (lit., “the Anointed One”) who would come after him, Cyrus would have a twofold mission: to free the people, and to bring God’s judgment on unbelievers.
 - Cyrus would easily conquer other nations (Isa. 45:1b), with God’s help (v. 2), and would receive wealth from the nations he overcame (v. 3). This he did in [Vol. 1, p. 1100] conquering Lydia and Babylon. All this would be for the sake of Jacob, God’s Chosen People (see comments on 41:8-9). And even though Cyrus would enjoy a special relationship with God (God called him by name; cf. 43:1) and was honored by God, he still was not a believer for he did not acknowledge the Lord as the true God.
- **45:5-7.** Again the uniqueness of God is stressed. The fact that there is no other is stated in verses 5-6, 14, 18, 21-22 (also see 43:11; 44:6; 46:9). In Cyrus’ day the Lord was not universally acknowledged, but eventually He will be (cf. Phil. 2:10-11). People will realize that all that happens—light (life), darkness (death), prosperity, and disaster (not “evil” as in the KJV; cf. Amos 3:6)—comes from God. As the sovereign LORD of the universe He can do everything.

- **45:8.** When the millennial kingdom is established on the earth the heavens, figuratively speaking, will rain down righteousness (God's standards will be followed). And salvation, like a great harvest, will spring up. That is, people everywhere will know the LORD (cf. v. 6; 11:9; Hab. 2:14).
- **God's sovereignty in Creation** (45:9-13)
 - **45:9-13.** The Lord can work sovereignly over individuals on the earth because He created it. When someone who is created voices disapproval of the Creator's work he risks receiving a pronouncement of impending doom (woe, vv. 9-10; cf. comments on 3:9) from the LORD. A potsherd, a broken, discarded piece of pottery, has no right to question the potter. Nor does a child have the right to question why his parents brought him into the world. In the same way Israel has no right to question God her Maker (45:9, 11), the world's Creator (v. 12), in His plans to raise up Cyrus (v. 13). Cyrus' task was again stated: to allow freed exiles to rebuild God's city, Jerusalem (cf. 44:28).
- **Gentile submission to God** (45:14-19)
 - **45:14-17.** In the Millennium Gentiles will realize that Israel's God is the only God. People from Egypt and Cush and the Sabeans (see comments on 43:3) will be subservient to Israel and will admit that there is no other god (cf. 45:6, 18, 21-22; also note Zech. 14:16-19; Mal. 1:11). Though at times it seems as if the Lord is hiding, He really is the Savior of Israel (see comments on Isa. 43:11). Whereas people who persist in idol-worship will be ashamed (cf. 42:17; 44:9, 11; 45:24) believing Israelites will never be ashamed (cf. 54:4; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6) for they will enjoy God's salvation forever.
 - **45:18-19.** Again God's creative power (cf. 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 48:13; 51:13, 16) is proof that what He predicted about Cyrus is true. Another proof is the very nature of God's word. He speaks only what is true. In captivity the Jews could count on the fact that the Lord would deliver them from exile by Cyrus.
- **The Lord's appeal to the Gentiles** (45:20-25)
 - **45:20-25.** The Lord appealed to the Gentiles to turn from wooden idols and be saved from coming destruction. They were to note the prophecies God had given and to acknowledge His uniqueness as the only God (vv. 21-22; cf. vv. 5-6, 14, 18) and to turn to Him because eventually everyone will acknowledge His sovereignty (cf. v. 14; Mal. 1:1; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11). Even so, some Gentiles will be saved, recognizing that only in Him is righteousness available. But many will continue to rage against Him (Isa. 45:24). However, Israel, God's covenant people, will be justified (found righteous) in the LORD, and in that they will rejoice (exult).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. God calls Cyrus his "anointed." What does it take for someone to become the "anointed of God?" Does God anoint people today? How do you know if someone is "anointed" by God?
2. In verses 5 thru 7, God talks about who he is, what he's like and the things he does. Contemporary Christians seem to attribute many things to the work of Satan. What, exactly, is he capable of doing here on earth?
3. Have you ever argued with the Creator? What do we hope to get accomplished by arguing with God? Is he ever offended by our arguments?

4. How is God's "creative power" demonstrated in our lives? What would you point to in your life and say, "I know this is evidence of God moving in my life?" Choose someone else in the room and point out something you see in their lives that might be considered evidence of God's creative power.