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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 45.

(2015)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Isaiah 45.

Topics.

- The LORD takes the right hand of Cyrus His anointed to subdue nations.
- I equip Cyrus that people may know I am LORD there is none besides me.
- The LORD has stirred up Cyrus in righteousness, he shall build my city.
- Woe to him who says to a father or a woman, "what are you begetting?"
- I have stirred him up in righteousness he shall set my exiles free.
- Egypt Cush, and the Sabeans will say, "Surely God of Israel is in you."
- All makers of idols will be put to shame and go in confusion together.
- God will save Israel with everlasting salvation and not put them to shame.
- Draw together survivors of the nations, those who carry idols cannot save.
- Every knee will bow, every tongue shall confess, the LORD is God.
- The Commonwealth of Israel and the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C.

He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the

present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ.

Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

The LORD takes the Right Hand of Cyrus His Anointed to Subdue Nations.

Isaiah 45:1-4 ----- ¹Thus 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, ³I 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. ⁴For 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.

Here the LORD says of Cyrus the king of Persia: -

- His is His anointed.
- He will take him by the right hand to subdue kings and nations.
- He will use him to open doors that no one can close.
- He will go before him to bring to ruin exalted nations and fortresses.
- He will open his eyes to the truth that the LORD is the God of Israel who calls him by his name.
- He has called Cyrus to benefit His chosen people Israel.
- He knows Cyrus by name even though Cyrus does not know the Him.

Isaiah chapter forty three talks about God doing a new thing (Isaiah 43:18-21), this is the new thing that Isaiah prophesies the LORD would do. Never before has God spoken of a secular king in this way or used a secular king to bless His chosen people Israel in such an amazing manner.

I equip Cyrus that People may Know I am LORD there is none besides Me.

Isaiah 45:5-8 ----- ⁵I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you though you do not know me, ⁶that 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. ⁷I 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 (spring up together in KJV); let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it.

I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God: (v5) all Christians believe that there is only one God, but much of traditional Christianity also believes that Jesus is God which causes great confusion since it means that God the invisible immortal Almighty Holy God of all creation and the source of all life, at one point in mankind's history became the baby in Mary's womb and the child that she weaned from her breast.

Emperor Constantine at the counsel of Nicaea in 325 AD and a group of bishops created a complicated doctrine titled, "The Incarnation of God or of Jesus Christ," to explain this, but it is a manmade doctrine that has been perpetuated from generation to generation without question by the Catholic Church and the many churches that grew out of it and by tradition. The truth that the Bible teaches from beginning to end is that God is the supreme heavenly Father while Jesus is His most beloved Son the Messiah the Christ and the Saviour of the world.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity)

In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Light: signifies knowledge, innocence, pure faith, and happiness, spiritual peace of conscience, prosperity and joy and peace in general. Figuratively it signifies the moral light of human nature, the rational understanding of the mind and the inward light by which spiritual things are known, perceived and understood.

Darkness: signifies adversity, misery, suffering, violence, crime and war. Spiritually it refers to internal blindness and ignorance of things concerning God, His word, the Lord Jesus Christ, the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of grace.

Light and darkness: in the context of this chapter the light primarily refers to the success and prosperity of Cyrus while the darkness refers to the calamity and utter ruin of Babylon and the nations to be conquered by Cyrus.

I form the light, and create darkness: (v7) all mankind's comforts and calamities come from the hand of the LORD. Many Orientals, ancient religions (and some today) held the belief that there were two supreme coeternal God's always struggling against and acting in opposition to one another. The good God was seen as the God of light and the evil god as the god of darkness;

The good God was believed to be the God of all that was prosperous, joyful and peaceful, while the god of darkness was believed to be the god of all that was evil and caused suffering and misery. They believed when the god of darkness had the superiority, then evil and misery abounded, likewise when the God of light was supreme prosperity, happiness and peace was abundant.

With the statement, "I am the LORD besides me there is no God, (Isaiah 45:5-7) (v5) the LORD by His prophet Isaiah is emphatically asserting His omnipotence and absolute supremacy. He forms the light and creates the darkness; He makes peace and creates evil. This is not to be taken of the evil of sin, but the evil of punishment.

Evil follows sin and as a consequence of sin God judges and punishes accordingly using the tools of famine, disasters, pestilence and war. Calamity, evil, ignorance, disappointment, and lack of success are subject to the sovereign will of God, but it should not be thought that God tempts mankind with the moral darkness and evil that stems from sin. James the brother of Jesus in his letter wrote: -

- Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (James 1:13-14).

Mankind, kings, nations and governments make their plans and set their goals, but it is God who has the sovereign and supreme power over all things there is no other spiritual being that has power over the LORD God of Israel or over creation or over mankind. This is why the LORD categorically states, "I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things." He is highlighting the truth that He is the LORD and besides Him there is no other God.

Applying all calamities, misery and suffering in the world today to God maybe too simplistic since not all things are as black and white as they may appear to be, especially since sin is rampant in the world and mankind throughout the generations has brought great destruction and pollution to the planet that we live on. Added to this, kings, Presidents, governments and mankind in general has spent very little on the care of the environment and the good health of the planet, but instead pillaged it for the sake of financial profit and greed and all mankind suffers because of this.

In the light of these things it should be kept in mind that the main focus of this chapter is that God would bless Cyrus with the victories over Israel's enemies and the consequent calamities that would come upon the nations that he would subdue. It is not necessary to apply this passage of Scripture to the entire world as a whole nor would it be entirely wrong to limit the passage to the truth that all things accomplished by Cyrus were accomplished by the LORD God of Israel and not by the idols of Persia.

The central focus of the message is that the God of Israel was to be praised for all Cyrus's successes and blessings of peace and for all his victories over Israel's enemies.

This is exactly what Cyrus did as the following verses show: -

- Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.” (2 Chron. 36:23).
- Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” (Ezra 1:2)

These verses highlight the omnipotence of God in His power to use secular kings and nations according to His plans, purposes and judgments. From the beginning of time Good and evil, prosperity and adversity have always abounded in the world through all generations and therefore all that is needed to correctly understand these verses is a general understanding that all things are under Gods sovereign direction.

Shower, O heavens, from above: (v8) (drop down, ye heavens, from above in KJV) these are prophetic words of comfort. The LORD is saying, though you may look to the heavens and earth for comfort and see nothing but signs of God's wrath the LORD will abundantly bring forth the promise of your deliverance and righteousness as the heavens pour down rain and dew brings life to the earth.

Let the clouds rain down righteousness: (v8) (let the skies pour down righteousness in KJV) these expressions carry the idea that righteousness and the gracious acts of God for His people will be so abundant that it will be as if God rained them down as the clouds of the sky pour down showers that brings life to the earth. It is certainly true that God did bless Israel spiritually upon their return to their homeland and with a time of peace and prosperity.

However the prophecy should not be limited to the time of Israel's deliverance only, but given the freedom to transcend time and history. This is because contained within the prophetic language is a beautiful echo of the day of Pentecost when the LORD poured down from the heavens the Holy Spirit and the Gospel went out across the earth bringing joy, peace and life to all who received it as the showers of rain brings life to barren and dry fields of the earth.

Let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit together: (v8) the expression, “the earth opening” carries the idea of the hearts of men and women opening to receive God's favour and salvation as the dry crust of the earth receive the rain and brings life to the seed that lay dormant in its soil. It could be paraphrased, “Let the hardened hearts of the people be softened, opened and prepared for repentance and the receiving of the truth by the Holy Spirit as the hardened crust of the earth is made ready by the showers of rain for the planting of the seed.”

Salvation can be likened to a natural seed that when planted it is hidden in the soil of the ground, but with sunshine and showers of rain it begins to gradually grow and rise above the earth for all to see and progressively opens it buds to produce a beautiful flower that delights the eyes of all who look upon it or produces tasty fruit that will bring life and health to all who eat of it. Likewise when salvation and righteousness work together they will increasingly bear the fruit of peace, prosperity and joy in the world until they are fully grown and the whole earth is covered in the glory of God.

NOTICE: salvation and righteousness are pictured as working together to bring deliverance in contrast to being delivered from troubles by unjust means, God deliverance comes by righteousness and salvation working together. There can be no salvation without its sister righteousness. In this chapter it applies to God working with His anointed shepherd Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to bring about His justice in rescuing His oppressed people from a cruel tyrant (the king of Babylon) and establish Israel in their true faith.

I the LORD have created it: (v8) in the context of these verses this statement of the LORD can refer to: -

- God forming the light and creating the darkness (both natural and spiritual light).
- God creating the calamity that Babylon brought upon Israel.
- God equipping Cyrus for war to conquer the nations even though Cyrus did not know the LORD.
- God delivering Israel from their seventy year Babylonian captivity and the following salvation prosperity and gracious acts of God toward them that followed.
- God sending the message of salvation and the Gospel through the prophets and apostles to all lands, nations and languages bringing joy peace and eternal life to all who receive it.

This passage (v5-8) is strongly figurative and can be understood to refer to the following two periods of time in the history of Israel and of God: -

1. During Israel's seventy years in captivity they were far away from their homeland; the temple was destroyed; the sacrifices had ceased to be offered on the altar; the praises of God had ceased to be celebrated in His temple courts and all the sacred vessels of the temple had been pillaged and taken to Babylon. However upon Israel's deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple of God Israel's true faith would be established throughout their land.

It is as though the mind of Isaiah is carried forward to future times and he sees the joyful and godly results of their return to their own land, and the peace and prosperity which followed that it was as if God had rained an abundance of blessings down from heaven bring salvation to his people.

2. The prophetic language of this prophecy allows it to supersede Cyrus to Christ its beauty and elevation better fits the coming reign of the Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world who in a far more complete sense brought righteousness and salvation by grace to mankind. In this scenario it is as though the mind of Isaiah sees past the present age of Cyrus and far into the future to the Kingdom of God under the rule of the Messiah, whose coming would bring deliverance from the condemnation of the law and eternal life to all who came to him.

Christ salvation under his own preaching and that of the apostles spread throughout most of the known world as if the very heavens themselves poured down righteousness on all nations' and countries of the earth that had lain barren of spiritual life and the salvation of God. The picture is of godly faith and peace flourishing as the Gospel covers the earth in the same way that the rain and the dew descending from heaven waters the hard crust of the earth to produce lush greenery, fruitfulness beauty and life.

- Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. ¹²Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. (Psalm 85:11-12).

The LORD has created both righteousness and salvation. Righteousness springs up together with salvation there can be no salvation without righteousness; together the LORD has created them.

The LORD has stirred up Cyrus in Righteousness, He shall Build My City.

Isaiah 45:9 ----- 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'? (Thy work, He hath no hands in KJV).

Amongst commentators there is a variety of thoughts as to who Isaiah had in mind when he spoke the words, "Woe to him." This is because it is difficult to say with absolute certainty who it might have been. Following are the four most common thoughts: -

- 1 The idolatrous Babylonians who planned to keep the Israelites in bondage and stood against Cyrus' who God was using as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to set His people free. Should an individual or nation stand against a man or nation that God is using to bring about His plans and purposes it is the same as that individual or nation standing against God Himself.
- 2 The Israelites who had turned to idols and set their hearts diamond hard against the LORD'S prophets and spoke against the messages that they spoke which is the same as speaking against the LORD Himself.
- 3 The Israelites who criticized and murmured against Gods wisdom and justice in punishing them so grievously and permitting them to be taken from their land and into captivity and being oppressed by their enemies for such a long time.
- 4 The Israelites who complained, because they believed that God should have chosen a mighty man of their own faith and their own nation to deliver them rather than a king that was not born of their nation and was a stranger to their faith and a worshipper of other gods.

It should be kept in mind that the principal taught in these verses can apply to all who are made of the dust of the earth and oppose and contend against their Maker and resist the influences of His Spirit and oppose His sovereignty. This contending against God by earthly vessels of clay was clearly manifested by the fierce rage of the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) and the Romans who rose up against the preaching of the Gospel to oppose the Lord and his people.

This intense rage will again be seen manifested again against the Lord and his people when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather the faithful to himself and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth.

The potter and the clay: (v9) in this verse the clay pot is personified as condemning the potter. Isaiah asks the Israelites the question, "Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'? (He hath no hands in KJV). The English Standard Bibles translation, "Your work has no handles," implies that the potter doesn't know what he is doing and is void of the wisdom needed to make the jar correctly. The King James Bible says, "He hath no hands," implying that the potter has no power and no skill.

Though both translations are in harmony and imply the same thing the King James translation, "He has no hands," is a better fit since it is by the hands that pottery is moulded, which means having no hands carries the idea of having no power and no skill. It signifies that the Israelites were accusing God the Master Potter of having no power and no skill in dealing with them and no wisdom to do a good work.

Isaiah anticipating that the Israelites might complain against God for treating them so harshly and criticise Him for being unfair and unjust (according to their world view) likens them to a potter and clay, but this image is not limited to Israel only, but embraces all who are made from the dust of the earth.

We are all earthen vessels made of feeble flesh created from the dust of the earth that after having God's breathe breathed into us and rising from the dust as a beautifully created being, have sometime afterward, at the fall developed a flaw that destroyed the perfection of the original creation. For such a creature to contend with its Maker is as senseless as it is for clay to find fault with the potter.

- The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Gen. 2:7).
- The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. ⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶"O house of Israel, can I

not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ⁹And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. (Jer. 18:1-10).

The central teaching of the potter and the clay is that God is the absolute sovereign authority above all things. It could be said that His sovereignty is being kept in the background of mankind's history. The implication of the story of the potter and the clay is that people are opposed to the ways in which God governs the world however the truth is that calamity will always follow mankind's resistance against His law and His will.

God has all power, and all who contend against Him must be defeated and subdued. God is right, and the sinner who opposes Him is wrong and will suffer accordingly for their resistance.

Woe to Him who says to a Father or a Woman, "What are you Beggetting?"

Isaiah 45:10-11 ----- ¹⁰Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?' ¹¹Thus 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?"

It is supposed here that the miracle of birth is accepted regardless of whether it is a male or female without questioning the father or mother since the final outcome lies beyond the control of either of them. The implication is that what God orders for nations and individuals should be accepted in the same way.

It would be utter foolishness for a son or daughter to argue and quarrel against their parents, because they were not born of the other sex, or into wealth and riches or as beautiful and handsome as others might be. Likewise it is foolhardiness to quarrel and contend with the Holy One who made and created us.

For a son to complain against his father or mother in regard to his birth or of his rank and condition of life is wicked and foolish. The idea is that if a child is by their birth placed in circumstances less advantageous than others, they have no right to complain against their parents for it. Likewise to complain against God who has brought us into existence by His own power is to exalt ourselves above our Maker which is not only an act of arrogance and pride, but also utterly disgraceful.

Isaiah in these passages is: -

- Rebuking the spirit of complaining against the workings of God which prevailed among the Israelites and which is found everywhere amongst people in general.
- Showing that God as a sovereign has the right to act as He sees best and judge according to His justice.
- That those made of clay are little qualified and extremely unwise to judge the workings and ways of God on earth.

Important note: these words of Isaiah should never be used to teach that God in every way moulds the character and destiny of people as the potter does the clay. In interpreting the passage it should always be kept in mind that God is Holy just and good and wise as well as sovereign while mankind is a creature subject to sin. God does nothing wrong, nor does He compel anyone to sin and then condemn them for it.

He does not make or mould those made of clay to be a transgressor by His power and then doom them to destruction for it. God acts according to His eternal laws of justice and man has no right to call in question the righteousness of His sovereign works.

Our mortal and finite mind has no hope of understanding God's ways on earth nor should we ever expect to comprehend the eternal mind and wisdom of the immortal invisible Almighty Holy God of all creation and source of all life.

The following verses show that man cannot find out God's works upon earth: -

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes. 3:11).
- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Eccles. 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. ¹²For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them. (Eccles. 9:11-12)

This means that no one no matter how intelligent or how much they study can find out the works of God upon the earth. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow.

I have Stirred Him up in Righteousness He shall Set My Exiles Free.

Isaiah 45:12-13 ----- ¹²I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. ¹³I 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.

This and what follows, is said to show that the LORD was able to bring to pass things to come, concerning His people and express the greatness and majesty of God. In the previous verses Isaiah rebuked the Israelites and by extension all mankind who calls God to account for His dealings with them.

In response God asserts that it was Him who had made the earth, created man on it and stretched out the heavens, (i.e., the moon, the sun, the stars and the celestial planets most likely to humble those who hold God to account and show how unworthy and lacking they are to judge such an awesome God.

- It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in. (Isaiah 40:22).
- Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. (Psalm 33:8-9)
- Let them (God's angels, all the hosts of heaven and the sun, moon and stars) praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created. (Psalm 148:5).
- Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. (Isaiah 40:26).

All creation is under the LORD'S direction and control. What more can be needed by His people than the friendship and protection of Him who is omnipotent and made the heavens and the earth and all living creatures that dwell upon it. The LORD is saying that He has made the earth and created man on it proving to all who call God to account for his dealings with them that He is the God that created them and given them life. In the same way that no child has the right to hold their mother accountable for giving birth to them, mankind has no right for condemning God who gave them life.

However the LORD then goes on to tell those in captivity that He has stirred a man up in righteousness (meaning one who will favour God and His people), and will give him success in everything he does and he will build Jerusalem and set those in captivity free and they will not have to pay him any taxes for their deliverance or even give him a reward.

This man of righteousness refers to Cyrus the king of Persia who God used to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. The following verses of the prophet Isaiah show that God not only called Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and called him by name, but also show that God said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. They picture God holding Cyrus by the right hand and opening all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdues all nations.

- 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. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³I 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 (Cyrus) by your name*. ⁴For 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. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me*, ⁶that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).
- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* 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.' (Isaiah 45:14).

God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free. Cyrus after conquering the mighty Empire of Babylon not only gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God, but gathered all the sacred items of the temple that Babylon had pillaged and returned them to the Jews at Jerusalem, this is what is meant by the statement, "he shall build my city." (v13).

But, Isaiah's message transcends the era of Isaiah and Cyrus and echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in who God at this present time is also building God's temple made up of Jews and Gentiles (also called a new nation or new creation in Christ). For further information concerning the spiritual temple God is building in Christ at this present time, see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel" (at end of this Chapter).

I will make all his ways level: (v13) this promise carries the idea that God will give Cyrus (and prophetically Christ) great success in all that he does which He did.

Cyrus reign lasted between 29 and 31 years, he is commonly known as the great King of Persia and was notable for embracing various civilizations and becoming the largest empire the world had ever seen. He built his empire by firstly conquering the Median Empire, then the Lydian Empire and eventually the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He led an expedition into central Asia (either before or after Babylon), which resulted in major campaigns that were described as having brought "into subjection every nation without exception." (He never entered into Egypt himself as he was killed in battle).

He respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered and at the end of his rule, the Achaemenid Empire (also called the First Persian Empire) stretched from Asia Minor in the west to the north-western areas of India in the east.

It is said that in universal history, the role of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus lies in its very successful model for centralized administration and establishing a government working to the advantage and profit of its subjects.

Conclusion: these verses speak of Cyrus, but they also echo the Lord Jesus Christ and apply to the entire human race. God is saying, "Who is man that he should presume to question God or hold the LORD accountable, to his mortal and limited mind, who does man think he is to command God what He should do, especially since it is God who created man?"

Egypt Cush, and the Sabeans will say, "Surely God of Israel is in You."

Isaiah 45:14-15 ----- ¹⁴Thus 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, god besides him.'" ¹⁵Truly, you are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior.

Egypt: appears in the Bible as a type of a temporary, earthbound system called the world, but it has the scriptural prediction of a wonderful future. Isaiah says that a day will come when Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage." (Isaiah 19:21-25).

Cush and Seba: the inhabitants of Seba were called Sabeans. It was the name of a people descended from Cush (Gen 10:7) the oldest son of Ham, one of the sons of Noah, and the name of the country which they occupied in southern Arabia (mostly Saudi Arabia), Nimrod is said to be a son or descendant of Cush. Seba was conquered by Cambyses, the successor of Cyrus, and by him the name Seba was changed to Meroe, after his sister. Meroe was a province of Ethiopia surrounded by the two branches of the Nile River and was distinguished for its wealth and commerce.

Here is the wonder of Bible prophecy the LORD through Isaiah not only prophecies that Cyrus will have victory over Egypt, Cush and the Sabeans (all great nations with mighty armies) before the events even happen and that they will submit to his rule and follow him and even bow down to him saying: "Surely God is in you and there is no other God besides Him."

These nations were makers of idols some so large that they towered above those who worshipped them. They strongly believed in many gods, yet when they see the great success that Cyrus has, they are brought to their knees and confess that the God of Israel is with him and there is no other, God besides Him.

During these ancient times all nations believed in some form of god, (there was no such thing as evolution), and when going to war prayed that their god would give them the victory which meant the greater the victory the greater the god. It did not necessarily mean that a nation that acknowledged that Israel's God was the God above all gods actually forsook their gods and worshipped Israel's God. Most simply viewed Israel's God as being above their gods and added Him to the many gods that they worshipped.

Truly, you are a God who hides yourself: (v15) this statement can apply to the following four things: -

- 1 God hiding Himself during the long and oppressive years of Israel's seventy year captivity. Israel's beloved city Jerusalem was in ruin, the temple was pillaged of all its holy vessels and they were under the dominion of a pagan nation, there is no-doubt it would have seemed to them that the LORD their God had forsaken them, yet in all their darkness He was working to bring about their salvation and deliverance in a most remarkable and unexpected fashion.
- 2 To all the secular nations that Cyrus the LORD'S anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) conquered and who declared to the world that Israel's God was the true God and that there was no other God besides Israel's God. Prior to

Israel's deliverance it is certain these nations would have considered Israel's God had forsaken His people especially when they looked upon Jerusalem and the temple in ruin and their land laying waste and the people being held captive to the Empire of Babylon, but after seeing Cyrus having such great victories and praising Israel's God for them, their natural response would be to feel that God had been hiding Himself during Israel's long and dark days.

- 3 To the Gentile nations, for hundreds of years God hid Himself from the Gentile nations. They had no knowledge of the true God and lived without Him in the world. Even the Jews considered themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles as the unholy race without God. During these times of the Gentiles ignorance God suffered them to walk in their own ways, but now makes Himself known by His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel sent amongst them.
- 4 To mankind in general, the conception of God being invisible, immortal, eternal, all knowing and omnipotent is given to us by revelation and though we may believe it, our mortal and limited mind cannot comprehend it in a manner that is fully known. The words are known, but their full meaning is not, and no revelation can make them known to our finite intelligences. He is incomprehensible in His essence and cannot be found out to perfection and His are ways and works on earth are past finding out.
 - Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, (Isaiah 44:24).
 - In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:8).
 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9).

However though God's ways are mysterious and the reasons of his dealings are unknown and His ways often seem to be dark until the distant event discloses His plans and purposes whatever obscurity there may be, there is none that hides His invitation to Himself and to His Kingdom. God is always found by those who seek Him, but the desire to know Him must precede the experience of Him. He is not a hidden God, lurking in obscurity and only to be found by lengthy searching, but those who do seek Him must seek from a desire to know Him and not for the blessing they believe He may favour them with.

This verse teaches us that we should not criticize whinge or complain under the mysterious workings of God. They may be dark now, but in due time they will be revealed and those who have been faithful will see God's purpose and the end results. Like a woman who suffers great pain is overwhelmed with joy when her child is born and placed in her arms those who endure to the end will be overwhelmed with the same abundant joy when they see the glorious end result of their faith.

O God of Israel, the Saviour: (v15) there is no other nation on earth that has history with their God as Israel does. Their history with the LORD their God goes back to the beginning of time no other nation or religion can claim such miracles and wonders or history no matter what god they may believe in. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation. God said: -

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation: -

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Rom. 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Rom. 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Rom. 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)
- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

The thermometer of God's prophecy: it is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being.

Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God.

Israel's love for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob cannot be doubted. When their Messiah does return in glory and the LORD pours upon them a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy when they look on him whom they had pierced, not only will the entire nation weep over the horrific crime they committed against him (Zech. 12:9-14), but the entire world and its oppressive systems of global finance and trade will be changed and its corrupt governments will be replaced for the better. For further information concerning the new nation God is building in Christ, see the title:

- The Commonwealth of Israel, at the end of this chapter.

All makers of idols will be put to Shame and go in Confusion Together.

Isaiah 45:16 ----- ¹⁶All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in confusion together.

All of them: refers to the craftsmen who make idols and images of worship and to those who worship them, although the makers of them and those who teach others to worship them are the most, guilty since they are the cause of the sins of others. They will be confounded, because all their hopes and trust in them for salvation will fail and because of this they will be thrown into confusion, because they were foolish and senseless enough to trust in trust in blocks of wood and stone to save them.

- All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods! (Psalm 97:7).
- They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, "You are our gods." (Isaiah 42:17).

Those who surrender their minds and hearts to idols and images of worship that cannot see hear, speak or move will find that they are unable to render them, help; comfort or aid in anyway and therefore will be disappointed and die in shame and disgrace, because of their senseless foolishness.

God will Save Israel with Everlasting Salvation and Not put them to Shame.

Isaiah 45:17 ----- ¹⁷But Israel is saved by the LORD with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.

The statement, "Israel will be saved," applies firstly to those in captivity to Babylon being saved and delivered from their oppression; Concerning this deliverance Ezra prayed: -

- O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. ⁷From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today. ⁸But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery. ⁹For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem. (Ezra 9:1-15)

However the prophetic language of the verse is by no means limited to the Israelites deliverance from the Babylonian captivity. The words "everlasting salvation and all eternity," clearly show that the true focus is upon the universal truth that that the true Israel that the apostle Paul spoke of in the following verse: -

- For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom. 2:28-29).

Will be saved from their sin and brought into God's everlasting Kingdom. This will be done by the power of the LORD, and Him alone, no human power could have saved Israel from their captivity in Babylon unless God was on their side and fighting for them as He was with His anointed shepherd Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1), likewise no human power can save anyone to eternal life.

It is not the fleshly seed of Israel or the natural descendants of Jacob that will be saved, but the faithful prophets, priests, kings and people who followed God with integrity and heartfelt devotion and in the latter days those who Zechariah speaks of in the following verses: -

- On that day (the day the Lord protects the inhabitants of Jerusalem) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great the priests will mourn by themselves and each family will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

Not be ashamed or confounded: This means that the faithful will find that it is better to befriend God, than the world and that in times of trouble He is a very present help and their refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1). It means that no man or woman that has put their trust in God will ever have cause to regret that they did.

In prosperity or lack of it; in sickness or health; at home or in a foreign land; in safety or in danger; in blessing or persecution and in life or in death: there will be no situation in which those who have become God's true friends ever regret it, nor are they ever ashamed that they gave their hearts to God.

There has never been any faithful Christian who regretted that they became a friend of their Redeemer. Their faith may have exposed them to persecution; they may have been stripped of their property; they may have been thrown into dungeons, laid on the rack, or led to the stake; but they have not regretted that they became the friends of their Saviour, nor will they ever regret it.

No believer dying on their death bed regrets that they are a friend of God. No one at the judgment will be ashamed to be a Christian and in the time between becoming God's friend and their deliverance from this corrupt world there will, never come a time when they will be ashamed that they gave their heart entirely to their Redeemer and Saviour who ascended from the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

In utter contrast to this those who entirely surrendered their hearts to idols that cannot even give temporary help will be put to shame and will regret their foolish and senseless choice when they stand before God at judgment.

The faithful who are saved by Christ and clothed with white robes and the wedding garment shall not be ashamed of their choice or of their faith and hope in him, or of their sufferings for him neither in this world, or when they are received into his and his heavenly Father's eternal Kingdom in glory

Draw Together Survivors of the Nations, those who carry Idols Cannot Save.

Isaiah 45:18-21 ----- ¹⁸For 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. ¹⁹I 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 (I the LORD speak righteousness in KJV). 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. ²¹Declare 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.

The LORD God of Israel in response to those who foolishly believe in idols that can neither see, hear, speak or move proclaims that He is the God who created the heavens and the earth and that there is no other God. The LORD in verse nineteen says, "I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness," and in verse fifteen it is written, "Truly, you are a God who hides yourself."

Sceptics may feel these two statements contradict each other, but should they do so they are easily proved to be wrong. The first statement refers to God declaring His law and His word openly for all to see and hear, while the second statement refers to God's works on the earth and in the world. The focus is upon two different aspects of God, the first being Him proclaiming His word openly and the second is to His dealings amongst the nations, governments and rulers of the world, these are what is hidden to our understanding.

I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness: (v19) speaking in secret and from dark places refers to the common practice of pagan priests, mystics, mediums and the necromancers speaking their oracles from dark caves or deep recess of mountains or darkened shrines most likely to incur some sense of awe in the minds of those who sought their oracles and to seduce them into receiving and believing the message of the god that their listeners believed was influencing them.

In contrast to this God spoke the Ten Commandments openly on Mount Sinai in a most dramatic manner that it is even spoken of amongst much of the world today. Unlike the pagan priests, mystics, mediums and the necromancers speaking their oracles from dark places God all throughout history has never spoken His word, His law and His predictions in darkness or in secret, but always in the broad daylight and amongst crowds of people.

Likewise Christ not only spoke openly on Mount Zion and before all the people and said nothing in secret, but also commanded his disciples to openly proclaim the Gospel and what they heard with their ears to the world.

- What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. (Matt. 10:27).

Darkness in this context means, while he is alone with his twelve apostles and not that he is trying to keep anything secret or teaching them secret things in fact quite the opposite since he commanded them to openly proclaim all that he has taught them both to Israel and to all Gentile nations.

I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, "Seek me in vain," (v19) can refer to the following two things: -

- 1 It was not a vain or useless thing for them to call upon God in times of calamity and trial since He would give them a long and peaceful life in their land and act as their friend protector and deliverer as He did at the end of their seventy year captivity and many times prior to this (providing of course they remained faithful).
 - It is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 32:47).
- 2 God did not call them for no reason, but to prosper their farms, vineyards, livestock and offspring from generation to generation and bless all that they put their hand to and make them the head of all nations and not the tail so that they would be His witnesses to the world and receive eternal life in the next.
 - I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies. (Gen. 22:17).
 - I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands and in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 26:4).
 - I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. (Gen. 32:12).
 - Nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory. ¹⁶For the LORD builds up Zion; he appears in his glory; ¹⁷he regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer. (Psalm 102:15-17).

I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right: (v19) (I the LORD speak righteousness in KJV) this is said in rebuttal to those who listen to and heed the oracles of the pagan priests, mystics, mediums and the necromancers who speak lies and deception that lead their followers away from the truth and toward ruin destruction and the darkness of the grave never to see the light again.

In contrast to this those seeking God with a right heart attitude are always rewarded with a rich blessing of God's Spirit His love and forgiveness and His comfort and grace in times of trouble and at the end of their days rewarded with eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

Assemble yourselves you survivors of the nations: (v20) here the call is for those Israelites that had been delivered from captivity and scattered amongst the nations to assemble together and forsake their idols and devote themselves once again to the LORD their God. However the call is not limited to the Israelites only, but goes out to all nations.

They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols: (v20) it makes absolutely no sense to a sane mind for a person to not only surrender their heart and mind to a block of wood and believe that it is a god, but also bow down in an attitude of devotion and pray before it. God in these verses challenge those who believe in such idols to prove that their blocks of wood are gods by producing

some evidence of prophecies that they have spoken of events that have come to pass. They unlike the LORD God of Israel who could produce multitudes of fulfilled prophecies could, of course produce nothing, proving that there is no other God besides the LORD God of Israel, He is the only Holy eternal God and Saviour of the world; there is none besides Him.

Every Knee will Bow, every Tongue shall Confess, the LORD is God.

Isaiah 45:22-25 --- ²²"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³By 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' (every tongue shall swear in KJV). 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. ²⁵In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory."

Throughout this chapter the LORD has constantly proclaimed to all idol worshippers and all nations of the earth that He is God, and there is no other and calls all dwellers on the earth to turn to Him and be saved, it would not be wrong to say that God earnestly pleads for all men and women of all nations to turn to Him and be saved.

Ponder for a moment: how grieved God must be to see His creation that He so wonderfully made from the dust of the earth turn away from Him and become so corrupt that they not only destroy each other, but also destroy the planet He gave us to live on. Being a God of justice He is forced to bring punishment upon those who act wickedly and against His law and by doing so bring harm to others. It could be likened to an earthly father who raised his son in love only to see him in later years become such a criminal that the justice system is forced to imprison him to uphold the law and protect others from being influenced by his wrong doing.

The following verses show that God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked and is grieved over their death.

- I will bring to an end in Moab, declares the LORD, him who offers sacrifice in the high place and makes offerings to his god. ³⁶Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute, and my heart moans like a flute for the men of Kir-hareseth. (Jer. 48:35-36).
- Have I (the LORD) any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezek. 18:23).
- I (the LORD) have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live. (Ezek. 18:32).
- Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. 33:11).

God earnestly desires that all would repent of their wicked ways and be saved to eternal life and deeply grieves over the death of the wicked.

From my mouth has gone out in righteousness: (v23) in this context means that everything that God has spoken is right, good and will lead those who heed His words to eternal life, in contrast to this all who listen to the deceptions and falsehoods that the pagan priests, mystics, mediums and the necromancers speak will be lead to eternal destruction.

To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance: (v23) (every tongue shall swear in KJV). The word allegiance/swear comes from the Hebrew word (*shaba*), it is a cardinal number; seven (as the sacred full one) an indefinite number and means to be complete, to swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times), to adjure and charge with an oath.

The expression, "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance," (v23) (every tongue shall swear in KJV) is cited by the apostle Paul in his letters: -

- As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (Rom. 14:11)

This does not mean that everyone will repent and turn from their wicked ways and receive God as their Saviour. We know this because even during Christ glorious millennial reign multitudes at the latter end of it rise up in rebellion. Added to this many at the great white throne judgment are judged to condemnation and cast into the lake of fire, a symbol of eternal death and destruction (i.e., utter extinction) which clearly shows that not all accept God's plan of salvation or the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. However it does carry the following two ideas: -

- 1 Every tongue shall swear that only in the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is there righteousness and strength, meaning only God has power over creation and nations and is Holy and without sin there is no other.
- 2 Every tongue shall swear that the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the only true God and will either willing or by force submit to His strength, power and authority.

In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory (v25) the focus here is most likely the descendants of the Israelites that were delivered from the seventy year captivity. It is certainly true they were justified and saved when they returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple and established their true faith. But it is not limited to them only, but embraces all the faithful of Jacob of all generations and especially those spoken of in the following prophetic verse of the prophet Zechariah: -

- On that day (the day the Lord protects the inhabitants of Jerusalem) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great the priests will mourn by themselves and each family will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

The Commonwealth of Israel.

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS of PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have

access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building, (taken from the beautiful writings of a faithful, but unknown brother in Christ).

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.