

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 77

Isaiah Chapter 44:24-45:13

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

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.

Isaiah 45:8-10

Next, we have an interlude of three verses where Isaiah uses imagery to reinforce what has already been said in verses 1-7, and what will be said in verses 11-13.

Verse 8 concludes verses 1-7 in picturesque fashion.

Verses 9 & 10 introduce verses 11-13 in picturesque fashion.

Verse 8 serves as a centerpiece for the entire section from Isaiah 45:1 to Isaiah 46:13 (and, indeed, for the rest of Isaiah as well). It features the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the LORD, and HIS SALVATION.

Let's see the other verses in chapters 45 and 46 where Isaiah also speaks of these things: **Isaiah 45:13, 17, 19, 23, 24; 46:12, 13.**

The **rain** is used symbolically by Isaiah to represent **the word of the LORD, Isaiah 55:9-11.**

In **Isaiah 45:19, 23-24;** the LORD speaks **righteousness**. His **word** has gone forth from His mouth in righteousness.

The LORD's desire is for righteousness to fill the earth, and for all the ends of the earth to see His salvation (**Isaiah 52:10**).

What the LORD desires He will bring to fruition, **Isaiah 59:16.**

Recall that in verses 4-6, the LORD's purposes pertained to both His people in particular, and the people of the whole earth in general.

In **Isaiah 45:25**, we learn that **all of the offspring of Israel** -referring to the remnant of believers - will be justified and will glory.

In **Isaiah 33:5**, the LORD declared that He has filled **Zion** with justice and righteousness. This is a prophecy that points to the Messianic Kingdom.

The LORD declares that His people are the branch of His planting, the work of His hands. One day, “**all your people will be righteous**”. **Isaiah 60:16-22.**

And in **Isaiah 61:11**, the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before **all nations**.

To sum up, then, Isaiah 45:8 speaks of blessings and prosperity in the Messianic Kingdom, when salvation will prevail, and all the earth will be showered with righteousness.

Verses 9 & 10 introduce verses 11-13 in picturesque fashion.

The plain inference is that some people of Israel were quarreling with the Lord.

This was a favorite pastime of the nation of Israel. The tradition extended all the way back to their years in the wilderness, and a place called Meribah. **See Exodus 17:1-10; Psalm 95:6-11.**

Now, however, they were upset at the idea that they would be in bondage to another pagan king. They had hoped to be restored as a nation under the rule of a Messianic king of the line of David.

They were questioning the work of the Lord's hands: the way He was working out historical events for them.

They were even questioning His fatherhood ! Do you know what You are doing in bringing forth the rebirth of the nation?

So now Isaiah declares two woes to them.

1. Woe to the one who quarrels with **his Maker**. (verse 9)
2. Woe to him who says to **a father**: “What are you begetting?” (verse 10)

In **verse 9**, Isaiah compares the relationship between Israel and the LORD to the image of **the clay and the potter**.

How outrageous and ridiculous would it be if common clay started asking the potter “What are you doing?”! Or if the clay told the potter that he had no hands (skill)!

This figure of the potter and the clay is used in the Bible for situations where Israel needed to be put in her place:
Rom 9:19-20; Isa 29:15-16; 64:8; Jer 18:1-12.

In **verse 10**, Isaiah compares the relationship between Israel and the LORD to the image of **a child questioning what his parents are doing in bringing a new baby into the world**. What is that creature you brought into the house?

Don't miss the irony here. The LORD told had recently told them that He formed THEM in the womb! **Isa 44:24.**

Verses 11-13 explain the meaning of the imagery in verses 9 and 10.

Verse 11 begins with “Thus says the LORD”, which marks the start of a new paragraph. The LORD makes it crystal clear who it is that they have been questioning. He is the Holy One. No one has the right to question His decisions. He is their Maker. He created the nation of Israel.

He will now speak concerning the things to come, or in other words, His plans for Israel.

As He did with Job, He is now going to turn the tables on Israel. He will now question them, and they will be silent.

The LORD takes the same approach as He did with Job in a similar circumstance. See **Job 38:1-7** and **Job 40:1-9**.

The next two statements in **verse 11** of Isaiah 45 are best understood as questions. To wit:

Isa 45:11

**do you question me about my children,
or give me orders about the work of my hands?
NIV**

Or as the **NET** translation puts it:

**How dare you question Me about My children!
How dare you tell me what to do with the work of My own hands!**

We have here an example of **chiasm** - a literary device found in both the Old and New Testaments. It was used for emphasis and also served as an aid to memorization.

The simplest structure for a chiasm can be represented as ABBA. That's what we have here in Isaiah 45:9-12.

Here's another ABBA chiasm, one in the New Testament:

Matt 23:12

12 "Whoever **exalts** himself [**A**]
shall be **humbled** [**B**];
and whoever **humbles** himself [**B**]
shall be **exalted** [**A**].
NASU

So too here in Isaiah 45:9-11 we have

Woe to the one who quarrels with **his Maker**. (verse 9) **[A]**

Woe to him who says to **a father**: “What are you begetting?” (verse 10) **[B]**

How dare you question Me about **My children!** (verse 11b) **[B]**

How dare you tell me what to do with **the work of My own hands!** (verse 11c) **[A]**

In **verse 12**, the LORD emphasizes that the work of His hands extends far beyond Israel to the farthest reaches of the universe. It’s as if He were saying, you puny little ingrate: I created the moon, the stars, the earth, and mankind. Who are you to question Me about anything!

Or as He said to Job with the same biting sarcasm,

Job 38:19-21

19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where is its place,
20 That you may take it to its territory
And that you may discern the paths to its home?
21 "You know, for you were born then,
And the number of your days is great!
NASU

If only Isaiah’s audience had the humility of Job to say what he said: “I repent in dust and ashes”! **Job 42:1-6.**