

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 74

Isaiah Chapter 44:24-45:13

This section consists of three paragraphs. Each paragraph is marked with the phrase “Thus says the Lord”.

Last week, we studied four points that each paragraph makes. The LORD created all things. He gives hope to His people. He redeems His people. He directs history. The LORD is the only God. There is none like Him.

Here is an outline of this section. Note that there is an interlude between the second and third paragraphs. It uses imagery to reinforce the message of these paragraphs.

Paragraph 1	Isaiah 44:24-28	The LORD will restore Jerusalem
Paragraph 2	Isaiah 45:1-7	The LORD will direct the activities of Cyrus
Interlude	Isaiah 45:8-10	Righteousness will pour down from heaven like rain. Will clay question the potter?
Paragraph 3	Isaiah 45:11-13	The LORD made the heavens and the earth and created man. He can certainly raise up a Cyrus to bring His exiled people back home.

Let's read the entire passage: **Isaiah 44:24-45:13**.

In **Isaiah 44:28** , the LORD, through His servant Isaiah, announces the name of His chosen agent: **Cyrus**.

The LORD predicted an event that would not occur for another 150 years. Isaiah’s prophetic ministry ended around 690 BC. Cyrus, King of Persia, will issue an edict in 538 BC to permit the people of Judah to return to Jerusalem.

In Isaiah 44:28, the LORD proclaims three things that He would bring about in the future:

1. He will call **Cyrus** to be His shepherd who will perform all His desire in **rescuing His people**.
2. He will cause **the city of Jerusalem** to be built.
3. He will cause **the foundation of the temple** to be laid.

We will now turn to three of the historical books of the Old Testament to learn how, after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the LORD fulfilled His promise to restore Israel, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple.

The LORD would use three Persian kings to accomplish His tremendous plan.

The LORD declared	Persian King(s)	The scriptural record	Notes
His shepherd would release His people from Babylon	Cyrus	2 Chronicles 36:17-23 Ezra 1:1-3; 2:1-2	
The foundation of the Temple will be laid	Cyrus and Darius	Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16; 6:1-15	During the reign of Cyrus, the work of rebuilding the Temple did not progress beyond laying the foundations.
Jerusalem will be rebuilt	Artaxerxes	Nehemiah 2:1-8; 6:15-16	

The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah in 445 BC: 245 years after Isaiah predicted it!

Next up: **Isaiah 45:1-7**.

“Cyrus is My shepherd and My anointed!” The words must have caused quite a stir. This was headline news. But make no mistake: the central figure of this passage is not Cyrus. It is the LORD!

The LORD performs all the deeds Himself. Every action mentioned up until verse 13 is the LORD’s work. There is nothing here about Cyrus’s genius, leadership skills, military might – or anything else.

It is as the LORD says in verse 7: “I am the LORD who does all these things!”

The LORD :

- Takes Cyrus by the right hand
- Subdues nations
- Loosens the loins of kings
- Opens doors
- Goes before Cyrus to make the rough places smooth
- Shatters the doors of bronze and cuts through their iron bars
- Gives treasures

Why does the LORD do all of these things?

1. In order that **Cyrus** may know that it is the LORD, the God of Israel, who has called him (v 3b)
2. For the sake of **the LORD’s chosen people** – the LORD will direct Cyrus to build the LORD’s city and let His exiles go free. (vv 4 and 13)
3. That **all men in the world** may know that there is no one besides the LORD. “I am the LORD and there is no other” (v 6)

The LORD had Isaiah record His words to Cyrus in order to give Israel hope for their future. He wanted to remind them of exactly how amazing He is, and that the LORD, the only God, had chosen them to be His special people.

His track record was impeccable. Every time He promised He would come through for Israel, He delivered on His promise. He performed miraculous deeds, and subdued mighty nations, to rescue them. He will once again.

And there was always that two-fold purpose behind the LORD's work: to finally get His people to completely trust Him, and to let the whole world know of His glory.

Egypt – Pharoah	Moses	“That the Egyptians would know that I am the LORD.”	Exodus 7:1-5; 9:13-16; Joshua 2:8-11
Philistia - Goliath	David	“That all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands.”	1 Samuel 17:41-47
Assyria – Sennacherib	Hezekiah	“That all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O Lord, are God.”	2 Kings 19:14-19

And now:

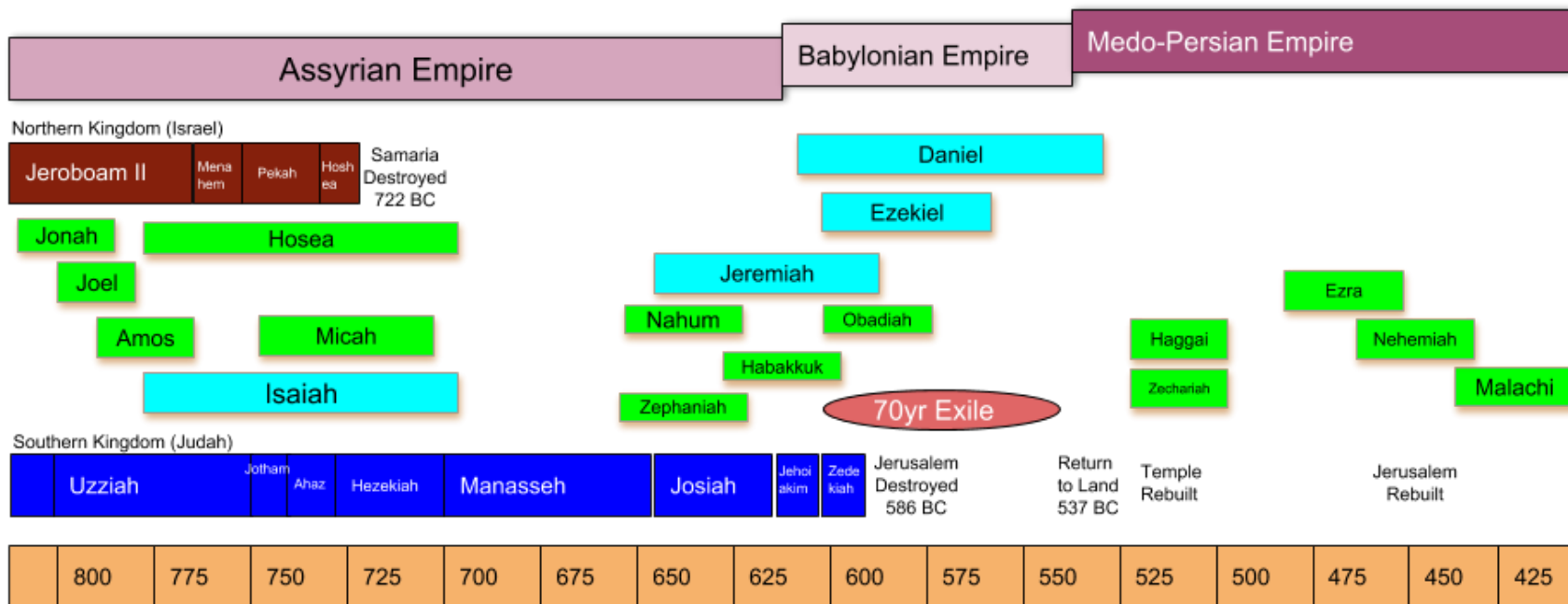
Babylon – Nebuchadnezzar	Cyrus	“That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other,”	Isaiah 45:1-13
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The worldwide impact of God's work in bringing His people back to their land is one of the greatest testimonies of God's divine character. Again and again, the nations of the world have seen the power of the Lord at work for His people. But every time, they refused to honor or worship Him as God or give Him the glory.

That will require the greatest King of all to appear and rescue His people: the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ!
Isaiah 45:20-26; Philippians 2:5-11.

So too

Timeline of the Prophets



RETURN FROM BABYLON

Chronology of the return	World events during the return
605-536 B.C. General period of captivity	ca. 563-ca.483 Buddha (in India)
605, 597, Leading Judean citizens deported,	551-478 B.C. Confucius (in China)
586 B.C. including Daniel and Ezekiel	549 B.C. Cyrus united Persia and Media
538 B.C. Edict of Cyrus permitting the return	546 B.C. Cyrus conquered Lydia
536 B.C. Return of 49,897 from Babylon to Jerusalem	539 B.C. Cyrus conquered Babylon
536 B.C. Altar rebuilt, sacrifice offered in seventh month	530 B.C. Cyrus died
535 B.C. Temple rebuilding begun, but stopped	539-331 B.C. Persian Empire
535-520 B.C. Economic and political struggle	530-522 B.C. Cambyses
520 B.C. Ministry of Haggai	522-486 B.C. Darius I
520-515 B.C. Ministry of Zechariah	490 B.C. Darius defeated at Marathon
515 B.C. Temple completed	486-465 B.C. Xerxes I (Ahasuerus)
458 B.C. Return of Ezra	485-425 B.C. Herodotus
445 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls	480 B.C. Persians defeated at Thermopylae and Salamis
	470-399 B.C. Socrates
	460-429 B.C. Golden age of Pericles
	428-322 B.C. Plato and Aristotle