

**Wednesday, February 28, 2024 ▫ Read Isaiah 44:24–45:8**

Questions from the Scripture text: Who is speaking to Jacob and Israel (v24a)? What is He to them? How does He describe this in v24b (cf. 43:1)? What is He to everything else (v24c)? Who has helped Him (v24d–e)? What men think they have knowledge (v25)? But what does YHWH do to their prognostications? Whose word does He confirm instead (v26a–b)? What is He prophesying about whom (v26c–e)? How has He showed the ability to do this (v27)? Whom is He going to use to release and reinhabit Judah (v28a)? What will Cyrus do (v28b)? What will Cyrus order to happen (v28c–d, cf. Ezra 1:1–4)? What does YHWH now call Cyrus in 45:1a? What has He enabled Cyrus to do, and to what extent (v1c–2d)? What else will Cyrus get out of it (v3a–b)? To show him what (v3c–e)? Why did this Persian arise to power (v4)? How can it be that the blessing of God's people controls what happens in all nations and the powerful men of history (v5–6)? What sorts of historical events are brought about by this God for this reason (v7)? What comes by the command of God (v8a)? But what is this a shower/storm of (v8b)? And what sort of crop does it bring forth (v8c–d)? By Whose divine creation (v8e)?

**How has God been pleased to make the greatest display of being the only God?** Isaiah 44:24–45:8 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these thirteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God displays Himself as God, most of all in announcing and accomplishing the redemption of His elect, through Christ.**

True knowledge only from the true God, v24–28. For several chapters, the Lord has been declaring that as the One Who created all things and determined the end from the beginning, He has shown Himself to be the only true God. That is still the theme, and in this passage He demonstrates it by telling the future (naming Cyrus by name, 44:28, 45:1) in which He is going to miraculously save His people (v26c–e) just as He has done in the past (v27).

The Word of the Redeemer (v24a) is the great source of knowledge. By it He made all things (v24c–e). And those who seek or claim knowledge apart from Him, He humiliates (v25). The Lord glorifies His saving Word in the mouths of His preachers (v26a–b).

The anointed deliverer-king, v1–3. Here, Cyrus is a prototype of Christ, the “anointed” (Messiah, 45:1). YHWH makes him a king over kings, destroying all obstacles in his way (v2, cf. 40:3–4), and giving him the treasures of the world (v3a–b). The Lord, Who did this for and through a king of Persia, will much more certainly do so through His Son!

The purpose that drives all of history, v4–7. The Babylonians, and the Persians, and the other nations of the world must have had many ideas about how and why Cyrus came to power. But the real reason is in v4a–b. It was for Jacob's sake, because he is God's servant. It was for Israel's sake, because He is God's elect. Cyrus had no interest in the Lord (v4d), but the Lord worked personally in and through his life for the sake of His elect!

Truly, there is no God but YHWH, and He makes that known all over the whole earth (v6). Sometimes, the Lord brings His salvation through light, but He is still bringing it in whatever darkness He ordains (v7a). The Lord brings His salvation through peace, but He is still bringing it in whatever calamity He ordains (v7b). What a precious truth this is for us: that every moment is ordained by God, and that it is ordained for bringing salvation to His elect, through the Messiah, unto His glory!

The two great creation-works for which we will praise the Lord forever, v8. The providence of God is what brings plant life through rain showers. But that's an ordinary work that becomes a metaphor here for what He is doing in history as a whole. The rain is His righteousness (v8b), and it brings forth the life of salvation (v8c) and more righteousness (v8d). The specific word that means to create out of nothing appears three times in vv7–8. It is the first verb in the Bible, and God shows Himself to be God especially in that creation (cf. Rev 4:11), as well as for this salvation/righteousness-creation that is His work of redemption (cf. Rev 5:9–10). For this He will be praised, forever and ever, as the one true God!

**What darkness and calamity have you seen in your personal life, and in the broader world? Who has ordained it? Why? How will we respond to Him for accomplishing that? How can you make use of this knowledge for trusting Him and praising Him now?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, please forgive us for all attempts at knowledge or power apart from You. Truly, anything that we rightly know or do depends upon You. And You have made Your word the only source for knowledge of Your salvation. Forgive us for resting upon anything else. And forgive us for the wicked unbelief in which we have not been sure of Your salvation. Truly, You do all for the glory of Your Son, our Lord Jesus. Forgive us for when we have not done things for His glory. Truly, You do all for the sake of redeeming Your elect. Forgive us for when we have not done things for the sake of Your church. You are to be praised for all of Your works of creation and providence. Even darkness and calamity serve You for our salvation. Forgive us for when we have failed to praise You in the midst of that darkness or calamity. And grant unto us to trust You and worship You constantly, through Christ, in Whose Name we ask it, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP138 “With All My Heart, My Thanks I'll Bring” or TPH256 “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Isaiah 44:24-45:8. These are God's words. Thus says, Yahweh your Redeemer and he who formed you from the womb. I am Yahweh. Who makes all things who stretches out the heavens? All alone who spreads abroad the Earth by myself? Who frustrates? The signs of the babblers and drives diviners mad, who turns wise men backward and makes their knowledge foolishness Who confirms the word of his servant.

And performs the Council of his Messengers, who says to Jerusalem, you shall be inhabited. To the cities of Judah. You shall be built and I will raise up her waste places. Who says to the deep be dry and I will dry up your Rivers. Who says of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and he shall perform all my pleasure.

Sending to Jerusalem. You shall be built and to the temple, your foundation shall be laid. Thus says Yahweh to his anointed. To Cyrus, whose right hand. I have held to subdue Nations before him and loose, the armor of Kings, to open before him, the double doors. So that the gates will not be shut.

I will go before you and make the Crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the Gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden Riches of secret places. That you may know that I Yahweh. Who call you by your name, and the god of Israel.

For Jacob, my servant's sake and Israel, my elect I have even called you by your name. I have named you though. You have not known me. I am Yahweh and there is no other. There is no God besides me. I will gird you though. You have not known me.

That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting. That there is none besides me. I am Yahweh. And there's no other. I form the light and create Darkness. I make peace. And create Calamity. Do all these things. Rain down, you Heavens from above and let the skies bore down righteousness.

Let the Earth open. Let them bring forth salvation. Let righteousness spring up together. Yahweh. Have created it. Amen. Thus, since this reading of gods inspired, An inherent word. In which the Lord shows himself to be the only true God. The Creator God. By being the only true God. The Redeemer God.

And so he says, thus says Yahweh your Redeemer, the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord. And he has, Redeemed us. In. And by the person of his son, Who

became, man. The Lord Jesus Christ. And so, the Lord is the one. Who declares? The end from the beginning.

He did creation all by himself. That's the point at the beginning of the passage, Where he talks about stretching out the heavens who helped him? Nobody So when it says, wisdom was there at the beginning, when it says he created all things, by Jesus Christ, he's identifying Jesus Christ, as Yahweh He's not saying oh I made one creature who then helped me make all the other creatures.

And so, if you hear someone even somebody, who used to be an officer of your church, Saying that Jesus is just the greatest of all creatures and has a Divine ish glory. He is disagreeing with God. And Isaiah 44. 24 through Isaiah 45 and verse 8. He stretches out the heavens alone.

He spreads abroad, the Earth by himself, And so also the second twerk of creation the work of redemption. When he creates righteousness from sinful men on the earth, He says, rained down you Heavens from above, let the skies pour down righteousness. He's not actually talking about righteousness being produced by atmospheric conditions.

Remember what he said in the previous chapter? For. I will pour water on him. Who is thirsty and floods on the dry ground. I will pour my spirit. On your descendants and what Springs up. As a result in verse 8, let the Earth open, let them bring forth salvation, let righteousness spring up together.

Just as, in the previous passage, the result is they will spring up among the grass like Willows by watercourses one will say I am yahweh's. Another will call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write with his hand yahweh's and name himself. By the name of Israel. And so the Lord.

demonstrates that he is the Creator God by doing a second work of creation and that is Redemption. And so, he uses the Hebrew verb for creating out of nothing. The very special verb. That is not something that man can do, man, fashions for himself. God, cannot create a God out of nothing.

He can't create anything out of nothing. And so does especially this this word is used especially of God and only rightly of God whenever it is used of man, it is not rightly used in man. But we have it here twice in verse seven. And again, in verse 8, I create Darkness, I create Calamity all yaw, they have created it just in case there was any doubt.

About the darkness and Calamity that was coming into the life of the nation of Israel. as if God doesn't ordain the hard things, no, he ordains it to the point that he is willing. To own the good that he does through it. I create it. He says He does, he doesn't perform evil.

He doesn't do anything sinful. and yet he is so Sovereign over. what even evil men do that. He does the good, he who is good? God, who is good? Does good through it. And so since God Alone is the one who does the work of creation and the work of redemption, we are unable to learn about it from any other any other source.

You cannot Trace back by examining the created stuff. How it was created. And when it wasn't there, when it was created. And so it can't give you the win and it can't give you the how just also as also men cannot invent or come up with on their own, how God Saves and this is one of the reasons that the New Testament uses that language the mystery of the Gospel.

That. You know, it's spooky and unknowable but that we couldn't have known it unless the one who does it tells us about it. And so it is especially a mystery that has been revealed, whether it is the mystery of the gospel in terms of who Jesus is and what he would do, and how that saves or even, as we have heard it a couple of times that mystery word used recently.

We've heard it a couple of times in the Romans preaching. About God's plan for bringing salvation to the Jew first and then to the Gentile and bringing Other apostatized church members in particular, Israelites to Faith by jealousy provoking them when they see others saved, you know, and he calls it a mystery because it's a plan that he had come up with and that we wouldn't know about if he hadn't told us.

But he has told us and so now we know When man tries to attain to knowledge apart from God's world and apart from God's word, the Lord humiliates him He makes his predictions embarrassingly fail. Whether those predictions come by divining or or people who claim to have some sort of special Revelation and they even quote unquote, do signs, or whether they're just wise men and that's what he's describing here in verse 25 of chapter 44 He frustrates the signs of the babblers drives the diviners Med turns wise men backward makes their knowledge foolishness

Either submit to him.

And you draw your knowledge first and foremost from his word. And then instructed by his word, are able to understand and interpret rightly his world. Or. Here is going to make your knowledge fall on its face and you who rest upon it. On your face as well. However, he confirms the word of his servant, he performs the Council of his Messengers.

And he did that, he did that with Jerusalem, it was inhabited again and the temple was rebuilt again and he even named Cyrus by name. hundreds of years more than a hundred, almost 200 years. Before. Cyrus ever came to power. and that's such a problem for the people who think that they themselves are wise and they apply to the Bible, the same sort of logic that they apply to stuff that they dig out of the dirt and they play psychology and they say, well, of course this must have been later, they wouldn't have known the name of Cyrus

Over a hundred almost 200 years in advance.

Well, The point of the passage is that God knows his name in advance because he's God, Yeah. And so as soon as you pick up a Commentary on the book of Isaiah. And it talks about Early Isaiah and late Isaiah and late. Isaiah had to be after Cyrus, you know, that you can just do the appropriate thing with that.

And Don't put it anywhere, where somebody might take it, maybe use the Leafs, the leaves of that book for good tender to get fires. started or something. but he names Cyrus by name, and he uses Cyrus then, and as an image of Christ, now Cyrus doesn't know, God, but Jesus knows God, although he does grow in wisdom.

But he names them by name. He appoints him as a deliverer for his people and He speaks about him even in a similar way as the coming of Christ was spoken about back in chapter 40 with the crooked places made straight and the mountains laid low and the valleys lifted up.

Well he uses that sort of language in verse 2. It's A, Well, Cyrus doesn't have to forgive me. He's not around anymore. He uses a cute little picture for him. Cyrus the, the baby, Persian king whom God. Takes by the hand. He says to Cyrus his right hand.

I have helped and he takes baby little, you know, little toddler Cyrus. And he he subdues Nations before him other kings come and fight against him. And the picture in verse one is the Lord going ahead of him and undoing the armor. So they go to to fight King, Cyrus of Persia and there are falls off and they're exposed and little baby Cyrus can take take out this King and oh he comes to a city that has not just one set of Set of Gates is two sets of gates, one made of bronze and one made of

iron and the the Lord goes ahead of him and says, oh don't worry little Cyrus.

I will get that for you and he undoes both of them, he cuts the bronze and he cuts the iron and the gates open up and the the city is laid open for you. Okay, now you can go in and take them. Iris and shows him the way to the treasure room.

because it's like having the first Map reading software for a video game where you have all the secrets and You just takes Cyrus to the secret, treasuries, and the reason. He says that the, the Persian conquests of these nations was so powerful, so Unstoppable. Was for Israel's sake.

This tiny little ancient near Eastern. The kingdom that was in the area of Palestine, where the Philistines had previously been, And yet, they are the people of the Living God. And so God says in advance how Persia is going to rise? So that when Persia does not only Persia but everyone from the rising of its son to its setting, everyone who does real history and examines these documents and knows that this was written in advance.

We'll say aha. God of Israel. The god of Jacob is the one true God. And he is bringing salvation for all the nations. Every bit is certainly. As he raised up, Cyrus and carried, Israel, back and caused Jerusalem to be rebuilt and caused his Temple to be rebuilt, which is a historical fact.

And the fact that God became man to redeem us, And lived and died. Lived, righteously died. Atoningly rose again, all mightily ascended, into heaven bodily and is sitting and ruling the Nations. While his enemies are being made a footstool for his feet. That is a certain. Historical fact. And the Lord who created the heavens and the Earth.

You stretched out the heavens by himself. He is the one. Who's done this? By himself. Praise God. Hey man. Let's pray. Our gracious God in our heavenly father, we thank you. Our gracious God and our heavenly father. We thank you.

Our gracious. God in our heavenly father, we thank you and praise you. For your goodness to us. given to us this portion of your word. that we might worship you in it. Help us O. Lord. To know you as our creator and Our Redeemer. And to see the second work of creation is the greater.

Thank you for anointing appointing your son. Our Lord Jesus. To be Our Redeemer, we praise you in his name. Amen.