

In wonder, Isaiah exclaims: Truly, you are a God who hides himself, Savior of Israel. He hides himself in that His ways are cloaked in impenetrable mystery, even though we see some things, such as His use of Cyrus to end the exile. But this is the God who created the heavens. He fashioned the earth, wanting it to be inhabited. He did not tell Jacob to seek Him in vain. He said He has not spoken in secret from the land of darkness - may be an allusion to the practice, in Babylon and even in Israel, of necromancy, of consulting the dead.

He says: Was it not foolish of you gentiles who are fugitives from Cyrus to trust in idols instead of in me? They are gods who cannot save. They never did anything, never foretold anything. But Israel's God does all things, even creating darkness as well as righteousness. There is no other God. He is righteous. He wants all things to be done in accord with objective morality. And that same Holiness leads Him to keep His covenant when the people do what He has prescribed. So He says to the gentiles: Turn to me, and be saved. Every knee will bow to me. All the descendants of Israel will become righteous: this includes the gentiles who will join the People of God.

End of Chapter 45



*"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"*  
ISAIAH 61:1

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## THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

### CHAPTER 45

AND HIS NAME  
WILL BE CALLED  
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,  
MIGHTY GOD,  
EVERLASTING FATHER,  
PRINCE OF  
PEACE.  
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

## **Book of Isaiah**

### **Summary of Chapter 45**

Continuation of the above thought. Chapter 45. Summary and Comments

The Lord speaks to Cyrus, His anointed, whose right hand He takes. He calls Cyrus the anointed. Kings were anointed. Cyrus has a special mission for God. So God will subdue nations and kings before him, and will level the mountains. We notice the same language as He used for preparing a way for the exiles to return. God will give Cyrus the treasures of darkness, that is, things that have been hidden away, so Cyrus may know God is the Lord. God will cut through bars of iron: Herodotus the Greek Historian (1. 179) said there were a hundred brass gates in the walls of Babylon.

God will do all this for the sake of Jacob, His servant. Again we see a connection to the Servant songs, in which the Servant sometimes seems to be Israel, sometimes the Messiah. Really, Hebrew writing often enough used an individual to stand for and in a sense be identified with a group. This was commonly done with the King of Israel.

God will honor Cyrus, even though Cyrus does not know or honor Him, so that from the rising to the setting of the sun man may know there is no Master but God. For Cyrus does all this only by commission of the Lord.

Then God says: I form light and create darkness. Amos 3:6 says: "Is there an evil in the city which God has not caused?" This was in accord with the Hebrew way of saying God positively did things that He really only permitted. We compare 1 Samuel 4:3, in which the Israelites exclaim (in the Hebrew, NAB disguises it) after being beaten by the Philistines: "Why has the Lord struck us today before the face of the Philistines?" They knew the Philistines did it, but that was their way of speaking. Again, during the plagues before the Exodus, the Pharaoh more than once was on the point of letting Israel go, but then became hardened. Exodus at times says that the Pharaoh hardened his own heart. More often it says God hardened his heart. -- Really, if we remember Aristotle's potency and actuality, even when some evil is done, it is the power of God, the First Cause, that actualizes the potency - though the evil orientation comes from the creature, not from God: cf. Phil 2:13. As a loose comparison, think of an electric outlet. The power company furnishes the power that makes things go, but the customer decides the way it will be used: cf. 2 Cor 6:1.

Poetically Isaiah exclaims: Let the heavens and the clouds shower down righteousness. Let the earth cause salvation to spring up. Salvation here means rescue from temporal danger, not eternal salvation.

Then: woe to him who quarrels with his master, as if a pot should tell the potter: why did you not make me into something nicer? (We think of the same comparison in Romans 9:20-24 -- where the comparison is to bring out the fact that God alone decides who will get the special added favor of full membership in the People of God). These verses do not at all refer to predestination to heaven or hell, as was once mistakenly thought.

But the Holy One of Israel, its Maker says: Why question me about what I am doing? It is I who made the earth, who gathered the stars. So if I will to use Cyrus for my purposes, who can speak against it?

After this is over, the gentile nations will bring gifts to Jerusalem, even Egypt, Cush, and Saba, wanting to attach themselves to Israel, for God is there. Basically a prediction of the time when the Gentiles would be invited to be part of the People of God, without becoming Jewish: cf. again Eph 3:6.