

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE Sunday School- January 9, 2011

Unifying Topic: TURN TO ME AND BE SAVED

Lesson Text

I. Our Creator And Lord (Isaiah 45:18-19)

II. A Righteous God And Savior (Isaiah 45:20-22)

III. God's Sovereign Authority (Isaiah 45:23-24)

The Main Thought: Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:22,KJV).

Unifying Principle: Many people who seek to be leaders falsely claim knowledge, authority, and power. How are the people to recognize false claims? God's mighty acts since the beginning of time present hope for the future while showing that none other can demonstrate such ability.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand how God, the Lord and the Creator, is the only One who can save us.

Life aim: To teach students to appreciate how God, the one and only Sovereign Lord and Creator, who made everything, is able to save us and give us a wonderful future full of hope and abundant blessings.

45:18 For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob. Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray into a god that cannot save.

45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

45:24 Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

HISTORY:

A CHARGE TO CYRUS:

Chapter 45:1-4 ¹Isaiah carries on this remarkable prophecy from the previous chapter. In it, God announces - by name - the deliverer for His people from a coming captivity, and He does it 200 years before the man **Cyrus** is born. This is the only place in the bible where a Gentile ruler is called "**anointed**." God is the power over all powers and He anoints whom He chooses for His special tasks. Cyrus' kingdom spread across 2,000 miles, including the territories of both the Assyrian and the Babylonian empires. Why did God anoint Cyrus? -Because God had a special task for him to do for Israel. This Word prophecy was particularly directed to Cyrus. This was God's message to him, and Cyrus apparently listened. *"These things Cyrus knew from reading the book of prophecy which Isaiah had left behind two hundred and ten years earlier."* (Josephus, *Antiquities XI, 5 [i.2], cited in Grogan*). Cyrus would see how the Lord held his hand the entire time **to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings. The gates shall not be shut** referring to the two leaven gates which went down into the Euphrates River (built to keep intruders out) were left unlocked making it possible for the army of Cyrus to take Babylon.

As the Lord went before them, it was an easy conquest. He made crooked places straight and broke brass gates and iron bars. God certainly gave Cyrus treasures which were of Babylon. God's focus was on His people. It wasn't Cyrus that moved God to act, but, the condition and cry of His people. However, Cyrus had not known the Lord, yet God could anoint him, guide him, bless him, and use him to glorify the Lord Himself. The Lord also did it so Cyrus would show kindness to the people of God, granting them permission to return to the Promised Land from the captivity imposed on them by the Babylonians. Therefore, God is the author of both the destruction of Jerusalem and her subsequent deliverance.

45:5-7 In chapter 43, God had said, *Is. 43:10-11* "...Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and there is no Savior besides Me." Again the Lord proclaims in Chapter 45 His uniqueness in that **there is no God beside Me** (verses 5-6). He is the first and last God. Jesus is one with the Father.

¹ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7764&commInfo=31&topic=Isaiah
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Jesus says in, *Rev. 22:13* "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." It's as if God is saying, "Well, anyone who is like Me would certainly be able to tell me the entire story of how I established things in ancient times, as well as being able to say what things are going to happen in the future." This is the same proof God required back in Chapter 41. He lets Cyrus know again, that He girded (*encompassed*) him and he had not known Him. **I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things:** Since this prophecy was given long before God's people went into the captivity, Isaiah now announces deliverance from Babylon. They could be comforted through this captivity by knowing God is in control. It demonstrates that God is outside of time, controlling the events of earth.

THE LORD THE CREATOR:

45:8 Looking to the God who created everything. God calls to the creation. **Drop down, ye heavens, from above..., pour down righteousness** is a prayer for God to intervene in human history. The imagery is that of a refreshing rain upon a fertile field, which causes it to spring forth abundantly. Our lives are sprinkled with both types of experiences and both are needed for us to grow spiritually. When good times come, thank God and use your prosperity for Him. When bad times come, don't resent them, but ask what you can learn from this refining experience to make you a better servant of God. **Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.** This lets us know that God is the source of spiritual refreshing.

45:9-13 Two **Woes** are pronounced on those that reject the Lord. Those who would resist the will and work of God are pictured as **clay** resisting the potter. Such rejection is as ridiculous as one questioning his father and mother or as to why he or she had begotten him. Thus God is pictured as **his Maker**. So God basically says that He can produce what He wants from where He wants. Whether righteousness drips down from heaven or comes up from the earth, God can bring it forth. So, if people want to argue with God about His plans, Isaiah simply says, "**Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker...**" Realistically, we should be thankful that God tells us anything at all - because really, we're not entitled to know what He's doing, ever! However, He challenges those who want to know the truth about the future, then come to the only source that can help you--that is the God of creation, **Ask me of things to come concerning my sons...and command Him.** Repeatedly through this extended section of Isaiah, God emphasizes His place as Creator. When we reject God as Creator, we reject the God of the Bible, and serve a God of our own imagination. He really did make us and it really does matter. Commanding God does not make us master and He the servant. Our commands are requests and they become commands only when God determines to do them. **I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I even My hands; stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.** The idea if all this is: God is saying, "*I do the commanding, and not you!*" The pronoun "I" (*meaning God*), **have raised "him"** (*meaning Cyrus*), **up in "righteousness"**, (*meaning to carry out God's righteous purpose*), **and I will direct all his ways;** (*making it possible for Cyrus to do what needs to be done*) **he shall build My city (Jerusalem), and he shall let go My captives (Israel), not for price nor reward,"** (*but out of a conviction from God that he must do it!*), **saith the Lord of hosts.**

AN EVERLASTING SALVATION FOR ISRAEL:

45:14 Thus, this passage then looks forward to a time when **Egypt...Ethiopia...the Sabens shall fall down** and acknowledge that Jehovah is the only God. The fact that the Gentiles robbed the sons of Israel and carried them away in fetters (*chains*) of iron and brass, but they will in the future day of "Restoration", come up to Jerusalem in chains of love and "Repentance", bringing their wealth with them, and confessing that there is but One True Living God, Jehovah, Messiah, the God of Israel. That latter phrase: **there is no God**, actually says, there is no other God. The profound truth of **verse 15** is that God cannot be known apart from His revelation of Himself to man. Thus, He is a **God that hidest** and yet, at the same time, He is the **Saviour**. We may not apply these words to a seeking sinner. From such God does not hide Himself. But when in the last days Israel will seek Him, she will find Him. He may be hid and still be Saviour so that man will develop trust and dependence on God, instead of having to be told everything that the Lord will do. **45:16** Isaiah's book has mentioned several times that idolaters will **be ashamed**. The idol worshippers are pictured as ashamed, **confounded**, and **confused** when the Lord is revealed as the true God; while God's people (**Israel**) are **saved**. When the Lord delivers Israel, the nations will look at their impotent and incompetent gods, and be humiliated. They will be especially dishonored when they see Jesus appearing in power and great glory, and they realize that their statues are just inanimate hunks of wood, metal, and stone. **45:17** Until this time, Israel had heard of temporal salvation—God would save them from their enemies. Now Isaiah tells of eternal salvation with God. **Everlasting Salvation** means one which will continue age after age. The general sense of the passage is that those who trust in the Lord shall be vindicated, and shall **never be ashamed nor confounded**.

LESSON:

Isaiah 45:18-19 Our Creator And Lord

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45:18 For thus said the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it: This mentions the creation of the heavens; created by God. ²There are 3 heavens mentioned in the Scriptures.

1. First heaven: The heaven in which the birds fly Jer.4:25.
2. Second heaven: The heaven in which the stars are found Is.13:10.
3. Third heaven: The heaven in which there is the presence of God Heb.9:24.
 - a. Paul speaks of himself in 2 Cor.12:2, 4 as caught up in the third heaven.
 - b. Christ will come from the third heaven to take up the Church. It is a glorious hope of the Church. 1 Thes.4:16,17

³But he enlarges more upon that of the earth, because that is the part of the creation which we have the nearest view of and are most familiar with.

- The Earth is the 5th larger planet in our Solar system
- The Earth is the 3rd planet from the Sun

All this God has created and formed the earth with very many favorable conditions for human beings to live in. It is here observed, (1.) That He formed it. It is not a rude, but cast into the most proper shape and size by Infinite Wisdom. (2.) That He fixed it when He made it. He established it; founded it on the seas, (Ps. 24:2); hung it on nothing (Job 26:7) (3.) That he fitted it for use, and for the service of man, to whom He designed to give it.

...he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: He created it not in vain, merely to be a proof of His power; but He formed it to be inhabited by the children of men, and for that end He drew the waters off from it, with which it was at first covered, and made the dry land appear, Ps. 104:6, 7. Be it observed here, to the honour of God's wisdom, that He made nothing in vain, but intended every thing for some end and fitted it to answer the intention. If any man prove to have been made in vain it is his own fault. **I am the Lord; and there is none else**. 1. It appears by the light of nature; for He made the world, and therefore may justly demand its homage. 2. It also appears by the light of revelation; terms as **created, formed, made, established** in scripture has revealed His awesomeness, His mind, His will. Don't you think God, who made all of this can make "*man*", place Him in what He has established, and we not think that we evolved from some kind of ape? As the works of God abundantly prove that He is God alone, so does His Word. Neither one of us can command the hand of God. We can make requests, but, He is Commander-in-Chief; God alone. There is none other that can make the claims of making God or any other thing in the heavens or the earth. How awesome is this? This verse tends to confirm **there is none else!**

45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: Everything is in view to see. All the things spoken are not hid from any of us. They are revealed to the public. God does not go or speak things into existence in dark places. He is the God of light and His fulfillments of His promises are sure! The pagan deities delivered their oracles out of dens and caverns, with a low and hollow voice, and in ambiguous expressions; those that had familiar spirits whispered and muttered (chap. 8:19); but God delivered His law from the top of Mount Sinai before all the thousands of Israel, in distinct, audible, and intelligible sounds. Apparently, **the seed of Jacob** consulted these oracles and governed themselves by them. The false gods wanted their worshippers to **seek** them, which would have been **in vain** anyway. God is not a vain God and He does not do anything in vain because He **speaks righteousness** and **declare righteous things** which make men righteous.

Isaiah 45:20-22 A Righteous God And Savior

45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray into a god that cannot save. – This, like the passage in Isaiah 41:1, is a solemn appeal to the worshippers of idols, to come and produce the evidences of their being endowed with omniscience, and with almighty power, and of their having claims to the homage of their worshippers. God calls his people to **Assemble** themselves from among the **nations** (Gentiles) and return unto Him. The Lord is not only superior to the idols of **wood**, but He is the One who has declared this from ancient time, meaning that He is the One who can predict the future with the precision and accuracy that only the True God can do. The idol worshippers **pray to a god that cannot save**. However, God is the Saviour, who can save without the assistance of any. His invitation is to all peoples of the earth. Assemble, come, and draw.

45:21 Thus He is both a just God and a **Saviour** to those who will come unto Him. As they **assemble**, as they **draw near**, He says **counsel together**; that is, announce, and bring forward your strongest arguments to defend the cause of idolatry. Which of the idols has done what God hath, namely, foretold, primarily as to Cyrus; ultimately as to the final restoration of Israel hereafter? The argument is an appeal to the fact that God had clearly foretold these events

² <http://www.vbvbc.org/bible-verse/isaiah45-18>

³ http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=45&verse=18#Isa45_18

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

long before, and that therefore He was the true God. To this argument He often appeals in proof that He alone is God. And **there is no God else beside me**. The argument is **who has ever declared this** or anyone thing at any distance of time before it came to pass? Thus, I say again, He is both a just God and the **Saviour**.

45:22 All these verses are repetitious to prove a point: ⁴**Look unto me....** and not to idols, nor to any creature, nor to the works of your hands or to your own righteousness and doings. Look to me **and be ye saved** because none but the True God can save the soul. No one else but He can pronounce sin forgiven; no one but He can rescue from a deserved hell. No idol, no man, no angel can save; and if, therefore, the sinner is saved, he must come to the True God, and depend on Him. The invitation has gone from His lips, and the command has gone forth that it should be carried to every creature and His church to bear the glad news of salvation around the world. Christ has a people at **the ends of the earth** and to these He sends His Gospel and His ministers, to find them. This invitation proves:

- That the offers of the gospel are universal. None are excluded.
- That God is willing to save all.
- That there is ample provision for their salvation even to the ends of the earth.

The word *"look"* is that of one *"turning"* to God. The reason why they should look or turn to Him to be saved is because **He is truly God and there is none else!** He has been saying this throughout these scriptures. If the heart is brought into the obedience of Christ, the knee will cheerfully obey His commands.

Isaiah 45:23-24 God's Sovereign Authority

45:23 **I have sworn by myself...** When God confirms an oath, who does He swear by? He swears by Himself. There is no one greater, so He swears by His own holy name and character. As *Hebrews 6:13* says, *"For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself."* **The Word out of his mouth is gone forth in righteousness!** –gone forth in Truth! That is, the thing which I have promised will be faithfully performed. He said that His Word **shall not return**. In other words, it will not be withdrawn or retracted. *"So shall my Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it Is.55:11."* *"God's gifts and promises are without repentance" Rom. 11:29.*

Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear (confess) refer to the universal turning to God which will take place in the coming kingdom age. To *"bow"* or *"bend"* the knee, is indicative of homage or adoration; and the idea is, that **all** should yet acknowledge Him to be God. The ancient mode of offering adoration, or of paying homage, was to place the knee on the ground, and then slowly prostrate the body until the head touched the earth. This is practiced now in eastern countries. **Every tongue shall swear** - This expression is evidently taken from the practice of taking an oath of allegiance to a sovereign authority, and here it means that all would solemnly acknowledge the Lord to be the true God, and submit themselves to His government and Will.

45:24 Since the Lord is the One who alone is the source of our salvation, we also like them may say, **in the Lord I have righteousness and strength**. The sense is, *first*, that it is by Him alone that they could be pardoned and justified; and, *secondly*, that it is by Him alone that they could obtain strength to meet their enemies, to overcome their sins, to discharge their duties, to encounter temptations, to hear afflictions, and to support them in death. Righteousness and strength found in God our Savior are all that man needs. Those who have set themselves up **against God shall come to Him** in penitence for the past because they are **ashamed**. They shall be brought to submit to Christ, confess Him, and declare their faith in Christ alone as their "righteousness. The bottom line: those in Christ will have righteousness and strength; those that don't will be brought to shame.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON:

45:25 *First*, all believers (in the Lord) are **the seed of Israel** (the spiritual Israel), an upright praying seed. *Secondly*, the great privilege they enjoy by Jesus Christ is that in Him, and for His sake, they are justified before God. Self-justification, as practiced by Israel brought self-righteousness, and resulted in pride and misery. God's justification, which is by faith and in Christ and what Christ has done for us at the cross always bring glory which is the glory of God and not the glory of man. They could not be justified by any other; and those who are **justified** shall be glorified. And therefore, *Thirdly*, The great duty believers owed to Christ is to **glory** in Him, and to make their boast of Him.

SUMMARY:

⁵God has established that He is the author of the Creation. Since this section of Isaiah began in chapter 40, we've seen Him referred to as being the One...

⁴ <http://bible.cc/isaiah/45-22.htm>

⁵ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4508.pdf>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

- Is. 40:26 ...who has created these stars,
- Is. 40:28 ...the Creator of the ends of the earth...
- Is. 42:5 ...Who created the heavens and stretched them out...
- Is. 45:7 The One forming light and creating darkness...
- Is. 45:18 ...He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited...

God is saying that He is the Creator, and in spite of the fact that He's invisible, He hasn't secretly told Israel, "Seek; *find Me in some place without form, in some dark and uninhabited place.*" He's spoken righteously, declaring what is right. None of it is hidden or secretive. He's saying "*I boldly proclaim promises and do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner.*" He speaks only truth and righteousness. We never have to be uncertain about Him.

There are some who will receive Him: fugitives from the nations, escapees from the "*status quo.*" Those that are idolaters don't realize the stupidity of idolatry. But God says that He alone can save, He alone is righteous, He alone is God. This is the hope for the future: "**Turn to me and be saved!**" We are once again confronted with the deity of Jesus Christ. Because it is Jesus who is saying, "**there is no other, and to Me every knee will bow and every tongue shall swear allegiance to my name.**" Look at what Paul said: He told the Philippians that Jesus existed in the form of God, but didn't regard equality with God something to be held onto. Instead, He came to earth as a man, and died on a cross—God in the flesh. Jesus Christ is God, there can be no doubt. And if we want to be saved, we will turn to Him. And if we want to be ashamed, we will be without Him. But God will always be glorified.

APPLICATION:

Allow this year to start off in you turning to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life. Allow Him to prepare your heart to receive truth and dispel idols that you relied on and disperse the disappointments that came because of them! There is no other God to go to, no other that can foretell and bring things to pass. Can you begin to focus on what God has done for you in the pass and better still, what He's about to do in the future! Be in the church that will be gathered together to glorify Him as we look to a future with Him.