

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 45:1-25

Topic

God chose a pagan king to deliver Israel from captivity and return them to Jerusalem.

Title

"Israel Won't Be A Thing If It Ain't Got This King"

Donald Trump, aka Cyrus?

Let me explain. President Trump moved the US Embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and was hailed as a modern-day King Cyrus.

Trump wasn't the first to become associated with the ancient Persian ruler on account of aiding Israel:

- The Balfour Declaration of 1917 expressed the British government's support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. It led to comparisons between Lord Balfour and Cyrus.
- President Harry Truman's decision to recognize the state of Israel 15 minutes after its declaration of independence in 1948 is often likened to Cyrus' support for the Jewish people.

@KingCyrusTheRealOne united the empires of Media and Persia. He conquered Babylon just as Israel's 70yr captivity was ending. Under his rule the Jews were encouraged to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple.

The shock with Cyrus is that he was named by Isaiah over 150 years before he was king.

The "anointing" of Cyrus 2700 years ago by God was a crucial moment in redemptive history. It reestablished Israel in their land so that the Messiah would be born in Israel with their Temple intact according to prophecy.

Isaiah has opened our eyes to God's dealings with nations. It has given us opportunity to consider our own nation. We will continue that today.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Your Nation Needs Ears To Hear,** and **#2 Your Nation Needs Knees That Bow.**

#1 - Your Nation Needs Ears To Hear (v1-13)

We are introduced to Cyrus...Or are we?

Isa 45:1 "Thus says the LORD 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:

The LORD talks "to" Cyrus. He is not so much introducing him to Israel as He is introducing Himself to Cyrus.

It may seem a small point, but I think it is always good to remind ourselves that the subject of the Bible is Jesus Christ. Make it a habit to look for Him while not bending the Scriptures to say something that they don't.

Cyrus may have been "anointed" with oil as was the manner with kings. God's anointing means Cyrus was chosen to serve the LORD.

If you are a Christian then you are chosen to serve Jesus:

- We all "Go," making disciples of all men.
- In the fellowship of believers there is a listing of "one another's we all can perform. There are at least 30 of them, and that is not an exhaustive list. A few of the encouragements are, "love one another," "honor one another," "build up one another," "bear one another's burdens," and "forgive one another."

- Beyond that the NT reveals certain supernatural “Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” These are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit so that you can serve Jesus in a way that ministers to others with a heavenly accompaniment.

The LORD “held” Cyrus’ “right hand.” In ceremonies the ruler of Babylon took the hand of their god Bel. Here the LORD seized Cyrus by the hand. Whose hand would you rather be holding, especially in turbulent times.

Isaiah had a fascination with the comfort of the LORD holding our hand:

- Isaiah 41:10 reads, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”
- Isaiah 43:13 reads, “For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.”
- Isaiah 49:16 reads, “Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands...”

The remainder of verse one is a prediction of Cyrus’ victory over Babylon, continued in verse two.

Isa 45:2 ‘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.

Nothing would stop his advance and his victories would be surprisingly easy. The Greek historian Herodotus reported there were one hundred brass gates in the walls surrounding Babylon. No matter. Cyrus would gain access by diverting the Euphrates and going under the wall.

Isa 45:3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call *you* by your name, *Am* the God of Israel.

As if calling him by name over a century before he came to power was not sufficient, LORD would condescend to prove Himself to Cyrus by leading him to discover Indiana Jones like treasures.

The LORD says, “I Am the God of Israel”; He was introducing Himself.

I heard a podcast host introduce a pastor prior to interviewing him. It was 45 seconds of accolades which at least once used the term "great" to describe him. Think of ways to, instead, introduce God.

Isa 45:4 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.

"Jacob" was the father of the twelve tribes of the nation of "Israel." They were and continue to be God's "elect" servant.

God was setting things up for the "sake" of His people. His providence is able to see that His will on earth be done so that His kingdom come.

Isa 45:5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other; *There is* no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

Isa 45:6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That *there is* none besides Me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;

The word for "God" in verse five is *Elohim*. We have noted in other studies that this is *not* a name for God. It is a classification of supernatural beings. There are numerous supernatural beings who inhabit what is called the unseen realm. God is an *Elohim*, angels are *Elohim*, etc. No *Elohim* is our Almighty God.

Isa 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these *things*.'

This is one of those verses that trouble us deeply. We are immediately drawn to, "I create calamity." Calvinists the world over feel a sudden thrill as they describe 'Calamity Jesus.'

The Persian's were *dualists*. A dualist is someone who believes that Good and Evil are *independent* and more or less *equal* warring forces in the world. "Light" is good; "Darkness" is bad. "Peace" is good; "Calamity" is bad.

In modern times dualism is called George Lucasism. It's the Force in *Star Wars*. Maybe good; maybe bad.

Dualism is nonsense. God and the Devil are in no way equals. God's plan is never in jeopardy. He is over all things, in charge of everything, and interjects Himself to protect the work of redeeming you and His creation along with you.

"That's all well and good, Pastor Gene, but it still says He *creates* calamity." The LORD has been talking about nations, *not* individuals. He determines whether a nation will enjoy peace or calamity:

- Medo-Persia would know peace.
- Babylon would suffer calamity.

Moreover we will see in a moment that peace or calamity depended on their free-will choices.

Isa 45:8 "Rain down, you heavens, from above, And let the skies pour down righteousness; Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, And let righteousness spring up together. I, the LORD, have created it.

"Rain" from the "heavens" and the "earth" opening up in "springs" reminds you of what? Yes, the global flood. Isaiah looks to the far future when God will establish His Kingdom on earth. "Righteousness" and "salvation" will overflow the earth as the waters of the flood did.

Isa 45:9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker! *Let* the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?

Isa 45:10 Woe to him who says to *his* father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?' "

It is absurd to think a child in the womb could question their parent's choices in bringing them into the world. Isaiah is conveying the message that it is not for us to question or challenge the ways of God. But he does so tenderly, reminding us we are His children.

The Potter working with the clay is another favorite illustration some folks use to try to prove that God's sovereignty and man's free-will are incompatible. The illustration comes from the prophet Jeremiah. When he used it he, too, was talking about nations, not individuals. And he clearly stated that God reacts to a nation's decision to either obey Him or disobey Him. If anything the illustration proves the opposite of what meticulous determinists think.

Isa 45:11 Thus says 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, you command Me.

Isa 45:12 I have made the earth, And created man on it. I - My hands - stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded.

The Jews accused the LORD of being a potter with "no hands." They did not like what the LORD was shaping - captivity.

Isa 45:13 I have raised him up in righteousness, And I will direct all his ways; He shall build My city And let My exiles go free, Not for price nor reward," Says the LORD of hosts.

In a bizarre unexpected move, God would use a pagan king to deliver His people and forward His redemption agenda.

No doubt someone took the scroll of Isaiah and read it to Cyrus. He had ears to hear. Would to God our leaders would "hear" the Bible and the Lord calling us to national "repentance!"

#2 - Your Nation Needs Knees That Bow (v14-25)

Revival, according to Ian Murray, is "an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, brought about by the intercession of Christ, resulting in (1)A new degree of life in the churches and (2)A widespread movement of grace among the unconverted."

I would submit that we put too little emphasis on the outpouring of grace on believers. We are "prone to wander." We leave our first love and do not even realize it. We ought to quit looking around for revival and look within:

- Within our individual bodies as the Temple of God.
- Within the church collectively as the Temple of God.

Isa 45:14 Thus says the LORD: "The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush And of the Sabeans, men of stature, Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; They shall walk behind you, They shall come over in chains; And they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, *saying*, 'Surely God *is* in you, And *there is* no other; *There is* no other God.' "

I say this with reverence: *Isaiah is all over the place!* He talks about the past, present, near future, and far future. In verse fourteen he described the far future:

- If nations “shall walk behind” Israel, then they are the world’s prominent nation.
- The observation that some Gentiles nations will be “in chains” is obviously forward-looking to a time Israel will have such authority over nations

Those things tell you Isaiah was describing the Kingdom on Earth, the Millennium.

Isa 45:15 Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!
In what sense is God hiding? Albert Barnes writes, “That is, ‘that hides Your counsels and plans.’ The idea is, that the ways of God seems to be dark until the distant event discloses His purpose; that a long series of mysterious events seem to succeed each other, trying to the faith of His people, and where the reason of His doings cannot be seen.”

Isa 45:16 They shall be ashamed And also disgraced, all of them; They shall go in confusion together, *Who are* makers of idols.

Isa 45:17 *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.

Isa 45:18 For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.

Isa 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in vain’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Woven throughout history is God’s plan to save lost sinners by sending a Savior through the nation of Israel. Typical of God, the plan seems foolhardy and always one episode away from total failure. Nevertheless Israel will “be saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation.”

Isa 45:20 “Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You *who have* escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god *that* cannot save.

Isa 45:21 Tell and bring forth *your case*; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? *Who* has told it from that time? *Have* not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; *There is* none besides Me.

God challenges those who have chosen idols over Him to produce one shred of evidence that their 'gods' have ever accurately revealed the future.

Isa 45:22 "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.

Isa 45:23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

Every knee shall bow, Every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.

Isa 45:24 He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him *men* shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.

Isa 45:25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel Shall be justified, and shall glory.' "

William MacDonald writes, "This will find its fulfillment in the Millennium. Then men will acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the only source of 'righteousness and strength.' 'All' His enemies will come to Him in contrition, and 'Israel shall be justified and shall glory' in Him, not in idols."

Where is the United States in Bible prophecy? We can look at two places.

(1)The first place we find the US in prophecy would be Jeremiah 18. We have alluded to it; it is the Potter & Clay passage. God tells us, "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it." (v8-10).

It would be great if our leaders were Christ-like, but even those that are Cyrus-like can honor God.

(2)The other place in Scripture we see the US is less hopeful. Zechariah announced, "And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against [Israel]" (12:3).

We will be one of "all the nations" against Israel. One commentator said, "There is a gathering storm of worldwide antisemitism and America's mind is slowly being poisoned by this malignant cancer."

We are not predicting, only reporting. And remember - we expect Jesus to come imminently to remove His church from earth in the pre-tribulation rapture.

Jesus has the whole world in His hands. More importantly, He is holding on to your hand. Tighten your grip in response.