

A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 44—45

Verse to Remember

*I am the LORD, and there is no other.
I form the light and create darkness,
I bring prosperity and create disaster;
I, the LORD, do all these things.*
Isaiah 45:6b–7

In Isaiah 44—45, the prophet continues to look into the future and sees the destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile of the Jews to Babylon. Isaiah develops two recurring themes: (1) the gracious promises of God to rescue and redeem his people once their sin has been judged, and (2) the contrast between the greatness of God and the worthlessness of idols.

Day 1 — Read Isaiah 44:1–8, 21–28.

1. Read Isaiah 43:22–28. The words “But now” (44:1) at the beginning of this week’s passage indicate a shift from the dark picture painted in the last part of chapter 43.
 - a. What does God say about his people? (Is. 44:1–2, 8, 21)

 - b. Why is this unexpected in light of the way they have been acting?

2. God’s decrees of disgrace, destruction, and shame for his people would understandably have generated fear in their hearts. What comforting promises does God give in response to their fear? (Is. 44:3–4, 22–23, 26b; * Joel 2:28–29)

3. God does not need to defend his character or reputation, yet he repeatedly does so in an attempt to gain the worship, trust, and allegiance of his people. What are some of the things he declares about himself?
 - Is. 44:2a, 24

 - Is. 44:6

 - Is. 44:7b

 - Is. 44:26a

 - Is. 44:27

 - Is. 44:28

4. How does God want his people, including you, to respond to this knowledge about him? (Is. 44:2, 8a, 22b–23;  Jer. 24:7)

Jeshurun

(Is. 44:2)

is an affectionate name used by God for his people. It means “the dear upright people.”¹

Day 3

Living in exile in Babylon, the Jews longed to be returned to their land. God had promised that this would take place, but his means for bringing it about was unexpected – **the pagan king Cyrus**. Although Cyrus arrogantly believed he was in control of his choices and battle plans, he was actually being used by God to bring about the deliverance of the Jewish people. Cyrus had the opportunity to acknowledge God’s control, but tragically he refused to do so.

Read Isaiah 44:24—45:13.

1. What surprising titles does God use for Cyrus? (Is. 44:28; Is. 45:1)

2. What does God say he will do for Cyrus? (Is. 45:1–5, 13a)

3. What will God, working through Cyrus, accomplish?
Is. 44:28; 45:13b

Is. 45:6–7

4. How does Isaiah 45:7 inform, challenge, or confirm your present view of God?

5. Although it is often difficult for us to see, God’s purpose in everything he does is always his people’s good and his own glory. God anticipates pushback against his decision to use Cyrus, a ruthless pagan king, to accomplish his purpose. How does God answer his would-be critics? (Is. 45:9–13;  Rom. 9:17–24)

Days 4 & 5 — Read Isaiah 45:14–25.

This passage brings together many of the themes and promises that we have seen over and over again in Isaiah.

1. This passage speaks of a time when God’s people will be subject to the Babylonian government. What transformation does God promise to bring about for his subjugated people? (Is. 45:17, 25)

2. What does God say about himself to give credibility to his promises?

Is. 45:18

Is. 45:19c

Is. 45:21

Is. 45:23

3. God calls all people to turn to him and be saved (Is. 45:22). What will be the final evidence that God is the one and only God? (Is. 23b–24a; Phil. 2:9–11)

4. What will be the ultimate outcome of God’s dealing in the world? (Is. 45:16–17, 24b–25)

5. Who are “all the descendants of Israel” who are ultimately “found righteous and will exult” (45:25)? (Gal. 3:6–9, 26–29)

6. Read Isaiah 45:7. How would the death of Jesus have appeared to be dark and disastrous to an outside observer?

What purposes of God were accomplished through this darkness and disaster?

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Adapted from M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Third Edition*, published by Thomas Nelson, 1897. Public Domain.

² Heidelberg Catechism 95