

A LONG LOOK AHEAD

Isaiah 45

OR HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT GOD WILL KEEP HIS WORD?

Intro: We must keep in mind as we go through these chapters in Isaiah that Isaiah was called to comfort the people of Judah. He comforts them by turning them to the Lord. Over and over again they are called to consider the uniqueness of God. One way in which God is greater than the idols of the heathen is His ability to predict the future and to announce ahead of time the things that are going to come to pass.

In this chapter Isaiah was enabled by the Holy Spirit to look far into the future.

The first part of his message had to do with Cyrus who was not yet born in Isaiah's day, and who did not do the things predicted in this chapter until more than 200 years later.

The prophecies concerning Cyrus now are history.

But there are two other prophecies in this chapter which have not yet been fulfilled. One has to do with Israel; the other has to do with the Gentiles.

From our standpoint, the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding Cyrus encourage us to believe that the other two prophecies will be fulfilled.

But from the standpoint of the people of Judah in Isaiah's day, their hope of the fulfillment of the three prophecies was to be found in the nature of God, and in His past works.

The longer the latter two prophecies are in being fulfilled, the more we, too, are thrown back upon the character of God.. God Who is what He is, cannot fail.

Cyrus is mentioned by name, but not his kingdom. Judah knew much about Assyria, and she was learning much about Babylon, but "Cyrus" was something new, unheard of. Humanly speaking, it was making promises to Judah concerning a source which had no existence!

Let us note, first of all, what Isaiah predicted concerning

I. CYRUS (Isa. 45:1-13).

The prophecy actually begins in 44:28.

What an illustration this is of the truth stated in Prov. 21:1,

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord,
as the rivers of water;
he turneth it whithersoever he will.

We see in God's words concerning Cyrus that He is indeed sovereign over the affairs of the nations. Remember what was said at the beginning of this series of messages in Isa. 40:15-17.

Also see Psa. 2. One nation can strike fear to the hearts of many other nations, but all of them combined against God only makes Him laugh!

Notice the things which the Lord said about Cyrus:

- 1) In 44:28. The Lord predicted
 - a) What his title would be.
 - b) What he would do.
 - c) What he would say.
- 2) In 45:1-3.
 - a) What the Lord would do for Cyrus (down through v. 3a).
 - b) What Cyrus would learn— in v. 3b.
- 3) In 45:4-6.

These verses go along with the latter part of v. 3 because they state the purposes of God. Not only would Cyrus learn something very important about the Lord, but he would see that his successes were for Israel's sake.

In addition, the Gentile nations would learn something very important about the Lord.

And all of this would be done in spite of the fact that it is stated twice (once in v. 4, and once in v. 5) that Cyrus did not know the Lord even though the Lord could call him by name over 200 years ahead of time.

- 4) In 45:13.

This last verse in the section concerning Cyrus tells exactly what he will do for J dah, and that he will be successful!

All of this came to pass. It is now history. Cf. Ezra 6. God was faithful to His Word.

But now let us go on to the unfulfilled prophecies. They have to do with

II. ISRAEL AND THE GENTILE NATIONS (Isa. 45:14-25).

Rather than take up this whole section in detail, we will look at the two or three verses which tell us specifically what to expect concerning these two groups which include all of the nations of the earth.

- A. Concerning Israel (Isa. 45:17, 25). See also v. 19.
- B. Concerning the Gentiles (Isa. 45:22, 23). The latter verse is quoted in Phil. 2:10. Thus these have to be the words of the Lord Jesus Christ!

These are just as unbelievable as the first prophecy. It was fulfilled. What guarantee do we have that these last two prophecies will be fulfilled?

III. THE GUARANTEE OF THE PROPHECIES. *The first for us is fulfilled prophecy.*

The guarantee of the prophecies is God Himself, the One Who gave the prophecies.

Notice what we have in the following:

A. The name and nature of the Lord: "I am the Lord" (v. 5).

Notice also statements like, "Thus saith the Lord," and "I the Lord," and all of the times we have "I" and "I will" throughout the chapter when they refer to the Lord.

B. The uniqueness of God.

One of the characteristic statements of God in the prophecy of Isaiah is that which is found in v. 5a, and again in v. 6b, and v. 14b, and v. 18b, and vv. 22, 23.

C. The providence of God. *He alone controls the events of history. He cannot be overruled.*

V. 7 establishes this. But so does v. 8.

This is followed by another point:

D. The creating work of God.

See vv. 9, 10, 12, 18, 19.

If God brought the universe and men into existence, then it is not beyond Him to be able to direct their ways.

Finally,

E. The superiority of God.

The nations characteristically have been idolaters. Look at what is said in vv. 14-16, and then in vv. 20-22.

Concl: The prophetic word is a word filled with comfort and all kinds of blessing. Cf. Rev. 1:3. And it is a sure word because of the God Who has given them! Let us be encouraged to believe that the Lord is worthy of our trust and worship because He cannot and will not fail to do all that He has promised.