

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 79

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

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.

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

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

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

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?

Verses 11-13 present the LORD's response to their complaint. There are three parts to His answer:

1. His people should not question Him, because He is their Father and their Maker (verse 11).
2. He is the creator of all things (verse 12)
3. He will arouse Cyrus to building the city of Jerusalem, and to let His people Israel go free (verse 13).

In so doing, the LORD explains 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?**

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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. If He is mighty enough to stretch out the heavens with His hands, and to make the earth and create man, He can certainly carry out His plan for Israel’s future glory.

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!

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**.

Verse 13 completes the topic of 44:28-45:5. Let’s refresh our memories by reading **Isaiah 44:28-45:5**.

Great emperors act in their own self-interest. When they perform a great feat, they usually do so in return for a financial or military reward. The fact that Cyrus will seek no reward for rebuilding Jerusalem is evidence that the Lord is directing him in all his ways.

God will accomplish all His desire. He will fulfill all of His promises. Therefore, His people ought to simply trust Him, and rest assured that all they long for will come to pass someday.

Application:

1. The LORD's mighty deeds in the past combine with His perfect character to guarantee that His future plans will come to pass.
2. Wars, calamities, and devastation are not senseless or random occurrences. Every war, every leader, every person ultimately serves the LORD's purpose by fitting into God's blueprint for human history.
See Genesis 50:20; Psalm 76:6-10; Psalm 91; Isaiah 54:14-17; John 16:33; and Romans 8:28.

Isaiah Chapter 45:14-25

The LORD wants Israel to realize that His ultimate goal with all His acts in human history is to save both Israel and many people from the foreign nations.

In the future, Israel will be saved and will never again be put to shame.
But anyone who persists in worshipping idols will be put to shame and disgraced.

In the end, every knee will bow before the LORD.

This section consists of two paragraphs. Each paragraph begins with “Thus says the LORD” ((vv.14, 18), and each one ends with the triumph of Israel (vv. 17, 25).

Here is an outline of this section.

Paragraph 1	Isaiah 45:14-17	Everlasting salvation for Israel: <i>“Israel has been saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation (verse 17)”.</i>
Paragraph 2	Isaiah 45:18-25	The LORD will provide salvation for all the nations, who will worship and glorify Him: <i>“Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other (verse 22).”</i>