

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

THE COMING SERVANT, PART 2: ISAIAH 44, 45



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A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Coming Servant, Part 2: Isaiah 44, 45
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Introduction to *Isaiah 44, 45*

God enlarges on His promise to send a servant to deliver Israel. In the short term, His choice as an anointed one is Cyrus, King of Persia – who had not even been born at the time Isaiah was prophesying about him.

But Cyrus is only a temporary solution. He can deliver God's people, but he can't save them. Only God can do that, and it will require a different *Anointed One* – God Himself – to achieve that great objective.

For now, God's people need to accept their coming judgment, keeping their eye on the Lord and trusting in His Word. He will not fail them, and they must not turn away from Him again to idols. God is faithful and strong, and His people need to hold fast to His Word.

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1 Promise of the Spirit

Pray Psalm 42.11.

Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

Read Isaiah 44.1-8.

Reflect.

1. Why does God keep referring to His people as His “servant”? What service do they perform?
2. What effects of the Spirit are mentioned here?

Meditate.

God reminds His people that, whatever may happen to them, they are created, chosen, redeemed, and appointed to be His servants (vv. 1, 2) and witnesses (v. 8). Trials, unfavorable circumstances, or stresses beyond belief do not excuse the people of God from their calling.

But how can they serve and bear witness, given their sinfulness and God’s upcoming discipline? God will show them what His servants do, and point them to the coming Servant Who will set them free to serve Him to the full extent of His covenant and promises.

One key to how God’s people will fulfill their calling is that He promises to send His Spirit upon them, and with Him, His promised blessing (v. 3; cf. Gen. 12.1-3). As a result, they will come alive and flourish, gladly and by many means bearing witness to the fact that they are the Lord’s servants (vv. 4, 5).

Again, those hearing Isaiah or reading his words must have been puzzled. How can this be? God tells them: “I have said it!” Everything He had said about Israel and Assyria had come to pass. And now He was giving His prophet amazing, imponderable promises to set before them again. The answer to “How?” is “He!” From ancient times (v. 7) God has been telling His people in advance what He would do, and not one of His promises or prophecies has failed. So the people should not be afraid or in doubt; they are rather to bear witness to God by their confidence and faith, because He alone is God (v. 8).

We may not be able to see how God can use us as His servants and witnesses. That’s because we’re looking only at ourselves and our circumstances, and not at God. Look to the Lord! Don’t be afraid! Trust His faithful Word! Draw on the power of His Spirit! Serve and witness at every opportunity!

Prepare.

1. We are God’s servants and witnesses today (Jn. 13.1-15; Acts 1.8). What should we be doing? What keeps us from doing this?
2. God keeps pointing His people to His Word past so that they will have confidence in His Word for the future. How does this apply to us?
3. Verse 6 sounds like it could be Jesus talking. Explain.

God himself testifies that the Holy Spirit presides over his blessings, saying, "I will put my Spirit on your seed and my blessings on your children." For no blessing can be full except through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD), On the Holy Spirit 1.7.89

Lord, You have sent Jesus, Your Servant, that I might be free from sin to serve You in righteousness. Help me today to...

Pray Psalm 42.

How is the Lord like a refreshing drink of water to you? Count the ways, and offer them up to Him in thanks and praise.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 42 (*Nettleton: Come Thou Fount*)

As the deer pants for fresh water let my soul, Lord, pant for You!
Let my soul thirst as it ought to for the Savior, ever true!
Tears by day have been my portion, tears by night have been my food,
While my foes add to my sorrow, saying, "Where now is your God?"

Now I pour my soul out in me as these thoughts come to my mind.
And I long to once again be where true worship I might find.
Oh my soul, be not despairing! Hope in God, and praise His Name!
For the Lord, your burden bearing, will restore your peace again.

Oh my God, my soul is weary, therefore I remember You.
Let Your grace and goodness near be, and Your promise, firm and true.
Lord, when trials and fears surround me, Your commands will be my song;
When distresses sore confound me, Your great love will keep me strong.

Lord, forget me not in mourning 'neath my foes' oppressing hand.
See their mocking, hear their scorning; help my weary soul to stand.
Hope in God, praise Him forever when despair on you has trod.
Look to Jesus; never, never doubt your gracious, saving God.

2 The Blinding Power of Idols

Pray Psalm 135.1-4.

Praise the LORD!

Praise the name of the LORD;

Praise *Him*, O you servants of the LORD!

You who stand in the house of the LORD,

In the courts of the house of our God,

Praise the LORD, for the LORD *is* good;

Sing praises to His name, for *it is* pleasant.

For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,

Israel for His special treasure.

Read Isaiah 44.9-20.

Reflect.

1. Why are idols of any kind foolish and vain?
2. Why do people turn to idols rather than to God?

Meditate.

The theme of idols comes up again and again in Isaiah, as well as in all the prophets. There are two reasons for this.

First, idols are stupid. They're stupid because they are mere objects and can neither hear nor see nor do anything else. They are the products of men's thinking and craftsmanship, made from the same stuff they use to warm their homes or cook their meals (vv. 12-17).

These warnings are essential, in the second place, because those who make and worship idols – whether the kind of idols we see in Isaiah or the idols of work, wealth, or whatever – exist in a kind of spiritual stupor, in which they don't think aright (vv. 18, 19) because their affections are misplaced (v. 20) and they are living the lie (v. 20; cf. Rom. 1.18-25)). What you love, you will worship; if you love anything more than God – if you give more of your heart, mind, time, resources, and energy to anything more than God – then you are an idolater, you are trapped in a spiritual stupor, and you can expect God to oppose your every attempt to find happiness and peace of mind.

We need these frequent warnings against idolatry, because we are all prone to make too much of things or ideal conditions or whatever we choose to pursue more than Christ and His Kingdom. Idolatry makes us useless for God and His glory (v. 9). It leads us to squander the many gifts God provides for us (v. 9), and we gain nothing of any lasting value from our devotion to idols (v. 10). If we really saw the idols in our lives for what they are, we would be ashamed, and would repent and renew our commitment to the Lord (v. 11).

Prepare.

1. What kind of idols do people serve in our day? What makes these idols, like those we see in Scripture?
2. How can we tell when something in our lives might be becoming an idol? What should we do then?
3. How can we increase in love for God, so that falling into the snare of idolatry will be less likely, and more readily recognizable?

Foolishness has mastered them; they have lost the faculty of reasoning and are slaves to folly. This is why I will put my Spirit on your descendants, so that they will be delivered from error, for in no other way can they receive the truth. "See, you will not say, There is a lie in my right hand." Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 13.44.20

Free me, Lord, from any idols in my soul, so that I may love You more completely, and...

Pray Psalm 135.

How great is our God? Let this psalm lead you to praise His greatness, and to turn from any idols you may be trusting.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 135 (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

Praise the Savior, praise Him, for His Name is good;
sing, for it is pleasant, to our glorious God!
All whom He has chosen and redeemed by grace,
praise His Name together, praise Him in this holy place!

Refrain v. 1

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!
Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Great and sovereign, Jesus rules o'er all above,
doing as He pleases, sovereign in His love.
Clouds and seas obey Him, lightning, too, and rain;
He the winds brings forth in pow'r and sends them back again.

Refrain

Egypt's firstborn fell to God's redeeming pow'r;
kings and nations crumbled in redemption's hour.
He the land of promise to His people gave;
thus His Kingdom Jesus gives to all He's pleased to save.

Refrain

Evermore Your Name, O Savior, shall endure!
Your renown throughout all ages is secure.
For You have compassion, vindicating all
Those who serve Your Name and on Your saving mercy call.

Refrain

Vain the nations serve the idols of their hands;
mouths and ears they have but cannot understand.
Every idol vain is, lacking life or breath;
all who serve them like them shall be lost to lasting death.

Refrain

Bless the Lord you people, all who love the Lord!
Bless Him, you who trust His sovereign, holy Word!
Bless the Lord from Zion, Him Who in it dwells;
praise Him! Lift your voices, all His grace and glory tell!

Refrain

3 Shepherd of God's Servants

Pray Psalm 79.8, 9.

Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us!
Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us,
For we have been brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Your name;
And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins,
For Your name's sake!

Read Isaiah 44.21-28.

Reflect.

1. Why do you suppose God keeps emphasizing to His people that they are His *servant*?
2. How many ways does God declare His faithfulness and reliability?

Meditate.

God reminds His people that they have been redeemed to *serve* Him (v. 21). They had all but forgotten God, preferring the idols of their neighbors instead; but God would not forget them (v. 21). He promises to blot out their sins (v. 22), and He calls on the whole creation to rejoice in His redemption and glory (v. 23). He is painting His promises in pictures, so that, as His people see mountains and forests and trees during their period of captivity, they will remember what He has promised, and will turn to Him (v. 22).

In verses 24-27 God reminds His people of His greatness and faithfulness. He is their Maker, and the Creator of the heavens and earth (v. 24). He shuts the mouths of false prophets and exposes fools in their folly (v. 25). He fulfills the words He gives to His prophets – including Isaiah – and Who promises in His Word to rebuild His nation, city, and people (v. 26). He dried up the river as Israel crossed to begin laying hold on His promises (v. 27). And He Who has done all this, will do more yet: He is raising up Cyrus to do His pleasure and to shepherd the servants of God back to their city, and to rebuild His temple in Jerusalem (v. 28).

And Cyrus has not even been born yet.

Prepare.

1. Is it a good idea to rehearse the greatness and faithfulness of God from time to time? Why?
2. How many different ways does God remind His people that He is the sovereign Lord? Why should this encourage them? Encourage us?
3. Compare verse 21 with verse 28 (the second part). What do the servants of God do? How does this apply to us, God's servants, today?

It is written at the start of Ezra, the prophet, that at the edict of Cyrus, the king of the Persians and Medes, the captivity of the people of Israel was ended and those who wanted to return were sent back to Jerusalem under Zerubabel son of Salathibel and Hiesu the son of Iosdech the high priest. The Lord inspired Cyrus to do his will and carry out his orders. Jerome (347-420 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 12.20

Your Word is truth, Lord (Jn. 17.17); help me to receive it in faith and to...

Pray Psalm 79.

Pray for the churches in your community, that they may not be taken captive by the priorities of our secular, material, narcissistic age. Seek the Lord for how you can fulfill the work of a servant in your church.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 79 (*Passion Chorale: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

O God the nations all Your inheritance have spoiled!
Your City have they ruined, Your temple they have soiled!
Your servants' bodies all to the birds of heav'n are thrown;
The flesh of all Your faithful the jaws of beasts now own.

The blood of faithful servants like water flows around;
And none are there Your saints to commit into the ground.
Our neighbors mock and scorn us: How long, O Lord, how long?
How long will You be angry and scorn our mournful song?

Pour out, O Lord, Your wrath on all who deny Your Name;
Who trust You not nor seek You, bring down to deepest shame!
For they have with great rancor Your precious saints devoured;
Lay waste their habitation at this late dreadful hour.

Why should the nations mock and say, "Where now is their God?"
Let there be known among them harsh vengeance for our blood!
Hear, Lord, our groans and sighing; preserve us by Your pow'r.
For we are fairly dying each day and hour by hour.

Reproach those who reproach us with judgment sevenfold!
Let thanks and praise to You by Your precious flock be told.
We are Your sheep, O Savior, we thank You all our days.
Look on us with Your favor as we declare Your praise.

4 Cyrus, Anointed One

Pray Psalm 33.1-5.

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Read Isaiah 45.1-7.

Reflect.

1. Why does God call Cyrus His *anointed*? For what was he anointed?
2. How is the sovereignty of God expressed in these verses?

Meditate.

Cyrus – who has not yet been born – will not know the Lord when He calls him (vv. 4, 5). No matter. God has *anointed* him, raised and appointed him for a particular purpose, and in fulfilling that purpose, Cyrus will come to know Him and His great power (v. 3), after he has seen God's great work through him.

The word *anointed* is the same word used for *Messiah*. In some ways, Cyrus would be a messiah for God's people; in even larger ways, he portends the Messiah to come, the true Shepherd of Israel, Whom – like Cyrus – Isaiah is identifying in various ways in this section, long years before the Messiah comes.

God promises to grease the skids for Cyrus, so that he can accomplish God's purpose with a minimum of resistance (vv. 2, 3). Cyrus' work of returning the Jews to their homeland will make the Name of the Lord famous throughout the earth (v. 6). When God accomplishes a great salvation, His people benefit greatly (v. 4) and He is greatly glorified. This sets the stage for more people to flow to the mountain of the Lord's house, precisely as God had promised (Is. 2).

God Who is sovereign over day and night, Who brings peace and calamity to nations (v. 7), is certainly able to deliver His people according to His promise. And naming Cyrus well in advance of the event lends increasing credibility to His Word and promise.

Prepare.

1. Can you think of some ways that you see the sovereign hand of God at work in nations today?
2. God's sovereignty is ultimately directed to two simultaneous ends. Can you explain each of them?
3. Meditate on Romans 13.1-4. Is this true of all governments? How should this passage, and the sovereignty of God, guide us in praying for our own rulers?

By all that is about to be said, he has taught that he has invested Cyrus as king, he has given him the necessary sovereignty to

direct his empire with good will and so that the disposition of difficult matters is mitigated and facilitated. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 14.45.2*

Lord, straighten my path today, and provide all I need so that I...

Pray Psalm 33.

Celebrate the sovereignty of God as you see it in this psalm, by asking the Lord to exercise His rule for the blessing of His people and His own glory in all the nations of the earth.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 33 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Sing with rejoicing in the Lord, for praise becomes His righteous ones!

With harps and songs raise grateful words, and let new songs of praise be sung!

Joyfully shout! His Word is true; He does His work in faithfulness.

His love prevails the whole world through; the Lord loves truth and righteousness.

God spoke and heaven came to be, and all its hosts His Spirit wrought.

He heaps the waters of the sea; the deeps their dwelling place are taught.

Let all below now fear the Lord; let all in awe of Him abide!

The worlds exist by Jesus' Word; let all on earth in Him confide.

He nullifies the nations' plans; forever stands His sov'reign Word.

All they are blessed who with Him stand – the chosen people of the Lord.

God from His throne looks down on men; He knows our works and made our hearts.

Let not Your Church, let none depend on strength or skill or human arts.

God watches those who fear His Name, who hope upon His grace and love;

He keeps their souls from death and shame who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield; upon us let Your grace descend!

We hope in You; to You we yield; we trust in Jesus to the end.

5 The Work of God's Anointed

Pray Psalm 138.7, 8.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Read Isaiah 45.8-13.

Reflect.

1. What "day" is suggested in verse 8? About whom is God speaking in verse 13?
2. God seems to be justifying Himself in verses 9-12. Why?

Meditate.

We are struck in these verses by the lack of any mention of Cyrus' name. Having referred to him as the Lord's *anointed (messiah)* in verse 1, God now proceeds to insist on His right to do what He pleases, and to explain the work of His anointed one. The avoidance of Cyrus' name is deliberate, because God intends here to point to him, but also beyond him.

The term *anointed* was reserved in Isaiah's day for the kings of Israel. To refer to Cyrus by that name might have created a stir, even an offense among some of Isaiah's hearers. God warns them not to become cavalier (vv. 9, 10). He can do what He wants. And He wants Cyrus to build His city and return the exiles to it (v. 13). But He also intends that Cyrus should be a type of the Messiah yet to come, Who will fulfill all righteousness and do all the Lord's will (v. 13).

Verse 8 and verse 13 are pointing to the time Isaiah has previously referred to as "that day" or "the latter days." When Messiah comes to build God's City and gather His exiles, then all creation will rejoice and abound. Righteousness will descend from the skies in the Person of Him Who fulfills all righteousness, and the earth will bring forth the salvation of God in the Son of Man Who accomplishes all God's will. God has ordained it; God will fulfill it. They are presumptuous and unbelieving who question the wisdom of God or doubt the veracity of His Word.

God is Lord and we are not. The sooner we learn that, and the more consistently we keep it in mind, the more of God's promised restoration we will realize.

Prepare.

1. In what ways is Cyrus a type of Christ? How does his work help us to understand the work of Jesus?
2. Do you ever find yourself *striving* with God? Explain.
3. God can do whatever He wants, and whatever He does will be right and good. Does this mean that whatever God does will always make sense to us? Explain.

There is no doubt that human wills cannot resist the will of God, "who has done whatsoever he pleased in heaven and on earth," and who has even "formed the things that are to come." Nor can the human will prevent [God] from doing what he wills, seeing

that even with human wills, he does what he wills, when he wills to do it. Augustine (354-430 AD), Admonition and Grace 14.45

Teach me Your will, O God, and help me to accept and submit to it, so that I...

Pray Psalm 138.

Pray that Jesus will build His Church all over the world, and that kings and peoples everywhere will worship and glorify Him.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 138 (*Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

I will give You thanks and praise You, God of gods, with all my heart.

I will bow before Your temple, grateful praise to You impart.

For Your Name and for Your glory, You have magnified Your Word!

On the day I called You answered, made me bold within my soul;

When I walk in troubled places, You revive and make me whole.

For Your hand will gently shield me, and my fearsome foes control.

All the kings of earth will praise You when Your words of truth they hear;

Of Your ways, of Your great glory, gladly they will loudly cheer.

For the proud shall not approach You, yet You hold the lowly dear.

Your Right Hand will save and keep me; all I need You will supply.

For Your love is everlasting, reaching from beyond the sky.

You will not forsake or leave me; You will save me when I cry.

6 Look to the Lord and Be Saved!

Pray Psalm 116.1, 2.

I love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.

Read Isaiah 45.14-25.

Reflect.

1. This passage seems to be looking beyond Cyrus and his service to God. How can you tell that?
2. How would you describe the salvation God promises here?

Meditate.

While this passage seems to begin with God talking to Cyrus, His anointed (v. 14), it quickly goes beyond that day to a greater day of salvation. In that day all who worship vain idols will be brought to shame, as the people of God receive His great salvation in their sight (v. 15). The salvation of God, and everything that goes with it, is so great and glorious that it puts to shame every false religion and worldview.

Again, God declares that He is not speaking vain things (vv. 18, 19). He declares the truth, and because He has power to create out of nothing, He can bring to pass everything He has declared, though it seems impossible to those who hear Him.

God calls His people to a great assembly before Him, to hear Him denounce the folly of idols and declare Himself the only and sovereign Savior of the world (vv. 20, 21; cf. Heb. 12.22-24). The Word of salvation goes out to the whole world: “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!” (v. 22) The Word of God brings with it the righteousness we need to draw near to Him (v. 23), and it calls us to submit to Him in worship and obedience. The salvation God brings to His people includes righteousness and strength, justification and glory (vv. 24, 25), and a life of confidence without shame in the presence of the Lord (v. 24).

This is the gift God is bringing to His people “in that day.” Cyrus, and the work he will do in bringing the people of Israel back to Jerusalem, is a powerful token and sign that, as God raised him up according to His Word, so He will fulfill all His promise of salvation in a day not long hence.

But that still leaves us with the question, “How?” How will God bring us to righteousness? How will He take away our shame? How will He justify and bring us to His glory? How will He renew the earth itself, and draw all the nations into His assembly? Isaiah is moving in the direction of an answer for all these questions.

Prepare.

1. How would you explain to an unbelieving friend what you have received in the gift of salvation?
2. How does this salvation put to shame every false religion and worldview? What is our role in that?
3. How does the Word of God bring the righteousness we need to be saved?

The coming of our Savior Jesus Christ fulfilled the goal of this prophecy, after which, in his church, all people, who have been brought together from throughout the world, have been taught to bend their knee to God in prayer. Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 2.29

Help me to grow in my salvation today, O Lord, as I bow my knees to You, receive Your righteous Word, and...

Pray Psalm 116.

Why should you love the Lord? Let this psalm lead you to express your love for Him, your gratitude for His mercy, and your determination to live for His glory.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 116 (*Mit Freuden Zart: All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*)

I love the Lord because He hears my cries and pleas for mercy.
Because He bends to me His ears, my prayers shall ever thus be.
The snares of death encompassed me; hell's grip could not unloosened be;
Distress and anguish pressed me.

I called to God, "O Lord, I pray, my soul redeem with favor!"
The Lord is gracious in His way, and righteous is our Savior.
His mercy to the simple flies; He lifted me up to the skies –
I rest in Him forever!

Full well the Lord has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
And dwell with them forever.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the Lord for all His blessings to me?
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
And pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart – save me, Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand'ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

7 Servants of God's Servants

Pray Psalm 118.1.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.

Review Isaiah chapters 44, 45.

Reflect.

1. How did God intend to use Cyrus as His *anointed* servant?
2. In what ways does Cyrus serve to point God's people forward to "that day" of salvation yet to come?

Meditate.

These chapters continue the movement and momentum begun in chapter 40 toward the coming day of salvation – "that day", as Isaiah frequently refers to it. God holds out promises of great blessing to His people, at the same time warning them against the folly of turning to idols. Their idolatry was bringing them into captivity in Babylon; they must not make that mistake again.

Perhaps God's promises seemed rather unlikely to a people who had dwindled in numbers and strength, and who were beset by powerful enemies. But God insists again and again that, as what He had spoken in the past had come to pass, so what He is promising now will also be fulfilled. The people must look to the Lord and listen to His Word, for God alone can sustain them through their time of trial to the new day of salvation which is coming.

Cyrus, the Persian king, will serve God as His *anointed* one – anointed by God to return His people to the land of promise and to rebuild God's city. This is an event that many would see in their lifetime, in particular, the generation that was carried away with Daniel, and who lived through the whole 70 years of Israel's captivity. God's Word would prove reliable in raising up Cyrus; therefore, His Word should be trusted concerning the coming day of salvation as well.

But how shall that day be achieved? The Lord Himself, Israel's Redeemer, will come to save them "with an everlasting salvation" (45.17). That's all the detail God's people need at this time. In the remaining chapters of his book, Isaiah will provide more details about the saving work of God and His Servant, and of what the effects of that will be for God's people, both *in* time, and *beyond* time.

Prepare.

1. What is the primary message for us today from these chapters? What is God saying to us about where to lodge our trust in troubled times?
2. In various ways, God reminded His people in these chapters of His sovereignty and might. How did He do this? Why?
3. What's your primary takeaway from Isaiah 44 and 45?

For it is through faith that understanding grows so that it is not in doubt. Even though faith might be undermined by deceit of ill counsel or led astray into ruin by ancient wickedness, we can quickly return to God and receive the light of the true divine knowledge and with a deliberation that comes from an upright mind constantly pursue the better things. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 4.3.45.20

Lord, You have given me Your great salvation, and I want to know more of that salvation day by day. Help me today to...

Pray Psalm 118.

Praise God for the salvation He reveals in this psalm, and for the life path and promises that come with it.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 118 (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

Thank the Lord, His love endures! All to whom His love is sure,
all who fear Him day by day, let them thanks and praise now say!
Out of my distress I cry; He will hear me from on high.
He will free me from all fear. What can man do to me here?

For the Lord stands next to me; He will give me victory!
Over all who hate my life I will triumph through the strife!
In His grace I refuge find; in His steadfast love so kind.
Trust not princes, trust not men – Christ shall be our haven then!

Praise the Lord, in whose great Name all His foes are brought to shame!
Though they swarmed on every side, in God's Name He dashed their pride!
Like a fire His judgment goes to consume His ardent foes;
Though they pushed against Him hard, He was rescued by the Lord.

In the Savior we are strong! He is all our strength and song!
To His grace now raise your voice; in His righteousness rejoice!
For the Lord does valiantly; we shall live eternally.
Praise His works with all your breath, you whom He redeems from death.

All who know Christ's righteousness His great Name now thank and bless!
Though His gate full righteous is, He our saving mercy is.
Cast aside and left alone, Christ is now our Cornerstone!
God has made His Son and Word our salvation: Praise the Lord!

Blessed are they who in His Name come and Jesus' grace proclaim.
God His light upon us shines in the Savior's sacrifice.
Praise and thanks to You, O Lord; we extol Your holy Word!
Thanks to You for You are good! Thanks to our great loving God!

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. God emphasizes His sovereignty to His people over and over in these chapters. How can you see that? Why does God consider it necessary to keep His sovereignty before the people of Judah and Jerusalem?
2. God mocks the idols people make for themselves. Why?
3. What was Cyrus *anointed* by God to do? How does this work point beyond Cyrus?
4. How would you describe the salvation God promised to bring “in that day”?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from Isaiah 44 and 45? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.