

# ISAIAH LESSON 39

The Lord's Shepherd<sup>a</sup>  
(Isaiah 44:21-45:9)

Isaiah 44:21-45:9 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

## Israel Is Not Forgotten

**44**<sup>21</sup> Remember these things, O Jacob,  
and Israel, for you are my servant;  
I formed you, you are my servant;  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>22</sup> I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud,  
and your sins like mist;  
return to me, for I have redeemed you.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Sing, O heavens, for the Lord<sup>d</sup> has done it;  
shout, O depths of the earth;  
break forth into singing, O mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it!  
For the Lord has redeemed Jacob,  
and will be glorified in Israel.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer,  
who formed you from the womb:  
“I am the Lord, who made all things,  
who stretched out the heavens alone,  
who spread out the earth—Who was with me?<sup>f</sup>—<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>25</sup> who frustrates the omens of liars,  
and makes fools of diviners;  
who turns wise men back,  
and makes their knowledge foolish;<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>26</sup> who confirms the word of his servant,  
and performs the counsel of his messengers;  
who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited,’  
and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built,  
and I will raise up their ruins’;<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>27</sup> who says to the deep, ‘Be dry,  
I will dry up your rivers’;<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>28</sup> who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd,  
and he shall fulfil all my purpose’;  
saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’  
and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”<sup>k</sup>

## Cyrus, God's Instrument<sup>l</sup>

**45** Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,  
whose right hand I have grasped,

to subdue nations before him  
and ungird the loins of kings,  
to open doors before him  
that gates may not be closed:<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>“I will go before you  
and level the mountains<sup>n</sup>,  
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze<sup>o</sup>  
and cut asunder the bars of iron,<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness  
and the hoards in secret places,  
that you may know that it is I, the Lord,  
the God<sup>q</sup> of Israel, who call you by your name.<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
and Israel my chosen,  
I call you by your name,  
I surname<sup>s</sup> you, though you do not know me.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>I am the Lord, and there is no other,  
besides me there is no God;  
I gird you, though you do not know me,<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>that men may know, from the rising of the sun  
and from the west, that there is none besides me;  
I am the Lord, and there is no other.<sup>v</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>I form light and create darkness,  
I make weal<sup>w</sup> and create woe,  
I am the Lord, who do all these things.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“Shower, O heavens, from above,  
and let the skies rain down righteousness;  
let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth,<sup>[c]</sup>  
and let it cause righteousness to spring up also;  
I the Lord have created it.<sup>y</sup>

**Revised Standard Version (RSV)**

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<sup>a</sup> **The Lord’s Shepherd** – After Isaiah, Judah would have 100 years of ill-rule and trouble before finally falling to Babylon in 586 B.C. After that, there would be 70 years of exile until Babylon itself fell in 539 B.C. and its new Persian ruler permitted the Exiles to return to the Land in 538 B.C. The second half of Isaiah would include many words of comfort and hope for the Jewish people in their Exile. Chapters 40–55 are viewed by some scholars as having been written by Second Isaiah (or Deutero-Isaiah), an anonymous prophet living the end of the Babylonian Exile. Isaiah, who is named frequently in Chapters 1–39, does not appear in these chapters by name. The Assyrians, the great threat during the eighth century, hardly appear at all. The Jews are in Babylon, having been taken there by the victorious Babylonians. Cyrus II, the Persian king, is named. He will defeat Babylon and release the Exiles. The Prophet, who sees this not as a happy circumstance but as part of God’s age-old plan, exhorts the Jews to resist the Babylonian religion and provides hope of an imminent return to the Land, where the Lord will again be acknowledged as King (Is 52:7). Because the Prophet proclaimed the triumph of Persia over Babylon, his message would have been considered seditious if written during the Exile. If it were composed during the Exile, it would likely explain why the collection would have

circulated anonymously. Under this theory, these chapters were later appended to Isaiah 1–39 and considered the work of Isaiah or perhaps his disciples. However, if these chapters were first written and circulated during the later years of Exile, and if they contain the name of Babylon’s conqueror before the conquest, there would be no reason that the original Isaiah, author of Chapters 1-39, could not have predicted what would happen during the Exile as well. Indeed, since all of Isaiah, and particularly the second half, are considered to be a primary prophecy regarding the coming Messiah, there would be no reason to exclude the Isaiah of Chapters 1-39 as the author of the remainder of the Book merely because it speaks of events that were not known to Isaiah’s contemporaries. Nor does the mere fact that Isaiah himself, or Assyria, are not mentioned in these chapters dispositive since they were written about a later time period in which neither of these were actors. Whether written by Isaiah, Isaiah’s disciples or Second Isaiah, the author of these chapters works within the tradition of Isaiah and develops themes found in the earlier chapters, such as the holiness of the Lord (Is 6:1-8) and his lordship of history (Is 7:14, 14:24-27, 26:4). These chapters also develop other themes common in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as the Lord as Israel’s redeemer or deliverer (Ex 3:8, 6:6, 15:13, 18:8). Chapters 40-55 are frequently referred to as the Book of the Consolation of Israel and contain the so-called “Servant Songs” which Christians interpret as speaking of the coming Messiah. The initial chapters of this section also contain predictions concerning the role of Cyrus II, the Great (559-530 B.C.), the founder of the Persian Empire, in the return of the Exiles to the Land who is referred to in Chapter 41 as “**one from the East**” and mentioned by name later (Is 44:28). God was thus able to use a pagan ruler to protect and care for His people, just as He had used the Assyrians to punish Judah for its sins. In Chapter 40 the power of God to save His people is demonstrated. Continuing the same theme, Chapter 41 paints a picture of a courtroom in which God challenges first the nations, and then the gods of the nations, to prove their power. In opening of Chapter 42 we are introduced to the Servant in the first of the Servant Songs which promises that the salvation which is available to the Jewish people will also be available to the gentiles through the actions of the Servant in carrying out God’s plan, which leads to a song of joy song by the gentiles now included in God’s people. In verse 18 of Chapter 42 the scene shifts back to the courtroom and the subject to the Jewish people. They are rebuked for not following God and His Law. But they are also called as witnesses to God’s unique nature and power. And finally they are assured that God has not forgotten them, or their election, and that He will save them and bring them back from Exile. In Chapter 43, the Lord bears witness in a metaphorical courtroom that He is the only true God or source of salvation, but temporal and eternal. It rejects the notion that anything else, be it false god, idol or human action, can contribute to salvation, a theme fully in line with the theme of Chapters 1-39.

<sup>b</sup> (44:21) Having just reassured Israel that God would redeem them because they were His people, His servant, God now tells Israel to **remember** that reassurance (Is 46:8-9, 49:7; Dt 4:9, 4:23, 31:19-21, 32:18) as they go through the difficult times ahead (Is 42:23). In the last line of the MT God also says that He will not forget (נָשַׁח, *nashah*, to forget, neglect or ignore) Israel during this time (Is 49:14-16, 65:15; Ps 27:10, 136:22; Jr 31:20; Rm 11:28-29), and will, in the future, rescue Israel from Babylon (Is 14:1, 43:1, 43:20) and return them to the Land (Is 65:9, 65:22; Jr 46:27-28; Zec 10:9). Some commentators have suggested that the end of this verse would be better translated as “Do not forget Me” corresponding to “remember these things” in the first line. The former reading fits with Israel’s complaint that God had forgotten His people (Isa 40:27). The LXX follows the alternate reading, however, “Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel; for you are My servant; I have formed you to be My servant; and do not forget Me, O Israel.” In IQIsaa the last line reads, “Do not mislead me.” Jacob and Israel both refer to the people of Israel, the descendants of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel after wrestling with an angel (Gn 32:25-29). The things the people are called upon to remember may relate to the folly of making idols and venerating them (Is 44:9-20) but more likely refers to the similar reassurances found which immediately precede that passage (Is 44:1-8) and its restatement immediately following. The foolish idol makers of the previous section created their own gods who would, they thought, serve them. The Lord, however, formed (צָרָה, *yatsar*, to form, create or mold) Israel (Is 27:11, 43:15, 44:1-2) as His servant (עָבַד, *ebed*, slave or servant) (Is 43:10), made it possible for them to become a nation by liberating them from Egyptian captivity, will rescue them from Babylon (Is 41:8-9; Jr 30:10), and through them the promised Messiah would come to lead all people to God (Is 42:1). He would do these things even though Israel would fail, time and again, to live up to the mission God have given it (Is 42:19, 43:7-8, 45:4).

<sup>c</sup> (44:22) God tells His people that He, **God, has wiped away Israel’s sins** (Is 1:18, 33:24, 43:25; 2Ch 6:21; Neh 4:5; Ps 51:1, 51:9-11, 103:12, 109:14; Jr 33:8; Rv 21:4), as if they were covered by a cloud or mist so that they can no longer be seen, or like clouds that blow away or evaporate and disappear in the heat (Jb 7:9, 37:11). The Hebrew here translated as **cloud** (עָב, *ab*) and **mist** (אָנָן, *anan*) both refer to clouds. While they are often, as here, translated using different English words, the Hebrew does not require it. God also encourages Israel to return to Him (Is 31:6) because He has **redeemed** them (Is 43:1, 59:20-21, 61:3; Mt 20:28; 1Co 6:20; 1Pt 1:18-19; Ti 2:12-14), as if from slavery, because their days of punishment are over (Jr 18:23; Lm 3:42-44). Israel, now free from its servitude to sin, is free to return to God (Lk 1:73-74; Mal 3:7; Rm 6:15-23) and, as a repentant people, resume the mission for which Israel was called. The return might also be literal in the sense of fleeing from Babylon and returning to the Land (Is 48:20, 51:11). The LXX alters the meaning somewhat and requires Israel’s repentance and return before the redemption (Is 1:27, 45:22, 55:7, 59:20-21; 2Sm 2:13; Jb 22:23; Jr 3:1, 3:12-14, 36:3; Hos 14:1-4; Ac 3:18-19), “For behold, I have blotted your transgressions out as a cloud, and your sin as darkness; turn to Me, and I will redeem you.”

<sup>d</sup> **Lord - Yahweh**, or **Jehovah** (יהוה, YHWH), written without vowel markings, unpronounced by Jews and referred to as the Tetragrammaton. See Note in the Introduction to this Study. **YHWH** appears twice here and in verses 44:24 (thrice), and in 45:1, 3 (combined with **Elohim**), 5, 6, 7, and 8.

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<sup>e</sup> (44:23) Is 4:2, 12:6, 26:15, 41:14, 42:10-12, 43:1, 43:7, 46:13, 49:3, 49:13, 51:11, 52:1, 55:5, 55:12-13, 60:9, 60:21, 61:3, 62:12; Ex 6:6, 16:7; Lv 10:3; 1Ch 16:31; Ps 63:9, 65:13, 69:34, 96:11-12, 98:4, 98:7-8, 148:7-9; Jr 30:19, 51:48; Ezk 36:1, 36:8, 39:13; Hos 2:21-22; Lk 2:10-14; Eph 1:6-7, 3:21; 2Th 1:10-12; 1Pt 4:11; Rm 5:8-14, 12:12, 18:20; Rv 19:1-6 == The very creation itself will rejoice and sing in celebration of the sins of Israel being wiped away. The verse goes from the most inclusive, the heavens, to the most specific, a single tree. Through the redemption and forgiveness of Israel, God's glory will be shown (Rm 11:\_\_\_-12:1). The highest glory of God is shown not through his creation, not his acts of power, but rather through His mercy. Through mankind's sin, the creation itself was corrupted (Gn 3:\_\_\_; ) and groaned for its deliverance as a woman in childbirth ( ). The Creation was called as a witness against Israel (Is 1:2) will now rejoice with Israel's redemption. With that redemption will ultimately come the Messiah and the redemption of all mankind. Creation itself will also be redeemed and be restored. The LXX reads, "Rejoice, you heavens; for God has had mercy upon Israel; sound the trumpet, you foundations of the earth; you mountains, shout with joy, you hills, and all the trees therein; for God has redeemed Jacob, and Israel shall be glorified." In the rendering of the LXX, Israel, as a restored people, would cease to be humiliated and be glorified under God's care. By redeeming His people, God also glorifies Himself as the God who fulfills His promises. With the Land being again inhabited, the whole Land would become a joyful place again. The witness of nature which had been called against the people in Is 1:2 is now called on to rejoice in the grace of the Lord. The joy will be complete when Earth and heaven are themselves redeemed and restored, Is 65:17-25, 66:22-23; Rm 8:19-22.

<sup>f</sup> **Who spread out the earth—Who was with me?** Or, who spread out the earth by myself?

<sup>g</sup> (44:24) Isa 27:11, 40:22, 41:14, 42:5, 43:1, 43:7, 43:14, 44:2, 44:6, 45:12, 45:18, 46:3-4, 48:13, 48:17, 49:1, 49:7, 49:26, 51:13, 54:5, 54:8, 59:20, 60:16, 63:16; Gn 1:1, 2:1, 16:11; Ex 34:5-7; Jb 9:8, 19:25, 26:7, 31:15; Ps 71:6, 78:35, 104:2, 139:13-16; Jr 50:34, 51:15; Jn 1:3; Gal 1:15; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2, 1:10-12; Rv 5:9 == God reminds the people of Israel that He was their Redeemer, and the One who had formed Israel from the womb, and who had indeed created all things without help from anyone else. The role of the redeemer refers back to the redemption of Israel from Egypt and the Exodus. Unlike the nonexistent deities that can do nothing, God did, and created, everything. The Heavens are a celestial dome stretched out by God. The Lands of the known world were spread out. No other gods were required to bring everything into existence.

<sup>h</sup> (44:25) Is 2:6, 8:19, 19:3, 19:11-14, 29:14, 47:12-14; Ex 9:11; Lv 19:26; 1Sm 6:2; 2Sm 15:31, 16:23, 17:23; 1Ki 22:11-12, 22:22-25, 22:37; 2Ch 18:11, 18:34; Jb 5:12-14; Ps 33:10; Jr 27:9-10, 28:9-17, 49:7, 50:36, 51:57; Dn 1:20, 2:2, 2:10-12, 4:7, 5:6-8; Mi 3:7; Zec 10:2; 1Co 1:19-27, 3:19-20 == The truth of God (Rm \_\_\_ ) will frustrate lies of the false prophets, diviners, and the wise (1Co 1:\_\_\_). The Hebrew translated here as liars (בַּדִּים, baddim) could also mean "empty talkers". This word appears four other times (Job 11:3; Isa 16:6; Jer 48:30, 50:36) but their context does not clarify the meaning. In light of its parallel construction with diviners (חֲסִידִים, qasam), some suggest that liars should be seers (בָּרִים, barim). The Babylonian monarchy depended greatly upon divination and omens (Dt 18:10-11; Dn \_\_\_). This may refer to the failure of the diviners and wise men of Babylon to warn of the threat of invasion by Cyrus or to offer any advice on defeating it. The LXX reads, "Who else will frustrate the tokens of those that have divining spirits, and prophecies from the heart of man? Turning the wise back, and making their counsel foolishness." The Septuagint rendering implies that the divinations "from the heart" are not from a god, but only from the diviners themselves – that is that they had no special power.

<sup>i</sup> (44:26) Is 1:1, 40:9, 42:9, 46:10, 49:8-21, 51:3, 54:3, 54:11-12, 55:11, 58:12, 59:21, 60:10, 61:4; Ex 11:4-6, 12:29-30; 1Ki 13:3-5, 18:36-38; 2Ch 36:22; Ezr 2:70, 9:9; Neh 1:3, 2:3, 3:1-32; Ps 51:18, 74:3, 102:13-16, 147:2; Jr 30:18, 31:4, 31:38-40, 32:15, 32:44, 33:7; Jr 23:20, 32:15, 32:44, 39:16; Lm 2:17; Ezk 36:10, 36:33-36, 38:17; Dn 9:12, 9:25; Am 9:14; Zec 1:6, 2:4, 12:6, 14:10-11; Mt 5:18, 26:56; Lk 24:44; Ac 2:25-28; 2Pt 1:19-21 == In contrast to the lies of the diviners who will be frustrated, God will confirm, or bring to pass, the voice or words of His Servant. Some commentators suggest, based on the context, that the Servant is Isaiah, or other prophets of the Lord who spoke not their own words, but the words of God. The ultimate voice of God on Earth is, of course, the Messiah. He further promises that Jerusalem will be re-inhabited and rebuilt. The Hebrew for **counsel** (עֲצָה, 'etsah) likely refers to the divine plan preached by the prophets. The LXX reads, ". . . and confirming the word of His servant, and verifying the counsel of His messengers; who says to Jerusalem, You shall be inhabited; and to the cities of Edom, You shall be built, and her desert places shall spring forth."

<sup>j</sup> (44:27) Is 11:15-16, 19:5, 42:15, 43:16, 50:2, 51:10, 51:15; Ex 14:21; Ps 74:15; Jr 50:38, 51:32, 51:36; Rv 16:12 == God claims that he can dry up the sea if He gives the word, again harkening back to the Exodus. The LXX states, "Who says to the deep, You shall be dried up, and I will dry up the rivers." The *Targum of Isaiah* likens the deep or abyss to Babylon which stood as a vast chasm preventing the return of the Jews to Jerusalem which God will lay waste. If Herodotus is believed, the abyss and rivers could refer to the Euphrates River that functioned as a moat protecting the city. In Herodotus' account, Cyrus diverted or dried up Babylon's rivers to enable his conquest of that city: "Cyrus, with the first approach of the ensuing spring, marched forward against Babylon. The Babylonians, encamped without their walls, awaited his coming. A battle was fought at a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian king, whereupon they withdrew within their defenses. Here they shut themselves up, and made light of his siege, having laid in a store of provisions for many years in

preparation against this attack; for when they saw Cyrus conquering nation after nation, they were convinced that he would never stop, and that their turn would come at last. Cyrus was now reduced to great perplexity, as time went on and he made no progress against the place. In this distress either someone made the suggestion to him, or he bethought himself of a plan, which he proceeded to put in execution. He placed a portion of his army at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough: he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where [legendary former queen] Nitocris dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly: he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became fordable. "Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the riverside entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man's thigh, and thus got into the town. Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street gates which gave access to the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and so took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare) long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learned about the capture. Such, then, were the circumstances of the first taking of Babylon." This account is consistent with the Biblical account which speaks of a sudden fall of the City (Dn \_\_\_). The fact that Cyrus is named a century before his time is taken as proof of a later date for its writing, or that Cyrus was a later addition to the text, or of similar objections to the text's validity. But that assumes that prophecy cannot be valid. In another example of a prediction centuries early, see 1Ki 13:1-2 (Josiah's reformation).

<sup>k</sup> (44:28) Is 14:32, 28:16, 41:2, 42:15, 45:1-3, 45:13, 46:11, 48:14-15, 54:11, 56:11, 58:12, 63:11; 2Sm 5:2, 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4, 6:3-18; Ps 78:71-72; Jr 23:4; Dn 10:1; Eph 1:9 == God designates Cyrus as His shepherd who will fulfil God's purpose by accomplishing the return to Jerusalem and its rebuilding. Others called Shepherd include Moses (Ex 3:1) and David (2Sm 7:8). Both were indeed shepherds by profession. Heb "my shepherd." The shepherd motif is sometimes applied, as here, to a royal figure who is responsible for the well-being of the people whom he rules. Heb. "that he might bring to completion all my desire." / Heb "and [concerning the] temple, you will be founded." The verb תִּנְּוּ (tivvased, "you will be founded") is second masculine singular and is probably addressed to the personified temple (הֵיכָל [hekhhal, "temple"] is masculine). The *Targum of Isaiah* has God promising the kingdom to Cyrus. According to the LXX, Cyrus is instructed to be wise, perhaps wise in allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Cyrus appears to have been a wise and very successful leader. Pliny the Elder, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, (Natural History, VII, xxiv) that Cyrus had an exceptional memory and was able to call every soldier by name.

<sup>l</sup> Is 41:1-5.

<sup>m</sup> (45:1) Is 13:3, 22:21, 41:2, 41:13, 41:25, 42:6, 44:28, 45:5, 48:14; 1Sm 10:1; 1Ki 19:15; 2Ch 36:22; Ezr 1:1; Ps 2:8-12, 45:3, 45:7, 73:23; Jb 12:21; Jr 27:6, 50:3, 50:35, 51:11, 51:20-24; Ezk 30:21-24; Dn 5:6, 5:28-30, 7:5, 8:3; Nah 2:6; Mi 4:13 == God Himself will anoint Cyrus, grasp his right hand, indicating both guidance and empowerment, and open the gates of cities before him. The Hebrew for anointed ( ) is Messiah in English. Its Greek translation in the LXX ( ) is the basis for the title Christ given to Messiah Jesus. Cyrus is the only non-Jewish King ever to be referred to as "anointed". Cyrus is envisioned as ungirding ( ), and thus disarming, other kings in the region in a reversal of the usual formula for arming oneself (1Ki 20:11). The Hellenistic (mid 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.) historian Xenophon (Cyropaedia, VII, v, 25), describes Babylon as having a huge party the night that it fell to the Persians, and Cyrus encouraging his men to a quick conquest before the Babylonians sober up. This account is consistent with the Biblical account (Dn \_\_\_). This is a coronation prophecy like those in Ps 2 and Ps 110. The prophecy is similar to a Babylonian text, the Cyrus Cylinder, in which Marduk, who was a Babylonian, not Persian, god, "named the name of Cyrus and summoned him to rule the whole world." This text was written by Babylonian priests at the moment of Cyrus' victory over Babylon.

<sup>n</sup> Mountains, or Gr. Swellings.

<sup>o</sup> Doors of Bronze - Bronze doors: those defending the city gates of Babylon.

<sup>p</sup> (45:2) Is 13:2-17, 40:4, 42:16; Ex 23:20; Ps 107:16, 147:13; Jr 51:30; Lm 2:9; Nah 3:13; Lk 3:5; Ac 1:15 == God promises to go before Cyrus and level all obstacles, and open all doors that might stand in his way. When Cyrus' victory over Babylon was certain, the Babylonian priests apparently opened the gates of Babylon to allow Cyrus to enter in the hope of preventing destruction. Jesus would open the gates of Hell, Rv 1:18, and set the prisoners free, Jn 8:36.

<sup>q</sup> **God - Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים), the plural form of the generic *el* (אֵל). See Note in the Introduction to this Study. אֱלֹהִים appears here, combined with **Lord**, and in verses in verses 45:5 and 6.

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<sup>r</sup> (45:3) Is 41:23, 43:1, 48:15, 49:1; Ex 33:12-17; 2Ki 24:13; Ezr 1:2; Jr 27:5-7, 41:8, 41:23, 50:37, 51:13, 51:53; Ezk 29:19-20 == In an obscure reference, this verse speaks of treasures of darkness and the secret hoards that will be given to Cyrus thus demonstrating God's power and concern for His people Israel. That God would call Cyrus by name indicates familiarity and even intimacy. Through this intimacy and God's enabling power, Cyrus will come to know that the God who calls him by name, and sustains his conquests, is the God of Israel, perhaps encouraging him to authorize the return to the Land. The LXX reads, "And I will give you the treasures of darkness, I will open to you hidden, unseen treasures, that you may know that I, the Lord your God, that call you by name, am the God of Israel." This would seem to point to some sort of secret knowledge that would be revealed. This implication is not present in the Hebrew. Perhaps it is merely a reference to the fact that when Cyrus conquered a city or kingdom he was able to seize their treasuries. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish historian Josephus wrote (Antiquities, XI,I,1,2) that Cyrus was aware of Isaiah's prophecy which encouraged him in his conquests and also led him to free the Jews from Babylon.

<sup>s</sup> Surname (קנָה, kanah), is better translated as bestowing a title, epithet or sobriquet rather than as a reference to a "family name".

<sup>l</sup> (45:4) Is 14:1, 40:26, 41:8-9, 42:19, 43:1-4, 43:14, 44:1, 44:5, 44:28, 45:1, 62:2; Ex 19:5,6; Jr 50:17-20; Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20; Ac 17:23; Rm 9:6, 11:7; Gal 4:8-9; Eph 2:12; 1Th 4:5 == For the sake of God's chosen people Israel, God called Cyrus and gave him a title even though Cyrus did not know God. Through carrying out God's mission, Cyrus would come to know God. The LXX reads, "For the sake of My servant Jacob, and Israel My elect, I will call you by your name, and accept you; but you have not known Me. It was God's purpose that the Messiah would come from the Jews and that they would return to the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. The Jewish people were God's chosen ones through their first father, Jacob, who had been chosen over Jacob's twin brother Esau even before they were born (Gn 25:22-23; Rm \_\_\_).

<sup>u</sup> (45:5) Is 22:21, 40:25, 43:10, 44:6-8, 45:6, 45:14-22, 46:9; Dt 4:35-39, 32:12, 32:39; 2Sm 7:22; 1Ki 8:60; Ezr 1:2; Jb 12:18-21; Ps 18:31-32, 18:39; Ezk 30:24-25; Jl 2:27; Jn 1:1; Heb 1:8-9 == God reiterates that He is the only God, and that He is enabling and empowering Cyrus even though Cyrus does not yet know Him. Only God controls the course of history. In contrast to the Biblical account, Cyrus II, on a cylinder inscription from 538 B.C. attributes his victories to Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. The Second Helvetic Confession (\_\_\_\_), Chapter III, Sec. 5.015, states, "GOD IS ONE. WE BELIEVE AND TEACH THAT GOD IS ONE IN ESSENCE OR NATURE, SUBSISTING IN HIMSELF, ALL SUFFICIENT IN HIMSELF, INVISIBLE, INCORPOREAL, IMMENSE, ETERNAL, CREATOR OF ALL THINGS BOTH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE, THE GREATEST GOOD, LIVING, QUICKENING AND RESERVING ALL THINGS, OMNIPOTENT AND SUPREMELY WISE, KIND AND MERCIFUL, JUST AND TRUE. TRULY WE DETEST MANY GODS BECAUSE IT IS EXPRESSLY WRITTEN: "THE LORD YOUR GOD IS ONE LORD" (DEUT. 6:4). "I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME" (EX. 20:2-3). "I AM THE LORD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER GOD BESIDES ME. AM I NOT THE LORD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER GOD BESIDE ME? A RIGHTEOUS GOD AND A SAVIOR; THERE IS NONE BESIDES ME" (ISA. 45:5, 21). "THE LORD, THE LORD, A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS" (EX. 34:6)."

<sup>v</sup> (45:6) Is 11:9, 14:13-14, 37:20, 43:5, 47:8-10; 1Sm 17:46-47; Ps 46:10, 83:18, 102:15-16, 113:3; Ezk 38:23, 39:21; Mal 1:11; Zep 2:15 == As a result of the success of Cyrus, and the liberation of the Jewish people, all the nations, from East to West, will come to know that Israel's God had enabled it, and thus would come to know that Israel's God was the one true God.

<sup>w</sup> Weal, or goodness, prosperity or wellbeing, or peace in Greek

<sup>x</sup> (45:7) Is 10:5-6, 13:11, 14:15, 31:2, 42:16, 47:11; Gn 1:3-5, 1:17-18, 50:20; Ex 10:21-23, 14:20; 1Sm 16:14; 1Ki 21:21, 22:8; 2Ki 6:33; Jb 2:10, 34:29; Ps 8:3, 29:11, 75:7, 78:49, 104:20-23, 105:28; Ec 7:13-14; Jr 1:14, 13:16, 18:7-10, 31:35, 51:20; Sir 11:14; Lm 3:38; Ezk 14:15-21, 32:8; Jl 2:2; Am 3:6, 4:13, 5:6; Nah 1:8; Ac 4:28; 2Co 4:6; Eph 1:11; Jas 1:17; Jude 1:6, 1:13 == God asserts that He is in control of history, and can deliver both woe and prosperity, light and darkness, that is, that God can do all things. On the surface, the beginning of this verse describes God's creation of and control over the movements of the Sun and Moon. But the reference to woe and prosperity which follows seems to suggest that a better reading would be that God controls deliverance and justice. The LXX references peace and evils rather than woes and prosperity, "I am He that prepared light, and formed darkness; who makes peace, and creates calamity; I am the Lord God, that does all these things." This does not significantly change the meaning however. Darkness is treated as something that was created, which is different from the absence of light. The response to Question 94 of the Heidelberg Catechism (\_\_\_\_) asking what the First Commandment requires, reads, "THAT I, NOT WANTING TO ENDANGER MY OWN SALVATION, AVOID AND SHUN ALL IDOLATRY, SORcery, SUPERSTITIOUS RITES, AND PRAYER TO SAINTS OR TO OTHER CREATURES. THAT I RIGHTLY KNOW THE ONLY TRUE GOD, TRUST HIM ALONE, AND LOOK TO GOD FOR EVERY GOOD THING [Is 45:7] HUMBLy AND PATIENTLY, AND LOVE, FEAR, AND HONOR GOD WITH ALL MY HEART. IN SHORT, THAT I GIVE UP ANYTHING RATHER THAN GO AGAINST GOD'S WILL IN ANY WAY."

<sup>y</sup> (45:8) Is 4:2, 11:1, 12:3, 32:15, 41:2, 44:3, 45:24, 46:13, 48:18, 51:5, 53:2, 56:1, 60:21, 61:3, 61:10-11, 62:1, 65:17-18, 66:22; Dt 32:2; Ps 72:3-6, 85:9-12, 133:3; Jr 31:22; Ezk 34:26; Hos 10:12, 14:5-8; Jl 2:23, 2:28-29, 3:18; Am 5:24; Mal 4:2; Ac 2:33; 1Co 3:6-9; Eph 2:10, 4:24; Ti 3:3-6 == This verse is a short doxology, or praise to God, who is pictured as causing justice to rain down from heaven to water the earth so that salvation may spring up and grow and righteousness also grow among men. This is a picture of an eschatological future in which God Himself will be the initiator in bringing justice and salvation to the Earth. Justice

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and salvation are pictured as being inextricably bound together. The Latin Vulgate translation by St. Jerome, in particular, made the Messianic reference explicit by using “just one” and “savior” in place of “justice” and “salvation,” which translation was incorporated in part of the Roman Catholic Advent liturgy known as the *Rorate coeli desuper: Rorate coeli desuper et nubes pluant justum Aperiatur terra et germinet salvatorem* (Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just. Let the earth be opened and send forth a Savior). The LXX is less clear on God’s direct role in bringing justice and salvation, “Let the heavens rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain righteousness; let the earth bring forth, and blossom with mercy, and bring forth righteousness likewise; I am the Lord that created you.” The Great Isaiah Scroll, 1QIsaa, contains differs from the MT, “Cry out heavens above and skies, and let righteousness pour down; the one saying to the earth, ‘And let deliverance be fruitful, and let righteousness spring up.’” The *Targum of Isaiah* sees the opening up of the earth as part of restoring the dead to life. Although this verse may be immediately concerned with the Jews being allowed to return from Babylon to the Land, its implications go far beyond that indicating that St. Jerome was not entirely incorrect, particularly given the similarity of this verse’s reference to Creation itself participating in the redemptive exercise which is similar to the reference to Creation rejoicing at the fulfilment of God’s plan (Is 44:23).