



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 44:24 – 45:25

“Cyrus: Anointed of Jehovah and His Greater Captain”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Begin with a word of the prayer. Father, we commit this time to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon us now as we turn again to the great Prophecy of Isaiah. Guide and direct us and enable us to think the prophet's thoughts after him and the thoughts that have been given to him by Thee Lord we pray that Thy will make them our thoughts. We thank Thee for each one present and we praise spiritual blessing upon them as they respond to the word of God and seek to have it carried out in their life. Now, we commit the hour to Thee with thanksgiving in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] We are turning to Isaiah chapter 44 and verse 24 and hoping to cover the remainder of that 44th chapter and chapter 45. And the subject is “Cyrus: The Anointed of Jehovah and His Greater Captain.”

With Cyrus, the Persian, we come to one of the most remarkable figures of ancient history. In fact, I guess we could say with Cyrus we come to one of the most remarkable figures of history. He is the only great personality treated with sympathy by both the Bible and Greek literature. And that in itself is a remarkable thing, that he should be in a sense, the cynosure of the Greeks as well as the Hebrews must mean that he is a

remarkable person. And he is the only man outside of the covenant people, that is outside of Israel who is called the Lord's Shepherd and the Lord's Messiah.

But he is given that title. Notice the 28th verse of chapter 44. That saith of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure,” and then chapter 45 and verse 1. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, that word anointed of course is the word for Christ. And so Cyrus is called the Lord's shepherd and he is called the Lord's Christ. These are two terms that are two of the most important of the terms that are used to refer to the Lord Jesus himself. This noble Persian becomes a type of Christ then. And in his ministry, he becomes a type of the future deliverance of the nation Israel from the hands of Gentiles into which they have been sent for divine and discipline.

The major facts in the life of Cyrus are important for us when we think of the Book of Isaiah, because these next chapters as a matter of fact, these eight chapters beginning with 40 through 48 are written with the background of Cyrus and the Babylonian empire in mind. Cyrus the Great or Cyrus II was born in a rather insignificant family. He was the prince of a little province called Anshan. That was a small territory to the north of Elam or to the north of what is known as Persia. He fought under the sway the nations of the Persians and of the Medes by about 550 B.C. And thus he had enlarged his kingdom.

Then he conquered the kingdom of Croesus. Everyone knows about Croesus. We still use the term Croesus. We say H.L. Hunt is as rich as Croesus. Because Croesus is the symbol of riches. He was the King of the Lydian Empire and the place of his rule was Sardis, the city that is referred to by our Lord Jesus in the Book of Revelations in the last book of the Bible. Well, Croesus, we have referred to this before but Croesus thought that he could conquer Cyrus and so he attacked Cyrus. But he was defeated, he was defeated by the noble terror produced by the camels of Cyrus' army. But Croesus was very self-confident. He knew that the City of Sardis was a practically impregnable city and to leave and though he had been defeated he knew that if he -- simply retreated to

the city of Sardis in Lydia where he would be safe and there he would be able to recoup his forces and seek to attack Cyrus again.

But Cyrus was a very remarkable man and he pursued Croesus to the city of Sardis and Sardis was a city that was situated on the side of a mountain. It was built out on the side of the mountain very much like a little island that was attached but -- or a peninsula out of an island and consequently it was about halfway up the mountain and it was impossible for soldiers to approach it. The rock would shear it seemed, and the only way you could get to it was to climb the mountain, and of course to climb the mountain with the enemy above you is a very difficult thing to do.

For 14 days, Cyrus besieged Croesus at Sardis. Finally he conceived of having a contest to see who would discover a way into the city and so he promised a reward to anyone of his soldiers who would be able to discover a way whereby he might take the city of Sardis. And one of the soldiers whose name was Hyraeades thinking about the reward and anxious to gain it for himself, was standing out watching the Lydians who were in the City of Sardis. And he observed that one of the soldiers in the city of Sardis dropped his helmet and the helmet fell off of the side of the embankment upon which the city was built and it rolled down to the bottom of the hill. And Hyraeades noticed that the man clambered down the side of that apparently shear precipice and got his helmet and came back up into the city. And so he knew immediately that there was some way that you could pick your way up the side of that apparently shear precipice into the city. And so that soldier organized, made a group of men and they went up the side of that mountain and of course they came suddenly upon the startled men of the army of Croesus and easily defeated him because they had completely surprised him.

That is important by the way for the New Testament. It wasn't but I think may be a 100 years after that a similar thing happened at city of Sardis. And so it's not surprising that the Lord Jesus should address the church, which was located at Sardis, many hundreds of years later and say to them Revelation chapter 3 and verse 1 and 2, these

words. "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know Thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Be watchful, be watchful.

Sardis, you see had lost itself to enemies twice, because they were not watchful. And the church in Sardis, hundreds of years later had a name that it lived, but it was dead. What a beautiful picture of the church today? It has a name that it lived but it is dead. And Jesus said to the church at Sardis, be watchful. And they would come up in their mind all of their past history of how King Croesus, remember had not been watchful and how later the Sardians had not been watchful and they had lost their city and the church is going to be lost the same way.

Well, Cyrus conquered the Lydian kingdom, and then remember he came back and made a second attempt to conquer Babylon and in 539 B.C. October 16th his forces lead by his general Gobryas, by diverting the Euphrates River managed to go into Babylon under the walls up into the city and surprised the nobles, a thousand of whom, who had gathered in the palace of Belshazzar to drink and to cohort with the holy vessels of the temple at Jerusalem. And remember in the midst of that feast they had come out behind that wrote on the walls, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin or numbered, numbered thou art weighed in the balances, and thou art found wanting. And when Belshazzar couldn't find anyone to read the writing he called for Daniel the Prophet, and Daniel the Prophet at this time apparently an elderly man came and read the judgment that God had pronounced upon the Kingdom of Belshazzar and that very night was the night that Cyrus, the Persians army entered into the city of Babylon and took that city.

So, Cyrus is a man who apparently has the hand of God resting upon him. As soon as Cyrus came into the city, according to ancient tradition he looked up Daniel and he asked Daniel for some advice. And apparently during the course of the advice that was given to King Cyrus, Daniel took an opportunity to read to Cyrus from the word of God. In fact Daniel, according to Josephus, read to Cyrus a section of the Book of Ezra,

which long before Cyrus' coming had announced that Cyrus would be the one who would allow the Jews to go back to rebuild the city. and so far as we know this tradition is true. He read for him these words, in Ezra chapter 1 verses 1 through 4, we have reference to it,

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, so, that the word of Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also in writing saying "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord, God of heaven, had given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him one house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build a house of the Lord God of Israel. He is the God, which is in Jerusalem. And whoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

And so apparently Daniel, was the intermediary and brought to Cyrus this information that it was God who had brought him to power -- the Jehovah, the God of Israel -- and it was this Jehovah that had given him that victory and therefore it was He who was to give permission for the Israelites to leave the city of Babylon and go back and rebuild the ancient city of Jerusalem.

I have no doubt in my own mind that Daniel read from the Prophecy of Isaiah, too. And he probably said, "Look here Cyrus, you are mentioned in the word of God, generations before you have come into existence". And he pointed him to Isaiah chapter 44 and verse 28, who saith of Cyrus. You see, Cyrus, there you are in the word of God. And chapter 45 and verse 1. "Thus saith Cyrus the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue nations before him, and I will lose the loins of kings, to

open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut." You see that's Babylon. "I will go before Thee, and make the crooked places straight, I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut in sunder the bars of iron, and notice the third verse. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness (that's Croesus perhaps) and the hidden riches of secret places that, thou mayest know that I am the Lord who call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." Josephus of course says that all of this really happened. We cannot prove it. It certainly seems that it could have happened. So, Cyrus is an important figure in the history of Israel.

Now the section that we are looking at tonight is one distinct prophecy. It begins at the 24th verse of chapter 44 and it goes through chapter 45. And I want you to notice that it is divided into five parts by the use of a phrase or clause that occurs over and over again. It is a little clause "thus saith the Lord", notice verse 24. Thus saith the Lord, Thy redeemer. Then notice chapter 45 and verse 1, the second movement. Thus saith the Lord. Then notice verse 11. Now notice that before verse 11, we have two verses that begin with Woe. "Woe want him that striveth with his Maker!". verse 10, "Woe unto him that saith unto a father". I think these two verses, go with the next movement, which really has that familiar clause at verse 11. Thus saith the Lord. So in my outline, I've taken this as the third movement, the Jehovah, the reprove of his critics and have begin at verse 9, because the thus saith the Lord here is preceded by two woe verses, but they seem to go with what follows. Then verse 14, Thus saith the Lord. And finally verse 18, For thus saith the Lord. So, five times we have this expression, "thus saith the Lord" and these five times divide up the five moments that occur in this prophecy.

Now let's look at the first one, I. Jehovah, the restorer of Israel by Cyrus. I want you to notice that as we read these verses, what Isaiah does is simply to say thus saith the Lord, and then their follows a series of participial predicates, which treats everything. Israel past, Israel present, and Israel future to Jehovah. Listen,

"Thus saith the Lord, Thy redeemer and he who formed Thee from the womb. I am the Lord who maketh all things; who stretcheth forth the heavens alone; who spreadeth abroad the earth by myself, who frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, who turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish, who confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers, who saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof, who says to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up Thy rivers, who saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

Just two points, I want you to notice the statement that is made in verse 24, Thy redeemer. Now what he means by this opening statement, Thy redeemer, and he who formed Thee from the womb, is that Jehovah is the one who has called Israel into existence, and in this word redemption is found his purpose for Israel. And then verse 28, my shepherd, the agent of the purpose of God is Cyrus, the purpose is God's plan of redemption for Israel. He will restore Cyrus, the agent of Jehovah. He will restore Judah, verse 26. He will restore Jerusalem, verse 26 and verse 28, and he will also be responsible for the laying of the foundation of the temple. And so here, a long time before these events take place, God prophesied that they shall take place through this man who you call Cyrus.

Now let's move onto II. Jehovah, conqueror of nations, and self-revealer by Cyrus. Let's read verses 1 through 8 of chapter 45,

"Thus saith for Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will lose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before Thee and make the crooked

places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:
And I will give Thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that
thou mayest know that I, the Lord, who called Thee by Thy name, am the God of Israel.
For Jacob, my servant's sake and Israel Mine elect, I have even called Thee by Thy name:
I have surnamed Thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none
else, there is no God beside me: I girded Thee, though thou hast not known me. That
they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside
me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make
peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from
above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring
forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.”

Cyrus, I said as I begin, is the only Gentile king who is called “the anointed one.”
He is called the messiah. Is it not a strange thing that God should call this evil king a
messiah. Now some of our friends think that Cyrus became a Christian; I do not. As far
as we can tell from the things that are said about Cyrus in the Bible and outside the Bible,
Cyrus remained a worshipper of the gods, who is there.

Now anointed is true that in Isaiah chapter 41, it states that he shall call Jehovah
by his name. But I think that the meaning of that is that he will acknowledge Jehovah to
be a great God, but he does not acknowledge him to be God in the sense that that
Jehovah becomes his savior. Cyrus was a syncretist; that is he believed in all of the gods.
There are lots of people like that, you know that's 20th Century viewpoint. We are all
going to heaven by the same way -- by different ways, but we are all going to heaven,
you go your way, I will go my way, the Jew is going his way the Mohammedian is going
his way, the Protestant is going his way, the fundamentalist, there is little chance that he
will get there but if he does get there he is going his way. Everybody is going to heaven

by different ways but we are all going to get there, and there is no distinction in the God, so long as we believe in God everything is all right.

Now the Romans felt that way. They were willing to acknowledge due to some among the other religions and finally they were even willing for a time to acknowledge Christianity providing Christianity would just become a religion among the religions, but you see Christianity can never become a religion among the religion for the simple reason that it claims to be an exclusive revelation from God. Jesus said "I am the way, not anyway, the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Any man who is a Christian can never believe that there are two ways of salvation. He cannot believe that there is a God that exists who is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is only that one God and he is the only God who says the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any if there is a God, who is not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is not the God of the Bible. Jesus said I am the light of the world, not a light of the world. I am the genuine vine, not a vine.

Now Cyrus was willing to acknowledge Jehovah among the God but that is as far as he went. How then is it possible for a God to use a man like this, as an illustration of his Messiah to come? Well the answer of course is that God controls everything, and no king exists on the earth except that God created us and allowed kings to rise and consequently every king is a faint adumbration, a faint for shadowing of the king who is to come. That is why in the Old Testament all the kings of Israel in their office looked forward to the king who was to come and that is why even Cyrus since he was used by God for the deliverance of his people Israel from Babylon. That is why even Cyrus in his office may become a faint replica of Jesus the king to come who shall deliver his people Israel and restore them to their land in the kingdom of God. And so Cyrus becomes a type of Jesus Christ, and that is why he is called “the my anointed,” because he will be the means for Israel leaving Babylon going back into the land and that will illustrate the

ultimate deliverance which is still future from our time of Israel from the four corners of the earth.

The achievements of Cyrus are set forth here and can be fairly well pinpointed in his history though Isaiah wrote a 150 years before most of them came to pass. For example, it is stated in verse 1, I will lose the loins of kings before Cyrus and he was a magnificent general who won many a victory. He will open before him the two leaved gates, and most think that this is a reference to the double gates of the city of Babylon, which Cyrus was enabled to conquer in 539 B.C. Then in verse 3, I will give Thee the treasures of darkness, and many have thought that this surely must be a reference to King Croesus and the fact that when Cyrus conquered him he inherited all of the riches of that great rich king. So, his achievements are set forth. And I think that Cyrus must have thrilled as he read the word of God under the tutelage of Daniel who showed him not only his name and Scripture, but showed him some of the things that would actually come to place in his ministry.

Now in verse 4, the prophet goes on to say that, God has laid his hand upon Cyrus for two reasons. He has laid his hand upon Cyrus first of all for Jacob, my servant's sake and Israel mine elect. In other words, Cyrus the reason God has laid his hand upon you is because he has prophecies for Israel. Don't you think Cyrus must have laughed at that? And if he laughed in faith he laughed with the kind of laugh that Sarah did when she was told that she should have a charge. It must have been a kind of accelerating laugh because you see when he conquered Babylon, where were the Israelites? Why, they were just a little minority group in the city of Babylon. They didn't count for anything. And he was told that the reason all of this has happened was for the sake of that motley little minority group, which was located in the city of Babylon and which had been scattered actually over the eastern world. But of course God prophecies are going to be accomplished even though men laugh at them. And all from the things that seem insignificant are the things that really count.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was born, if you had been asked which is the important person, the king who sits upon the throne: the emperor in Rome, Caesar Augustus, or the little infant in the manger in Bethlehem? Everyone would say Augustus, the great king, history will always remember Augustus. Now there are many people today who do not remember Augustus. But there are hardly any in the western world who have not heard of Jesus of Nazareth. You see it is the little thing, the insignificant thing that really counts with God, who does not know of Bethlehem. It's because when God works the insignificant becomes significant.

And so, Cyrus "It's for Jacob, My servant's sake and Israel Mine elect" that I have called Thee by Thy name. I have surnamed Thee, though thou has not known me, before you ever even heard of Jehovah. All of this has been laid out as one of the prophecies of God. Then secondly Cyrus, I have chosen you verse 6, "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else." In other words, through you and through your ministry and through what it will ultimately signify, the Gentiles are going to come to know him. Everything is planned from of old, Cyrus. My plan is comprehensive, my plan is yet minute, it is accomplished through individuals who are free but nevertheless it is accomplished by God.

I wonder as I see some of these things like verse 7, "I form the light, and create darkness," if perhaps Isaiah does not write with the Persians in mind for the Persians of course with their doctrine of Zarathustra, Ormuz and so on believed in a dualism of light and darkness. They believe that one God was the God of light and the other was the God of darkness, and this dualism persisted in the Persian religion, which was a religion of a high standing. But the God who speaks through Isaiah the Prophet is a God who is unity itself, and it is he who forms the light and it is he who creates darkness, it is he who makes peace and it is he who creates evil.

Martian, who was one of the early heretics lived in the 2nd Century made the claim that the God of the Old Testament was not the same as the God of the New Testament. It's very interesting and I some times must confess that I get a big kick out of reading contemporary theologians. Because frequently they come up with some new doctrines, they think and then of course you discover as you listen to their doctrines that is nothing more than just a new garment on an ancient heresy. And today, for example, you will find men, or not today but I can remember in the last generation, my generation when men like Harry Emerson Fosdick were saying, as I said Sunday morning, that the God of the Old Testament is a God of war, a God of blood. The God of the New Testament is a God of love. And consequently down thorough the years, God has been getting better and better and finally when Jesus came, God came of age and we have a good God from that time on.

Emerson said that 1900 or 1800 years ago. He said that God of the Old Testament is not the same as the God of the New Testament and consequently for Emerson, the New Testament consisted only of some of the Pauline Epistles most of them and the Book of Luke, which had least of the objectionable features of the Old Testament in it. Emerson, in support of his doctrine appealed to this very passage right here. He said, after all, can the God whom Jesus told us about say, I make peace, I create evil, I create darkness? How could the God of love that Jesus gave us, say things like this? So it must be a different God. Jesus gave us a God who is come of age. Now, of course that is a hopeless misunderstanding of the things that our Lord said. After all who is that, that speaks of hell-fire, who is that, that speaks of Gehenna. Well out of about 12 or 13 times that it is mentioned in the New Testament every time but one it is Jesus who speaks of hell, did you know that? That's right. Look it off in the concordant. It is Jesus who gives us the fullest revelation of hellfire.

I just opened up a magazine, people send me all kinds of magazines. I get Billy Joe Hargis' or whatever his name is, Billy James Hargis' magazine, I get John Birch Society

magazine, I get the Seventh-day Adventist Periodicals. I get all kinds of periodicals, all are my friends, all over there where I think I need a lot of things [laughter] and so all these magazines surrounded my house. And I occasionally look at some of them too. And today I opened up the Seventh-day Adventist magazine and in there was an article on eternal punishment seeking to prove that there was no such thing as eternal punishment. A long article, about four pages of nonsense. Failing of course to lay any stress whatsoever upon the fact that it was Jesus, who revealed that doctrine of hell most definitely.

Now, what does this text mean, “I create evil?” How can we say that of God? Well, now we have already talked about this in systematic theology back a long time ago. This obviously cannot mean that God creates evil in the sense that he is evil himself, moral evil and responsible for it, couldn't possibly mean that, couldn't mean the evil of guilt. It really means the evil of punishment. It must, it must mean that evil of calamity; that is, that he is responsible for that. He forms the light, he creates darkness, he makes peace and what's the natural opposite of peace? A war or calamity, catastrophe. Why it is God that does that.

But now of course he does not do this vindictively, that is not the force of it. One of the principles of Bible study is this. Look at the context. No interpretation can be the true interpretation, which disagrees with the context. A lot of people who have false interpretations of the Bible are able to support them by taking a text out of its context and saying, see I believe so and so, because the Bible says and then they quote the text. I always say let's look at the context. I always want to say, let's look at the context before I accept it.

Now notice the context of this begins with verse 1, remember, thus saith the Lord this is the second movement in the prophecy and it says, thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue nation before him. Now you see right at the beginning God says that, Cyrus is his messiah, his anointed one, and that

God is going to subdue nations before him. Cyrus is going to be a great conqueror. He is going to conquer Babylon. He is going to conquer Lydia. He is going to conquer the Persian. He is going to conquer the Elamites. He is going to unite all of that world. He is going to be a great and good conqueror. He is going to be responsible for a lot of catastrophe in the lands of evil men.

And that's what the Bible means when it says in this verse, I make peace, I create catastrophe or calamity, evil. I am the one, Cyrus, who is responsible for the great victories that you are going to win. I shall subdue nations and when Babylon that wicked city is overthrown as they drink out of the sacred goblets from the temple in Jerusalem, it is I who am responsible for that calamity in that city. That they may know that my hand has been upon them in divine judgment, that's what that text means. Learn to read the Bible in its context. Then you will come to understand it.

The eighth verse is a kind of anthem. God says the heavens are full of righteousness, it's just like the heavens raining righteousness and when the righteousness falls upon the ground, righteousness shall spring up, because I the Lord am responsible for it.

Now III, Jehovah, the reprover of his critics. What do you think Israel will say, when Isaiah says, Cyrus is the messiah of Jehovah? What do you think a Jew would say who didn't believe, a Jew in a backslidden condition, an Israelite who has gone away from God, what do you think he would say, when the prophet stood up and said, my shepherd does say the Lord is Cyrus. My anointed one saith the Lord is Cyrus, what do you think he would do? Object! That's right, he surely will object. What do you mean Isaiah that God is going to use a heathen man. That he is going to be God's messiah. That he is going to be God's shepherd, but don't you know Isaiah that all the prophets have spoken of messiah, who is to be an Israelite. And of course they could speak about Micah. Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. Everyone knows that. And so they object.

What does the movement begin with, verse 9, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" Woe unto him that objects to the prophecy that comes from Jehovah through the prophet; that text of course has many applications. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!", but its meaning in the context is woe to the man who objects to my plan for Israel, through Cyrus, the Persian.

Recently, in Believers Chapel we have been studying the book of Jonah. I said as we begin that series of five messages that one of the texts that the book of Jonah illustrates is, woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. And the experience of Jonah is the living example of what it means to strive with the will of God, and of course it had Christian application too in the present day. Woe unto you, if you strive with the God who is your Maker. You cannot hope to overcome, you cannot hope to live in happy, peaceful existence if you are striving with the God who has created and has redeemed. How can we hope to succeed, if we are out of his will? We can never succeed, that's why it is so foolish to be out of God's will. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.

The Apostle Paul makes great use of this in the Epistle to the Romans when he talks about God's election. He said, "Shall not the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Why God is the great power, he can take up one vessel and make it a vessel unto honor, he can take up the other vessel and make it a vessel unto dishonor. And the vessel unto dishonor cannot say, why shall he made me thus.

One of our modern theologians says "Ah, but that's just were we will object". We are not pots! [Laughter] I think it makes good sense, doesn't it? We are not pots. But after all we are pots. The matter of fact, we have been pots from the beginning. Out of what was Adam made? Out of dust, dirt, out of what our pots made? Dirt, clay; that is right. We are pots; that's really what we are. So let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the claysay to him that fashioneth, what makest thou or the work, He hath no hands -- imagine something that is made by the individual saying the

person who made me doesn't have any hand. Woe unto him that says to his father what doest thou? When we were born we didn't object, did we? What have you brought into existence, father, or to the woman what has they brought for, mother what have you brought for forth, how ridiculous.

Now we come to the prophecy. Jehovah the reprover of his critics,

“Thus saith the Lord the Holy One of Israel and his Maker. Ask of me things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me, I have made the earth and created man upon it I, even my hands have stretched out to heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city and he shall let go my captives not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts. Leave the people he has created to their creator, Cyrus will be the agent of their deliverance.”

So God reproved those who object to his working.

Now we come to the fourth movement. The submission Jehovah, the submission of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel. Chapter 45 verses 14 through 17. Let's read these verses. Now here, remember as often in the prophets what we have is the prophet he is of course writing from -- he is writing back here at 700 B.C. roughly, plus or minus. He is writing of events that begin let's say, 538 B.C. when Israel is to return to the land, and he is writing of their restoration by means of Cyrus. But often in the Old Testament prophet will get the background of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Babylon by Cyrus. With that in its background he will leap on into the distant future, and writes of the events that just precede our Lord's coming to the earth, when God will gather Israel out of the four corners of the earth, whether he shall by them have sent them because of their rejection of Jesus Christ. So remember it is 70 AD here Israel was scattered to the four corners of the earth and against that captivity Isaiah will now skip and against the

deliverance by the Son of God who shall come, he will write of Israel's future. So he will write against the background of Cyrus of the things that come to pass in the distant future. Now this is what we call typical language, as you know it is illustrative. Now let’s listen verse 14 through verse 17.

"Thus saith the Lord: The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature shall come over unto Thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after Thee, in chains, they shall come over and they shall fall down unto Thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them, they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

Now that last salvation referred to there of course is the ultimate salvation, everlasting salvation, and you shall not be ashamed or confounded world without him. So Isaiah prophesies of the submission of the Gentiles in verse 14. “They shall bring up their riches to Israel.” Then he also prophesies of this secret God, verse 15, “Verily thou art a god who hidest thyself.” I wonder what he means by that. When you think of the fact that he has just described what Cyrus is going to do and will now described how in the future, he shall gather Israel back into the land, save them with an everlasting salvation, bring the riches of the Gentiles to her.

I think I know what he was saying. Really what he was saying is something like this: all the reverence that we opt to have for a God, who guards with such marvelous strangeness, the Israel of God. And who among the history, in the history of the nations has given us such a tremendous history of this one nation, and all how much he has taught us in his dealings with them? I am going to take just a minute or two if you don't

mind and ask you to turn over to Romans chapter 11, because in Romans chapter 11 we catch the same spirit that manifests us -- that is manifested in Isaiah chapter 45, the same spirit of all, the same spirit of a amazement at God's dealing among the nations. Romans chapter 11, verse 25.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (There is the Cyrus to come.) "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins and save them with an everlasting salvation" (as Isaiah said.) "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election they are beloved for the Father's sake, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

God does not regret the promises that he made to Israel. He never regrets them. Now, notice this,

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief. Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy."

Now, notice what he has said. Notice that verse, verse 30. "For as ye in times past have not believed God". This is the call of Abraham. "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief". Gentiles, Jews, believers generally, Gentiles, unbeliever to the cross. Notice, verse 30. "For as ye Gentiles in times past, have not believed God, he hath now have obtained mercy through their unbelief". Now, Jews unbeliever, Gentiles believer. This is false philosophy of

history, for as ye in times past, have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief. Even so have these also now not believed, Jew is now, when we finish the text, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy that is they are going to turn to belief. Israel, have the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

So, look at the Gentiles. They have passed through a time of unbelief but they have received mercy. Do they know what it is? To be unbelieving, they know what it is by the grace of God to imprint the mercy, so near. The Jews now know what it is to be in unbelief. And they shall know what it is to come to mercy in the future. So Paul says, verse 32, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." So he has past the Gentiles through a period of unbelief, so that they might learn the wonderful grace of mercy. And at the present time, the Jews are passing through the stage of unbelief so that they too as a nation might learn the wonderful blessing of the mercy of God, and the result is that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus is 1000 year reign shall be appeared of time in which Gentiles and Jew rejoice in what, God's mercy.

Now, what do you say to that, what do you say to it. Well, notice what Paul says to it, in chapter 11, and then I will conclude with this. What do you say, "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out." That is what he means when he says "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior." And he concludes the section verse 36, with "to whom be glory, forever and ever." And did you notice how chapter 5, verse 25 ended. "In the Lord, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Time is up. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] We heartily thank Thee for the amazing perfection of the plan of God and Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast shown us individually mercy through Jesus Christ.

“Cyrus: Anointed of Jehovah” by S. Lewis Johnson
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Accept our thanks, for the great plans and purposes of a God who has Thymself, but reveals Thymself to babes and children through the world.

For Jesus sake, Amen.