

Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isaiah 40-55)
(#13) The Conversion of the Nations (45:14-25)

(The outline of Isaiah 40-55 is placed at the end of these notes.)

Let us turn to Isaiah 45, in which we will resume our study with verse 8.

We have shown that this large portion of Isaiah, chapters 40 through 55, which is commonly called "The Book of Consolation", was intended to be a prophecy directly to the Jewish exiles of the Babylonian captivity of the 6th century B.C. God had judged His people for their transgression against the covenant that God had established with Israel long before at Mount Sinai (15th c. BC). Instead of the blessing of God for keeping the covenant, Israel and Judah encountered the curses of God for breaking the covenant.¹ But God had promised to restore a remnant of His people from Babylon, enabling them to return to their homeland. This would occur after Judah had served 70 years of God's punishment, one year of exile for their failure to observe one out of every seven years' Sabbath rest throughout its hundreds of years' existence.²

In Isaiah 44:24-28 we considered that God promised to raise up a deliverer who would save His people from Babylon. God had used Babylon to punish His people, but He would use Persia to save and deliver them. Babylon would not readily release God's people, so He would cause a ruler to rise in Persia who would first conquer Babylon and then he would set free the Jewish people, enabling them to return to their homeland, repopulate their cities and Jerusalem, and rebuild the Jewish temple.

Isaiah 44:28 identified the name of the Persian deliverer 140 years before he conquered Babylon and set free the Jewish people. In Isaiah 44:28 is the first mention of his name. There Isaiah records God's intention to raise up Cyrus:

***²⁸Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd,
And he shall perform all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built,"
And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."'***

In Isaiah 45:1-7 we read of God's charge to Cyrus to deliver His people. But next in verses 8 through 13 we read that...

C. God will commence His work of Delivering His People (45:8-13)

In this section of Isaiah's prophecy God declared that He will commence His work of delivering His people as the sovereign God over all things. **Verse 8** is worded as a decree of God issuing His commands to the creation to participate in accomplishing His work of deliverance of His people.

***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.***

¹ See 2 Kings 17:5-23 for a summary explanation of God's judgment upon the northern ten tribes of Israel for having broken its covenant with God. The same judgment of God fell upon Judah by Babylon. God jettisoned from the Promised Land the people who survived the invasions. They were taken into captivity by their conquerors, Israel in 722 BC and Judah in 586 BC.

² 2 Chronicles 36:20f.

I, the LORD, have created it.

This is a pronouncement of God to bring about what had been previously declared. As rain comes down from heaven resulting in fruit springing up from the earth, the heavens are called upon to pour down “righteousness.” Here “righteousness” would be the manifestation of God’s faithfulness to His Word, to Himself, that He fulfill what He committed Himself to do and to accomplish what He purposed to do, that being to deliver His people. God is righteous to bring to pass His words of promise.

Now some might be critical of God using one like Cyrus, a pagan king, to effect deliverance for His people. We read of God’s response to them in **verses 9 and 10**. God hears the charge against Him and His ways and so He answers them, essentially saying, “Who are you to tell Me what I can do?”

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’?
¹⁰Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What are you begetting?’
Or to the woman, ‘What have you brought forth?’”*

God challenged His challengers. In essence says: “I am the LORD, come and ask Me what I intend to do.” He is in control, if you want to know what is going to transpire, come to Him and ask Him.

Three illustrations are provided to show the absurdity of God’s creatures to protest His purposes that He intends to bring to pass. **First**, God likens Himself to a **potter**. To protest against God for the manner in which He accomplished His purposes is absurd as broken pieces of pottery complaining to their potter that He is not free to do what He wants to do with the things that He has made. “Does the pot challenge the potter as to the manner or shape to which it is being fashioned? Can you say that the potter has no hands?” No, obviously God must be shaping, manipulating His creatures. **Second**, we read of God likened to a **father** who begets a child. And then similarly, **third**, He is compared to a **mother** who has given birth to her child. Does a child have any control over its begetting, its birth? So God controls His creatures. He has full power over His creatures.

The metaphor of the potter and the clay was used by Paul in Romans 9. There Paul argued that God was sovereign in His election of sinners to be saved. Those that He chose to save from their sins, God had chose before the foundation of the world. Paul addressed what he thought might be the reaction of some who opposed his doctrine. “If God is sovereign in giving salvation only to the ones that He chose and damns all the rest, how could God justly hold people accountable in judgment?” Paul used the potter and clay metaphor to argue the defence of his doctrine. Here is **Romans 9:18-24**:

Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. ¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” ²⁰But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? ²²What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Paul argued that God was free and right in disposing of His creatures as He determined. Because God created them for His purposes, He was free to do as He determined to do.

We should be careful never to strive against God, complaining of the lot in life that He has apportioned to us. He is free to put up or pull down. He is free to bless, as men count blessing, or He may deal seemingly in a severe manner. Do not charge God with mismanagement of your life by complaining, regretting, or mourning over His dealings.

God challenged those who would challenge Him, arguing that He is the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of all that He made. We read in **verse 11**,

***¹¹Thus 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.***

Perhaps it should better be translated as a question, as does the ESV translation.

Thus 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?

God challenged them who would challenge His right to do as He has determined to do. God then again affirms His right as Creator.

***¹²I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
And all their host I have commanded.***

God again affirmed that He had purposed to call and equip King Cyrus of Persia to bring about the deliverance of His people from their Babylonian bondage.

***¹³I 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.***

God will have raised up Cyrus to his position of authority, doing so due to His faithfulness to His promises to His people. And so, the “righteousness” that is identified is not that Cyrus was righteous, but God was righteous in raising him up to deliver His people.

God would oversee the life and rule of Cyrus. God declared, “***And I will direct all his ways.***” God would have King Cyrus rebuild Jerusalem, that had been destroyed decades before. God describes Jerusalem here as “My city.” He would also release the Jewish people from their captivity in Babylon. Whereas most ancient slaves would only gain their freedom through paying a great ransom or redemption price, their release would cost nothing. God would see to it that Cyrus releases His people without ransom or bribery. Cyrus is God’s servant to do God’s bidding, to rebuild Jerusalem, release the Jewish exiles to return to their land. And he would do it for free.

But God had a greater purpose than to save a remnant of the Jewish people from Babylon. Yes, God would deliver them from the Babylonians, even from the nations, but then God would extend His salvation to “the ends of the earth.” In other words, God purposed to also save an innumerable number of Gentiles who would join themselves with His people. What we have before us in the following verses, a prophecy not only of a deliverance of a Jewish remnant from Babylon, but reveals His intention to extend His salvation to encompass Gentiles. God will issue a world-wide summoning of many Gentiles to faith, who would enjoy the

salvation that God intends for all His people, Jews and Gentiles alike who are saved by His great work of grace. We see this traced out before us in the remainder of Isaiah 45. Here is an outline of what is before us:

N. The Conversion of the Nations (45:14-25)

A. Israel is saved from his enemies (45:14-17)

B. Israel is saved due to God's purpose (45:18-19)

C. Israel's enemies will be saved as well (45:20-25)

Let us consider the message first that God would save a remnant of Jewish people from Babylon.

A. Israel is saved from his enemies (45:14-17)

Let us read these verses before considering them:

¹⁴Thus 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.’”**

**¹⁵Truly You are God, who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!**

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

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

The Lord declared that the wealth and notable “men” of Gentiles would come “over to you.” The “you” addressed by God is probably a reference to “Zion”³, which is Jerusalem restored, which in many places is a metaphor for the redeemed and restored people of God, here, being comprised of Jews saved by the grace of God. But here the “you” is probably to Zion that has been reinhabited by the returned exiles from Babylon. The announcement here, therefore, is God’s promise that the Gentiles would contribute to the building of Zion, but more specifically, the rebuilding of the Jewish temple, which occurred in the days of Ezra. King Cyrus had not only declared the release of the Jewish captives, but he also decreed that the nations under His rule would finance the rebuilding of the city and its temple. That is what is being declared here.

But these Gentiles are not giving their wealth to “Zion” only because their emperor commanded them to do so. These Gentiles recognize that the true God had delivered these Jews from their bondage. They join in the procession of returning Jews to Zion, even while humbly acknowledging that these are the true people of God. They confess,

‘Surely God is in you,

³ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah, vol. 2, chapters 40-66* (Baker Book House, 1971), p. 124.

**And there is no other;
There is no other God.”**

And so, the people of nations round about Israel come to Jerusalem in humble submission requesting that they, too, may submit to the God of Israel. There is recognition that Jehovah is the one true God. They come to offer their treasures to Him.

In **verse 15** the prophet expresses adoration the greatness of God. That many of other nations are led to come and worship Him leads the prophet to praise God for His greatness. The prophet described God as One who “hides Himself.” The prophet acknowledged His God is working, controlling all things, working out the salvation of His people. But if God is not recognized by all for this great work of salvation, it must be due to God Himself refusing to disclose Himself.

John Calvin brought forth a good spiritual lesson for us from this verse. This is his interpretation of Isaiah 45:15:

Isaiah now exclaims, that there is need of long exercise of patience, that we may enjoy the promises of God; for the people might have been prompted to despair, when the wicked had everything to their wish, and when everything adverse befell themselves. I am aware that some expound it differently. The Jewish writers commonly interpret it to mean, that the Lord will hide himself from the Gentiles, but will reveal himself to his people. Christian interpreters bring forward a different sense, but too far-fetched. There is ingenuity, indeed, in what they say, that Christ is a hidden God, because his divinity lies concealed under the infirmity of the flesh. But it does not agree with the Prophet’s meaning; for he calls himself “a hidden God,” because he appears to withdraw, and, in some measure, to conceal himself, when he permits his people to be afflicted and oppressed by various calamities; and, therefore, our hearts ought to be encouraged by hope. Now, as Paul says (Romans 8:24), “hope is not directed to those things which are seen;” and in this sense Isaiah calls him “a hidden God,” because those things which he promised are not immediately visible to our eyes.

Thus he intended that we should withdraw our minds from present objects, and raise them above the heavens, which we must do, if we wish to receive and accept of his aid. There is “need of patience” (Hebrews 10:36), therefore, that we may continue to direct our desires towards him, when he delays the execution of his promises. He had said, a little before, that unbelievers, though at that time they were blind and stupid, would feel the presence of God; but, because the time of manifestation was not yet at hand, this exclamation is appropriately introduced, that God, before he displays his glory, conceals his power in order to try our faith.⁴

Matthew Henry similarly drew out a lesson for the people of God:

They are taught to trust God further than they can see him. The prophet puts this word into their mouths, and goes before them in saying it (45:15): *Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself*. 1. God hid himself when he brought them into the trouble, *hid himself and was wroth*, (cf 57:17). Note, Though God be his people’s God and Saviour, yet sometimes, when they provoke him, he hides himself from them in displeasure, suspends his favours, and lays them under his frowns; but let them *wait upon the Lord that hides his face* (cf. 8:17). 2. He hid himself when he was bringing them out of the trouble. Note, when God is acting as Israel’s God and Saviour commonly *his way is in the sea* (Psa. 127:19). The salvation of the church is carried on in a mysterious way, by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts working on men’s spirits (Zech. 4:6), by weak and unlikely instruments, small and accidental occurrences, and not wrought till the last extremity; but this is our comfort, though God hide himself, we are sure he is *the God of Israel*, the *Saviour*.⁵

We read in **verse 16** that idol makers are put to shame because the futility of their worship is made clear to all; the God of Israel is the only God.

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3 (Baker Book House, 1993), pp. 415f.

⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), p. 255.

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

But the people of God, the Jewish remnant that He had purposed to save, enjoy “everlasting salvation.” God had removed their reproach and had restored them to Himself forever. **Verse 17** reads:

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

Here we clearly see that although the immediate context is God’s promise of deliverance from Babylon, the language suggests more than salvation from their physical bondage and return from exile. The passage leaps forward to the salvation that God brings through a greater deliverer than God’s servant, Cyrus. Before long we will once again read of the coming Servant of Jehovah that would bring everlasting salvation to His people.

We may next consider that...

B. Israel is saved due to God’s purpose (45:18-19)

**¹⁸For 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.
¹⁹I 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.**

God makes two points in these verses. First, God declared that it was never His intention to decimate His people or make desolate the land permanently. In other words, even when He had destroyed the land and had removed His people from the land, it was in His purpose to one day restore them. Back in **Isaiah 24:1-6** Isaiah had described the land after God had completed His judgment.

Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
²And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;
As with the buyer, so with the seller;

As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
³The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.

⁴The earth mourns and fades away,
The world languishes and fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.
⁵The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the everlasting covenant.
⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,
And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,
And few men are left.

This describes the land after God had decimated His people and destroyed the cities. This was the result of the judgment of God through His instruments of Assyria and Babylon. Israel had broken its covenant with God, the covenant that God had made with Israel at Mount Sinai. The result was devastation and desolation.

God had declared to Israel when He had made His covenant with Israel that this would be the result of their rebellion if they were to break their covenant with God. We read in **Leviticus 28:27-39**.

²⁷And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, ²⁸then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. ²⁹You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. ³⁰I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. ³¹I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. ³²I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. ³³I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. ³⁴Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

³⁶And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. ³⁷They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no *power* to stand before your enemies. ³⁸You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. ³⁹And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away.

God had judged His people for they had broken their covenant with Him.

Now we read in **verses 18 and 19** the promise of God restoring His people to their land cast in the language of God as the Creator. Again, we read **verse 18**:

**¹⁸For 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:**

One cannot but recognize the similarity of language to the opening verses of Genesis 1. There we read,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²*The earth was without form, and* void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Just as God had originally created the earth and it was “without form and void”, so the land of Israel was similarly desolate. This is also reflected in Jeremiah’s description of the land after God’s judgment had fallen upon His people. Here is **Jeremiah 4:22-26**:

“For My people are foolish,
They have not known Me.
They are silly children,
And they have no understanding.
They are wise to do evil,
But to do good they have no knowledge.”

²³*I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void;*

And the heavens, they had no light.

²⁴I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled,

And all the hills moved back and forth.

²⁵I beheld, and indeed there was no man,

And all the birds of the heavens had fled.

²⁶I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness,

And all its cities were broken down

At the presence of the LORD,

By His fierce anger.

But just as God had not created the earth to remain in that barren state, but He purposed to create living things to inhabit His world, so God had a similar purpose for the land of Israel. In causing the land to become desolate upon His judgment, He did not intend that it remain barren and without inhabitant. He would populate His land once again with His people and He would give them a blessed existence.

Now this language of a new creation with respect to His salvation of His people from exile, He again suggests something far greater in scope that He intended to bring to pass. And so through Jesus Christ, when God brought Him forth from the dead, it signaled a new creation of which the redeemed of Jesus Christ have a vital role. This new creation will finally and fully be seen in the creation of the new heavens and new earth in which the people of God will inhabit in eternity. We may see a prophecy of this in **Isaiah 66:18ff**, which read,

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. ²⁰Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. ²¹And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the LORD.

²²“For as the new heavens and the new earth

Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD,

“So shall your descendants and your name remain.

²³And it shall come to pass

That from one New Moon to another,

And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.

Notice also that the prophet expands God’s purpose beyond the borders of Israel to include all the inhabited earth. God is described as the One...

**Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:**

The language is cosmic in scope, all the earth is included and the heavens too. He created this world to be inhabited by His people. And it will be.

The second point that the prophet was revealing in verses 18 and 19 was that although God’s ways were “hidden” in one sense (cf. v. 15), He had revealed His will to His people. Again, verse 19 reads,

**¹⁹I 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.**

Although God’s dealings were hidden, He had not hidden His will for His people.

Here is another good word from **Calvin**:

He now recalls the people to the doctrine of the Law, because God cannot be comprehended by human faculties; but as he is concealed from carnal reason, so he abundantly reveals himself, and affords the remedy, by his word, which supplies what was wanting, that we may not desire anything more. If this had not been granted, we should have had no hope, and should have lost all courage. Now, he solemnly declares that he does not invite us *in vain*, though he delay his assistance; for what he has promised is most certain, and, as he plainly shewed to whom we ought to betake ourselves, and on whom we ought to rely, so he will give practical demonstration that the hope of those who relied on his word was not *vain*, or without foundation.

This enables us to see clearly how wicked are the speeches of those who say that no certainty can be obtained from the word, and who pretend that it is a nose of wax, in order to deter others from reading it; for thus do wicked men blaspheme, because the mere doctrine of the word exposes and refutes their errors. But we reply with David, “Thy word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths.” (Psalm 119:105). We reply with Isaiah and the rest of the prophets, that the Lord has taught nothing that is obscure, or ambiguous, or false. We reply also with Peter, that “the prophetic word is more sure, and you do well if you take heed to it, as to a lamp burning in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the morning-star arise in our hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19).

If these things were said concerning the Law and the prophets, what shall we say of the Gospel, by which the clearest light has been revealed to us? Shall we not say with Paul, “If the Gospel is dark, it is dark to those who are lost, whom Satan, the prince of this world, hath blinded?” (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4).⁶

Let blind and weak-sighted men therefore accuse themselves, when they cannot endure this brightness of the word; but, whatever may be the darkness by which they shall endeavor to clothe it, let us adhere firmly and steadfastly to this heavenly light.

⁶ Calvin, *Isaiah*, vol. 3, pp. 420f.

C. Israel's enemies will be saved as well (45:20-25)

Here we read clearly of God's intention to save many Gentiles along with the remnant of Jews. They would join with the Jewish people who would be the objects of God's saving work. They, too, would be numbered among the people of God.

- 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.**
- 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.**
- ²²**“Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- ²⁵**In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and shall glory.”**

The language of salvation and participation in its blessings are extended to the entire world. Verse 22 suggests this: “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”

We also read the language of verse 23 which is applied to those who submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:13 we read:

⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phi. 2:7)

We have before us, therefore, a beautiful proclamation of salvation by God's free grace to sinners. Everywhere sinners may come to the true God of Israel and have a share in the blessing of God that He gives to His people.

Interestingly, there was a well-known conversion that resulted from God using verse 22, which again reads,

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

We can read an account of the conversion of **Charles Spurgeon** in his autobiography who was brought to faith in Jesus Christ through this verse. He had undergone seven years of great guilt and misery over his sins. Even though he was raised in a godly home and attended to the reading of the word and attending church, he never experienced the joy and peace of salvation until one day when the Lord wonderfully converted him. Here is the account:

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm, one Sunday morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there may have been a dozen to fifteen people. I had heard of the Primitive Methodists, how they sang so loudly that they made people’s heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they could tell me that, I did not care how much they made my head ache. The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. Now, it is well that preachers should be instructed, but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was—

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”

He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus: “My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, ‘Look.’ Now lookin’ don’t take a great deal of pain. It ain’t liftin’ your foot or finger; it is just, “Look.” Well a man needn’t go to College to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But the text says, ‘Look unto *Me*.’ Ay!” said he in broad Essex, “many on ye are lookin’ to yourselves, but it’s no use lookin’ there. You’ll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, ‘Look unto *ME*.’ Some on ye say, ‘We must wait for the Spirit’s workin’.’ You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ*. The text says, ‘Look unto *Me*.’”

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: “Look unto Me; I am sweatin’ great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin’ on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried.’ Look unto Me; I am sittin’ at the Father’s right hand. O poor sinner, look to Me! Look to Me!”

When he had gone to about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at an end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I dear say, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, “Young man, you look miserable.” Well I did, but I was not accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right at home. He continued, “and you will always be miserable—miserable in life, and miserable in death—if you don’t obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.” Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, “Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin’ to do but to look and live.” I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said—I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. I had been waiting to do 50 things, but when I heard that word, “Look!” what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen in an instant, and sung with

the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, "Trust Christ, and you shall be saved." Yet it was, no doubt. All wisely ordered, and now I can say--

"E're since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."⁷

Outline of Isaiah 40-66
SECTION THREE: ORACLES OF REDEMPTION AND CONSUMMATION

- I. The Book of the Consolation of Israel (Chs. 40-55)
 - A. 40:1-11 The Prophet is to Announce God's Coming
 - B. 40:12-31 The Creator of the Universe
 - C. 41:1-29 God Promises to Deliver His People from Babylon
 - D. 42:1-9 The First Servant Song
 - E. 42:10-13 Sing to the Lord a New Song
 - F. 42:14-17 God declares His resolve to battle on behalf of His people
 - G. 42:18-25 Israel, the Blind and Deaf Servant of God
 - H. 43:1-7 God's Commitment to Save His People by His Grace (43:1-7)
 - I. 43:8-13 The Servant Israel is the Lord's Witness
 - J. 43:14-44:8 The Redemption and Restoration of Israel from Babylon
 - K. 44:9-20 Satire against Idolatry
 - L. 44:21-23 Israel is Forgiven and Redeemed
- M. God Commissions the Persian Emperor Cyrus to Deliver His People (44:24-45:13)
 - A. God will restore Judah from Babylon (44:24-28)
 - B. God Charging Cyrus to Deliver Israel (45:1-7)
 - C. God will commence His work of Delivering His People (45:8-13)
- N. The Conversion of the Nations (45:14-25)
 - A. Israel is saved from his enemies (45:14-17)
 - B. Israel is saved due to God's purpose (45:18-19)
 - C. Israel's enemies will be saved as well (45:20-25)

⁷ Charles Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography*, vol. 1 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1962), pp. 87f.