

**Remember This, God Names a Deliverer for Israel
150 Years in Advance, By Name, and He's a Gentile
Isaiah 44:21 – 45:7**

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YAHWEH has told His people, Israel, that He is the first and the last, there is no one like Him among the no-gods because He is the only one who provides the nation true information about the future. Israel is His witness and because of that, they should not be afraid of anything.

YAHWEH then provides us His opinion of those who make and worship idols. Idols cannot redeem or deliver anyone, only YAHWEH does that.

Sin and violation of the covenant between God and Israel must be dealt with, but that does not change God's heart for His people or the future He has planned for them. "In spite of Israel's lack of response to God's judgment, God has not changed His plan and purpose for His people." (Horton 2000, 325)

God hates idolatry, that has been made crystal clear. He will not share His glory with anyone else. God is to be number one on a list of one.

Isaiah 44:21

"Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me." (NASB95)

With everything that is about to come down onto the nation, the need to remember will become paramount. The northern kingdom is already in exile and Judah is soon to follow. We already know that He intends to gather them back in the future. "Though I scattered them among the nations, yet in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return." (Zechariah 10:9, ESV)

We have already considered the prophecy of that regathering (Isaiah 43:4 – 7).

For Israel, the need to remember what it is the Lord has done for them is important. It is one of the major themes running through Deuteronomy. Moses brought up the need to remember what it is the Lord has done at least 15 times in that book.

As NT believers, are we better at this than Israel. We would like to think so but as we look at the messages Jesus gives to the churches in Revelation 2 & 3, we see a similar message to remember.

For example, the church in Ephesus left their first love in favor of being doctrinally correct.

Revelation 2:2–5

“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.” (ESV)

This is a problem with some churches today.

Entire groups of believers and ministries are so taken up with making sure that their doctrine is correct, and the perceived false teaching of others is exposed, that they have completely forgotten what the number one distinctive of the church should be...that we love one another (John 13:34 – 35).

Paul saw this coming and as part of his instructions to Titus said “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. They must not slander anyone, but be peaceable, gentle, showing complete courtesy to all people.” (Titus 3:1–2, NET) So Paul, are you also referring to interactions on social media as well as on Christian talk radio? Yes.

The church of the reformation, as an overreaction to the problems they saw within the Catholic Church, reacted so strongly that Jesus had nothing good to say about it. Yes, the selling of indulgences was evil. But they too were told to remember what they had been taught. Getting doctrine right is one thing, but the temptation appears to be...overdo it. Entire ministries have been established with the goal of doing nothing but finding fault with other believers who may disagree on minor points. These are not cults but other believers who agree that Jesus Christ is God and He is the only one who can save. They just happen to teach that all of the spiritual gifts are for today, or...

Luke 9:49–50

“John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he is not a disciple along with us.” But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”” (NET)

Totally forgotten is the persecution inflicted by this church on those who taught contrary to what they taught.

Revelation 3:1–3

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.’” (ESV)

A distinctive for both churches, which exist in far too many places these days, is a lack of love for those who do not believe like they do.

The Reformed Church persecuted the Anabaptists over the issue of infant baptism. “According to Mennonite writer Terry Miner, the early Mennonites were “thoroughly charismatic in the best sense of the word.” The story of the church under persecution included many instances of prophecy, dreams, visions, and even martyrdom. Anabaptists and Mennonites saw themselves as neither Protestant nor Catholic, and as such were persecuted from all sides. Their vision was not simply a reformation of the church, but a restoration of primitive Christianity.” (Synan 2001, 195)

But the church of the reformation executed thousands under a persecution that some historians have said was worse than that under Rome. Why? Because they insisted on baptizing someone when they were saved, even if they had been baptized as an infant.

Again, they need to remember where they came from and what the word actually taught.

The solution is to remember. Israel was told to remember who they belonged to and what their mission was. They were not forgotten by God; we are not either.

God’s people should always remember God’s plan. The certainty of His promises and the absolute guarantee of prophetic fulfillment. We should remember the truth that we have heard and know.

It is so easy to get caught up in the day to day that we forget the mission, just like Israel. “All of Israel’s remembering is to be in the context of her special relationship to God. He had not merely shaped her, but he had shaped her for the special purpose of service. The role of servanthood is mentioned twice in three phrases, and the second occurrence is emphatic. Thus in the light of all that has been said about the Lord’s superiority over the idols and in the light of this special relationship that Israel bears to him, she must not interpret the exilic experience to mean that God has forgotten her.” (Oswalt 1998, 187-188)

We are not being called to remember and then be theological sin sniffers, such as the two churches Jesus reprimanded. Our mission is not to root out poor theology and teaching in the church at the expense of others falling away and spending an eternity in hell.

Our mission is outlined for us “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV)

We have theological sin sniffers show up here at Calvary from time to time. They show up and enjoy the teaching, but that is usually not enough for them. They want to transform Calvary into what they believe would be the perfect church, as they see it.

What is that? Well for some, that would mean becoming reformed in theology, to cease teaching chapter by chapter and verse by verse, to throw out anything written by Paul or Luke. Never teach anything about prophecy since we would need to change our viewpoint to no millennium.

They would have us shift to believe that everything Revelation teaches happened before 70AD and the church has replaced Israel regarding all of the promises made to Israel. This is called preterism.

They would replace most of the staff, oh, and put-up crosses everywhere.

I have never heard one person who has advocated for any of those things tell us we need to concentrate more on the great commission and love each other more. I also have never heard them say we need to rely more on the Holy Spirit, usually they want to not even talk about Him.

The need to remember has not ended. We too are called to remember our special relationship that we have with Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 44:22

“I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.” (NASB95)

The Lord has already told Israel they are His servant, present tense. He formed them, past tense, to be His servant. “I created you to be My servant.” (Paul 2012, 243)

On top of that, present and future – “you will not be forgotten by Me.” Based on the previous fulfilled promises and prophecy...that is a serious guarantee.

Now we see Him pointing to the end of the age and telling Israel, past tense, their sins have been forgiven. Not just forgiven, but sin forgotten. Grace, God’s wonderful grace is fully in play here. We also see God’s attitude towards our sin, He has made provision for our and Israel’s forgiveness with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We find ourselves, when asking to be forgiven and exercising what it says in 1 John 1:9, having to remember that He has already forgiven us. We are simply agreeing with Him that the action we are repenting of is sin and then turning away from it. It is just like the clouds going away and yielding a clear blue sky.

The idea of blotting out a cloud seems to be an allusion to that dissolving of these vapours which is continually taking place in the atmosphere, when the heat of the summer sun draws up the moisture of the cloud, and renders it completely invisible. As completely does God dissipate the sins of the believing penitent. It is as impossible to bring them forth again to judgment as it would be to reconstruct the clouds, with all their varied shapes and hues and tints which we looked upon last summer, and which never outlived the day we gazed upon them. Blessed consideration for the souls of God’s believing and pardoned people. It is the teaching of Scripture, not that God will forgive the penitent at the day of judgment, nor even in the hour of death, but in the very moment that they turn to Him. The forgiveness which He bestows is full and free, and it is bestowed at once and for ever. (Bertram and Tucker 1892, 200)

God has redeemed His people; they need to return to Him as He has made the provision for them, and the path is now clear. Their sin has been swept away.

God initiates the restoration of their relationship by graciously calling them, giving them faith, and providing for the removal of guilt; so now his servants need to initiate a response of repentance and turning to God. (Smith 2009, 237)

And what is it that happens in our heart when we realize that our sin has been forgiven and forgotten?

Isaiah 44:23

“Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the LORD has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory.” (NASB95)

Praise is the result for Israel and praise is the result for us as we realize what it is that God has done for us in forgiving our sin. There is nothing more vital or important than to realize that what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross once and for all resolved the sin problem for us, if we accept His gift of forgiveness.

God is not a dead idol of wood that can do nothing; he is a living divine power who acts, creates, controls all of nature, and determines the history of humanity from the beginning of history until the final parts of his future plans are accomplished. Of course, among the greatest acts of God is his loving redemption of his people from sin. These divine deeds should cause people to praise God and glorify his name, for he alone is God. (Smith 2009, 238)

This is a song of praise that all of creation has been invited to join in on. God has rescued His people and all of creation, which has been waiting for this day (Romans 8:19) and is invited to join in on the joy. This is a command too. Three commands, shout, shout joyfully and break forth into a shout of joy.

Praise is not intended to be silent. Praise is not intended to be quiet either. It is intended to be loud, boisterous and joyful. The Lord has done it. That is why we sing and why we praise. The Lord has brought redemption...He saves forever. "Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf." (Hebrews 7:25, NLT)

Psalms 95:1–3 "Come! Let's sing for joy to the LORD! Let's shout out praises to our protector who delivers us! Let's enter his presence with thanksgiving! Let's shout out to him in celebration! For the LORD is a great God, a great king who is superior to all gods." (NET)

A question may be lingering tough in the minds of those who are leaving the courtroom. The verdict was announced, and God has spoken how He speaks before things happen and is the only one who provides detail about the future. Some of the fallen ones are more than likely trying to figure out how they can do this or make it look like they can do this. They will try and counterfeit this.

What God says next should stop them dead in their tracks and at the same time, make us realize it is all true. God is indeed the God of the universe.

Isaiah 44:24–28

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone, Causing the omens of boasters to fail, Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back And turning their knowledge into foolishness, Confirming the word of His servant And performing the purpose of His messengers. It is I who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited!' And of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built.' And I will raise up her ruins again. It is I who says to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!' And I will make your rivers dry. It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.' "" (NASB95)

God begins, what is one of the most mind-boggling prophecies in the Bible, by pointing back, for the benefit of Israel, just who He is. He is the redeemer of Israel. He is the one that formed Israel to be the witnesses they will become. He is the one that formed Israel. He is the creator of everything.

He is the one who stretched out the heavens, with His fingers no less.

Psalms 8:3

"When I look up at the heavens, which your fingers made, and see the moon and the stars, which you set in place," (NET)

Reading this, the Jew of 700 BC would recall some of the conversation that took place between Job and God on the same topic.

Job 38:31–33 "Can you tie the bands of the Pleiades, or release the cords of Orion? Can you lead out the constellations in their seasons, or guide the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens, or can you set up their rule over the earth?" (NET)

Job 38:3–7

"Now stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you. Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it. Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answers? What holds up the pillars that support the earth? Who laid the cornerstone of the world? In the dawn of that day the stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy." (GNB)

God alone is creator. He is sovereign. There is no pantheon of gods who did this that or the other thing. If He is the sole maker of the world, then He can also be Israel's redeemer.

Because He is God and knows the future, He also can make certain that the words coming from those who advertise themselves as being oracles, fortune tellers or prophets, but were never called by God, fail. If it is true that Israel's God is the only Creator, then it follows that he alone is completely free. The work of the astrologers, diviners, and readers of omens is based on the absolute continuity of the present with the past. What happened before, given similar historical circumstances or similar configurations of elements thought to have a particular continuity with destiny, will of necessity happen again.

But the Creator, the one God who is utterly discontinuous with his creation, is in no way bound to such continuities. He is able to do things that have never happened before (42:9; 43:19; 48:6, etc.), confounding all those whose skill is based merely on encyclopedic knowledge of past congruities. Guidance for the future can come only by direct revelation from the Lord (so also 8:16–20; 19:3). (Oswalt 1998, 194)

God is omniscient. As the Creator, He is outside of time and can enter it anytime He chooses.

It is perfectly coherent to maintain that God is, at least since the moment of creation, temporal and also that God's omniscience extends to future contingents. Indeed, it is precisely in virtue of His omniscience that God must possess foreknowledge of such events. For if there are future-tense truths, these must be known to God. But that implies both God's temporality and His knowledge of things to come. Together these features of God entail divine foreknowledge. Such foreknowledge is wholly compatible with contingency and, in particular, human freedom and is best understood in terms of a conceptualist model of divine cognition, according to which God simply possesses essentially knowledge of all truth, including truths about future contingents. (Craig 2001, Kindle Location 3318-3321)

Men, who think they know, really do not. They are fools and God exposes them for what they are.

1 Corinthians 1:22–29

“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” (ESV)

Isaiah 44:27

“It is I who says to the depth of the sea, ‘Be dried up!’ And I will make your rivers dry.” (NASB95)

There is the reference again to what God did for Israel not once but twice. He dried up a path across the Red Sea as they left Egypt and then later, as they crossed the Jordan River into the land of promise, He dried up the Jordan River so they could cross. The God who did that for His people has not forgotten them. He is the one who has redeemed them in the past and now He announces to them how He will redeem them in the future from Babylon and who it is that He will call on to do that. Here is a shock, it will not be a Jew.

Isaiah 44:28–45:7

“It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ And of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’” Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: “I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. I will give you the

treasures of darkness And hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.” (NASB95)

This should eliminate any doubt about who is Lord. One hundred and seventy years or so before he shows up on the international geopolitical scene, God tells us who He is by name.

For those of you who are using various commentaries for your study of Isaiah, this is one of those prophecies, along with some from Daniel, that made a bunch of dead German theologians go crazy in the 1800's. The questions many have today about the Bible and its relevance for today can be directly traced back to these guys.

Some of their comments are as follows.

Isaiah was supposed to have been written by one, two, three, or more men. They say that Isaiah did not predict the coming of Cyrus 175 years in advance. It was the writing of Deutero-Isaiah, or a second Isaiah, who lived during Cyrus's time. They also claim that Daniel did not predict the succession of the great empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece down to Antiochus Epiphanes in 165 B.C. The book was presumed written at a later time when Antiochus Epiphanes was fighting the Maccabees, and it was actually ancient history instead of the prophecy it pretended to be. Thus the higher critics did not limit their destruction to the structural details of the text. They struck at the very basic truth and value of almost every Old Testament book. (Harris 2002, 79)

But the problem with that view is that Jesus very clearly and on multiple occasions validated the Old Testament text.

The easiest and clearest answer as to why Christians believe the Old Testament is that Christ believed it. We trust His teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ is our final authority in all matters. By miracles, wonders, and signs, He fully proved Himself to have come from God. He proved Himself to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. (Harris 2002, 15)

Romans 1:1–4

“This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.” (NLT)

Now that we have that resolved, over 100 years before he was born, Isaiah, the one who wrote the book, all of it, is letting us know that a man named Cyrus, a gentile, will be used by YAHWEH to deliver Israel.

Cyrus is the one from the east who is stirred up (Ezra 1:1) and who has nations delivered up to him (Isaiah 41:1 – 4) “The God who delivered Israel from Egypt calls Cyrus “my shepherd.” He will fulfill all God's pleasure, and he will say the word for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and the foundation of the temple to be laid.” (Horton 2000, 341)

We know from external evidence that Cyrus did indeed decree the release and return of various peoples, to include Judah.

Cyrus Cylinder

In 538 BC the Persian king Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews exiled in Babylon to return to Judea and rebuild their temple. (Hays 2020, 30)

2 Chronicles 36:22–23

“In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfillment of the promise he delivered through Jeremiah, the LORD moved King Cyrus of Persia to issue a written decree throughout his kingdom. It read: “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: ‘The LORD God of the heavens has given to me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build for him a temple in Jerusalem in Judah. May the LORD your God energize you who belong to his people, so you may be able to go back there!’” (NET)

Who is Cyrus?

He is the “Persian king (559–530 BC) who founded the Achaemenid dynasty and the Persian empire. Cyrus (II) was the son of Cambyses I (600–559 BC), who ruled the unified territories of Parshumash-anshan and Parsa. Cyrus’ mother was Mandane, daughter of the Median king Astyages (585?–550 BC). The ancestor of the dynasty was Achaemenes. Cyrus succeeded his father and established himself in Pasargadae about 559 BC. Ambitious and daring, he aligned his kingdom with neighboring peoples and tribes into a solid block of Persian power, then revolted against Astyages of Media. When it became evident that Cyrus would win in the struggle to control Media, the troops of Astyages mutinied and deserted to Cyrus.” (Elwell and Beitzel 1988, 564)



(Bolen 2018, Used with Permission)

Isaiah 44:28–45:1

“It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ And of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’ ” Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:” (NASB95)

Cyrus will be a military leader and a political leader. “YHWH will go before him to provide favorable circumstances for the accomplishment of these tasks and will reward him with rich booty, but it must be clear that Cyrus is YHWH’s tool (not the reverse) and that YHWH’s primary responsibility and attention continue to be to Israel. Cyrus is employed to do what YHWH wants for Israel.” (Watts 2005, 696)

Yes, God is going to use a gentile ruler to reestablish His people into the land.

When we earlier read about Cyrus in Isaiah 41, we confronted the nations being conquered by Cyrus, the one from the east. We saw their abject fear of him. “The coastlands have seen and are afraid; The ends of the earth tremble; They have drawn near and have come. Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, “Be strong!”” (Isaiah 41:5–6, NASB95)

How worried are they, Isaiah adds some detail for us here, “...To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings;” (Isaiah 45:1b, NASB95). This is a polite way of saying that they are to all be disarmed by Cyrus and unable to defend themselves.

Isaiah 45:2–3

“I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.” (NASB95)

This implies that someone in the future will take the scroll of Isaiah and give it to Cyrus to read. And who is it that worked for Cyrus and wound up moving to the Persian capital of Susa? Daniel.



(Bolen, Susa tomb of Daniel from royal palace 2018)

Why is it that this man will succeed at the level he will? We get that in verse 2. “The ‘I’ is expressed by the pronoun (the Tg characteristically has ‘my word’), drawing attention to the fact that Cyrus’s relentless advance reflects not merely his military expertise but Yhwh’s preceding him.” (Goldingay and Payne 2006, 22)

In Daniel 9:25 we read of a decree taking place to rebuild Jerusalem. In Daniel it is tied into the timing of when Messiah would appear.

Isaiah actually named Cyrus as the person who would issue this decree at least 150 years before it ever occurred. His prophecy is recorded in fulfillment four times: 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 6:1–5; and 6:6–12. This is clearly the decree that is emphasized in Scripture. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 9)

As to the treasures of darkness, this comment speaks to how Cyrus will conquer Babylon. In fact, much of what we see in verse 1 – 3 speak to that. More than likely starting with the loosening of the loins comment. While Belshazzar was having a party, one that Daniel was invited to to decipher some handwriting on the wall (Daniel 5), Cyrus and his army were busy blocking the Euphrates diverting it into a swamp. This left the channel, which went under the wall of Babylon, dry enabling the entire Persian army to enter the city without a fight. Even the secondary gates under the wall were open, just as verse 1 said they would be.

Cyrus dealt with it and with the river just as had the Babylonian queen: drawing off the river by a canal into the lake, which was till now a marsh, he made the stream to sink till its former channel could be forded. When this happened, the Persians who were posted with this intent made their way into Babylon by the channel of the Euphrates, which had now sunk about to the height of the middle of a man's thigh. Now if the Babylonians had known beforehand or learnt what Cyrus was planning, they would have suffered the Persians to enter the city and brought them to a miserable end; for then they would have shut all the gates that opened on the river and themselves mounted up on to the walls that ran along the river banks, and so caught their enemies as in a trap. But as it was, the Persians were upon them unawares, and by reason of the great size of the city—so say those who dwell there—those in the outer parts of it were overcome, yet the dwellers in the middle part knew nothing of it; all this time they were dancing and making merry at a festival which chanced to be toward, till they learnt the truth but too well. (Herodotus 1975, 239-241)

All of what was prophesied took place. Literally as foretold over 170 years before it took place. YAHWEH states the reason, for Cyrus as well as for His own people, as to the why. Why so specific?

Isaiah 45:4–7 “For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.” (NASB95)

Cyrus would like to think that God picked him because he was the smartest or most talented or strongest man available. Really, God's focus was on His people. It wasn't Cyrus that moved God to act, but the condition and cry of His people. It was for their sake. (Guzik 2000, Is 45:4-7)

And the point to Cyrus is a simple one, YAHWEH is the creator, He is the God of the universe, only He could have done this and named him so far in advance.

Short term, Cyrus is raised up to facilitate the release of God's people from the exile they had been subjected to due to their sin. He will send them back to rebuild Jerusalem as well as the Temple and to repopulate the land.

This was all done according to a specific timetable that is outlined by Daniel in his 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9. The end point of that prophecy and tied directly into this prophecy here in Isaiah 45 is that Messiah will come into Jerusalem and be cut off at the exact point in time called for by the prophecy given to Daniel.

Cyrus was raised up that the Jews might return to Palestine and that Christ might then be born in Bethlehem, and that when redemption had been accomplished and its message proclaimed there might be a universal acknowledgment that the God of Israel is the true God. (Grogan 1986, 271)

Isaiah 45:7 “The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.” (NASB95)

Once again God makes a point, one we need to hear today and one that was made not only for the benefit of His people Israel, but also for the benefit of a pagan king who had a totally different worldview. He would have believed that creation was done within a pantheon of gods, YAHWEH wants him to know there is only one true God. This holds for us today.

This verse speaks of God's creative power and his control of world events. All three Hebrew verbs used for creation in Gen 1–2 occur here (rendered form, create, and make(cause)). (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1247)

God formed light and created darkness. Unlike the Persian religion which “dealt in opposites of light and darkness. YHWH claims not to be those conditions, but to create both.” (Watts 2005, 701)

He made everything in the natural world. “Causing well-being and creating calamity...” nothing happens in the world He created that He does not know about.

What Isaiah asserts is that God, as creator, is ultimately responsible for everything in nature, from light to dark, and for everything in history, from good fortune to misfortune. No other beings or forces are responsible for anything. (Oswalt 1998, 204)

This is a concept we see more fully revealed to us within the New Testament.

John 1:1–5

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (ESV)

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