

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part L: God's Prophecy About Cyrus That Illustrates His Claim To Be The Only True God (Isaiah 44:24-45:8)

I. Introduction

- A. Idolatry was a main cause for God's sending Israel into captivity in Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:14-21), and once in Babylon, Israel was exposed to many pagan idols (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Isaiah 44:9-20), so the Lord wanted Israel to learn about His infinite superiority to idols once she arrived in captivity in Babylon.
- B. Isaiah 44:24-45:8 illustrates God's claim to be the Only True God in predicting His use of Cyrus to restore Israel to the land 150 years before it occurred (B. K. C., O. T., p. 1099), and we view it for our edification:

II. God's Prophecy About Cyrus That Illustrates His Claim To Be The Only True God, Isaiah 44:24-45:8.

- A. In stating His supremacy as the Only True Creator, God had claimed in Isaiah 44:6-8 and earlier in Isaiah's prophecy that He was the only Creator God as seen in His ability to prophecy the future and then fulfill it.
- B. To illustrate this fact, Isaiah 44:24-45:8 introduces God's prediction of using Medo-Persia's king Cyrus to restore Israel to her land following Israel's still future 70-year Babylonian Captivity (as follows):
 - 1. Repeating His former claims to be the Lord, Israel's Redeemer Who had formed her from the womb as the creator of all things all by Himself (Isaiah 44:24), God added that He made false prophets, diviners and allegedly wise people in the estimation of men appear to be foolish, Isaiah 44:25; *Ibid.*
 - 2. Indeed, contrary to those who would claim God could not release His people from captivity to the seemingly overpowering Babylonians, God would use His messengers to claim Jerusalem would be inhabited and Judah rebuilt, removing obstacles to their ever returning to Israel as figuratively pictured in His drying up the deep and the rivers, thus confirming their word by fulfilling prophecy, Isaiah 44:26-27.
 - 3. Then, naming the ruler He would use to get Israel back into the land, the man yet to be born and rule the Medo-Persians who would then conquer Babylon, God predicted Cyrus would act as His shepherd for Israel, declaring Jerusalem would be rebuilt and its temple foundation laid, Isaiah 44:28. [Many in Liberal Theology assert this prediction must have been written after Isaiah's era as they presume that predictive prophecy cannot occur (*Ibid.*), but the **context** shows God is trying to demonstrate His supremacy and true, sole deity by predicting future events like no other god could do, so inserting this section after the event had already occurred would have made Israel's people long ago discard the book of Isaiah as false!]
 - 4. Isaiah 45:1-4 continued to give details about Cyrus and how God would use him in the future (as follows):
 - a. The Lord predicted that Cyrus would be His "anointed one" since, just as He would do with the Messiah, God would help him defeat kings and obtain riches for helping Israel be restored to her land, Isa. 45:1-4a.
 - b. The Lord would thus hold Cyrus's right hand (Isa. 45:1b), helping him though Cyrus would not even know the Lord, Isa. 45:4b. In proof of this amazing prediction, Cyrus (557-529 B. C.) later wrote on his famous clay barrel that the god "Marduk" had been "going at his side like a real friend," that Cyrus had "gathered all their (former) inhabitants" of captured lands "and returned (to them) their habitations," letting them rebuild the temples of their gods ("Cyrus," James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near East. Texts, 1969, p. 315-316). Cyrus, a polytheist, did this to be blessed by all the gods, adding: "May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me . . ." (*Ibid.*)
 - 5. Though Cyrus would not know God though the Lord would have given him his victories, the Lord claimed that He was the sole, true God, that one day all the world's nations would know this truth, Isaiah 44:5-6.
 - 6. God was He Who formed light and made darkness, Who made peace and created calamity [not "evil" as in the KJV, for *ra'* means **either** moral "evil" **or** "calamity," and the latter applies here, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 672; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 948-949; Isaiah 45:7); He as Creator God did these things!
 - 7. Isaiah 45:8 predicts the Messianic Kingdom blessings that God claims He will yet produce for the world!

Lesson: Illustrating His claim to be the Only True God and Creator Who fulfills prophecy, God foretold 150 years in advance the arrival of pagan king Cyrus who would restore Israel from her captivity in Babylon and even direct that God's temple be rebuilt though Cyrus himself would not know the Lord! Indeed, God claimed that one day the world's kingdoms would know Him and that He would greatly bless the world in the Messianic Kingdom.

Application: In view of the fulfillment of His prophecy about Medo-Persia's Cyrus 150 years after that prophecy was given, may we believe in Scripture's Creator God and FULLY expect Him to produce the Messianic Kingdom!