

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

THEME:

The identification of Cyrus, the creation of the material universe, and the salvation of Israel.

REMARKS:

This chapter is again the continuation of the theme of a succeeding chapter. This chapter begins with Cyrus as the last chapter closed with him. It is indeed remarkable that Cyrus would be named and identified almost two hundred years before he was born. This unusual prophecy has caused the liberal critic to construct, out of the web of his imagination, the figment of “the great unknown” writer of this section of Isaiah.

The fact that Isaiah could name a man two centuries before he appears is too strong a tonic for the weak faith of an unbeliever. We shall consider this remarkable prophecy in detail under COMMENT.

There are several other striking statements in this chapter which we consider when we come to the verses under COMMENT.

OUTLINE:

1. **The CALLING of Cyrus Before He was Born.** Verses 1-6
2. **The CREATION of the Universe Before All Time.** Verses 7-14
3. **The CONTINUANCE of Israel for All Time and Eternity.** Verses 15-25

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;**

Cyrus is named and identified before he is born. There was a lapse of about 200 years between this prophecy and the appearance of Cyrus. It would be humanly impossible to perform this feat. Jesus Christ was named and identified nearly 2,000 years before He came (Genesis 49:10).

Isaiah 49:33 needs to be considered with this verse. Cyrus is given titles of dignity which make him a Gentile figure of Christ, he is called “**shepherd**”, a title that prefigures Christ, he is also given, in this verse, the title of “**anointed**”—Messiah—Christ. This is quite remarkable.

Doubtless he was given this title because he delivered them from captivity and permitted them to return to the Land of Promise, he also encouraged those who remained to send rich gifts of gold, silver and many precious things with those who returned. In this respect he was a Gentile Messiah of Israel and a vague foreshadowing of the One who was to come.

“**The two leaved gates**” is evidently a reference to the numerous gates of Babylon which shut Israel out from returning to Palestine.

Verse 2—**I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:**

God also broke down the gates of Babylon which had shut Cyrus out and permitted him to capture this strong nation.

Verse 3—**And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.**

The rich treasures of Babylon, which the kings of Babylon had taken as spoils of war from all nations, especially Jerusalem, fell to Cyrus.

Verse 4—**For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.**

The question may rightly be asked why God would mark out this lone king and identify him by name. The answer is found here. It was to let His people, Israel, know that He had not forsaken them, and they would be able to recognize Cyrus when he appeared in history, and they would be assured that he was their deliverer. What joyful assurance this must have been to God’s people when Cyrus came to the throne.

Cyrus is a character in history (Daniel 10:1). The ruins of his tomb have been found in Pasargardae, Iran, bearing this inscription, “who founded the Persian Empire and was King of Asia . . . Therefore grudge me not this monument.”

God chose Cyrus before he knew the Lord. It is reasonable to conclude that Cyrus came to know the living and true God.

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah (Ezra 1:2).

There is a reason why he befriended Israel, as we shall see in the next verse.

Verse 5—I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

This was God's word to Cyrus. Cyrus was a monotheist, as were all the Persians. Zoroastrianism began and flourished in this land. They did not worship idols, but this does not mean they knew the true God. God here introduces Himself to them as the one God who has no equal and the One who chose Cyrus.

Verse 6—That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

This was the great message for the world of polytheism and idolatry.

Verse 7—I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.

Zoroastrianism teaches that Mazda is the God of light. God says He creates light and that it is no god. Darkness was the god of evil—Ahriman.

God takes responsibility for darkness, he does not create evil, however. He is here showing that “sorrow,” “difficulties,” and “tragedies” are the fruit of sin. This is the Old Testament way of saying, **“The wages of sin is death.”**

Verse 8—Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.

God does create all good things and the fruits of good things. **“His reward is with Him.”**

Verse 9—Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Verse 10—Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

There may be some who will protest God's taking the future in His hand like this—even choosing and naming a king.

This is God's answer to that. It reminds us of Romans 9:19-21.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Verse 11—**Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.**

God can be proven and tested by prophecy.

Verse 12—**I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.**

God claims to be Creator—note that He stretched out the heavens. Space is a creation.

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39).

Verse 13—**I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.**

God is the Creator of man and his Redeemer.

Verse 14—**Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.**

The enemies of Israel will finally come with Israel to God—confessing their need of Him, he will finally prevail and conquer.

Verse 15—**Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.**

This is the heart cry of the prophet in praying that God's ways are unfathomable and are past finding out.

Verse 16—**They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.**

Confusion is the end of those who oppose God. The world is moving again toward a Tower of Babel.

Verse 17—**But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.**

Those who believe God is through with Israel should take a long look at this passage. Israel's salvation is everlasting.

Verse 18—**For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.**

“**He created it not in vain**”—this expression is found in Genesis 1:2, *tohu-va-bohu*. God says here He did not create the earth *tohu-va-bohu*.

Evidently some catastrophe produced this sad state (Genesis 1:2).

Verse 19—**I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.**

Another test of God’s dealings is the fact that they are right.

Verse 20—**Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.**

The whole world is urged to turn to God.

Verse 21—**Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.**

God is one God; He is just; He is the Saviour.

Verse 22—**Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.**

This is the verse that an ignorant man used which was responsible for the conversion of Charles Spurgeon.

Verse 23—**I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.**

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

Verse 24—**Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.**

The prophet saw that the righteousness of God alone sufficed for the salvation of man.

Verse 25—**In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.**

The Lord alone can justify Israel, as He alone can justify a sinner.

~ end of chapter 45 ~

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