

Title: WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

Text: Isaiah 45:20-25

Subject: *The Purpose of God*

Date: Sunday Bible Class — October 5, 2008

Tape # Z-55a

Introduction:

What has the triune God sworn that he will do? Does he tell us? Has the Lord actually told us what he will do, what he will accomplish before time shall be no more? He has indeed. Turn to Isaiah 45, and I will show you **WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO.**

(Isaiah 45:20-25) "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 unto a god *that* cannot save. (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. (22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (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. (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. (25) In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Here the Lord God himself speaks to sinners about who he is, what he is determined to do, and how we may be saved by him. He tells us here how things shall be when he gets done with all things.

GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF LOST MEN

In Isaiah 45:20, the Lord God describes lost, unbelieving men and women who worship at the altar of a “god” who cannot save as those who have no knowledge. — “*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 unto a god that cannot save.*”

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

All men and women are religious. Everyone has some kind of religion. Everyone has some concept of God, and some form of religious faith and hope. The fact is most people are very religious. I do not suggest for a moment that they are spiritual, or that they are saved; but most people are very religious. The vast majority of the people we meet and do business with, most of our friends, and most of our relatives are described by our Lord as people who have entered the wide gate and walk in the broad way that leads to destruction. They have entered into and walk in “*a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Pro. 16:25).

In this twentieth verse of Isaiah 45, the Lord God tells us three things about all lost, unregenerate, religious people.

1. “They have no knowledge.”

We are not told that they have a little knowledge or misguided knowledge; but that “*they have no knowledge.*” Lost, unregenerate, religious people have absolutely no spiritual knowledge. Their ignorance is blatantly manifest almost every time they open their mouths. In order for a person to know anything spiritual, he must be born again (John 3:3-7). He must be taught of God. He must have the mind of Christ imparted to him in regeneration (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

It does not matter how religious people are. It does not matter how long they have studied the Bible and studied what men say about the Bible. It does not matter how much experience they have, or how phenomenal their experience is. Natural, unregenerate people have no knowledge of themselves, or of God, or of sin, or of righteousness, or of salvation in and by Christ.

2. They “set up the wood of their graven image.”

They all worship a god that they have whittled out of the dark forests of their own depraved minds (Rom. 1:21-23). I realize that refined, civilized, educated people do not worship images carved from tree stumps, chiseled from granite, or molded even from gold and silver. Yet, the vast majority of people in the world (judging by the words of their own mouths and by the statements of the world’s religious leaders) worship a little, peanut god

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

which they have whittled from their own little, peanut minds, a god that no more resembles the God of the Bible than a gnat.

3. **They worship, serve, and “pray unto a god that cannot save.”**

The god of this age (call it by whatever name you will) is “*a god that cannot save.*” The Holy Spirit told us plainly that in these last days “*perilous times shall come.*” He told us that in these perilous times men and women everywhere would have “*a form of godliness*” (religious exercise), while denying the true power of true godliness. Then, he commands, “*from such turn away*” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Our Lord Jesus said to the Jews and religious leaders of his day, “*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God*” (Matt. 22:29). That is exactly what is wrong with the religious world in which we live. The Apostle Paul describes all legalistic, Arminian, free-will, works religion as “*another gospel,*” the preaching of another god, another Jesus, another spirit, and another salvation. He calls it a religion that is a mere “*form of godliness;*” and he declares that it is a mere form of godliness, because it denies the power of God.

The power of God, the power of godliness, in this context, is the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. Lost religionists do not deny the omnipotence of God, but the gospel of God! — **A form of godliness says...**

- “God wills to save all men;” denying his power adds, “but he cannot save unless men open their hearts to him.”
- “God has a wonderful plan for men and women;” denying his power adds, “but you must allow him to have his will and way.”
- “Christ died on the cross for all the sins of all the sons of Adam that all might be saved;” denying the power of his blood adds, “but his blood has no power or efficacy to save anyone until man releases it to work.”
- “The Holy Spirit knocks at everyone’s heart with a desire to enter and work repentance and faith;” denying the power adds, “but you must open the door.”
- “Salvation is of the Lord;” denying the power adds, “but those whom he saves may fall away and perish.”

A god that cannot save is no god at all. Any who worship such a god, are not saved. Any who preach such a god are to be identified and marked as false prophets. How are we to treat such religion? How are we to deal with

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

those who preach it and promote it to the everlasting ruin of men's souls? Paul tells us plainly, "*from such turn away!*"

GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF GOD

In Isaiah 45:21 the Lord God contrasts himself with the gods of men who cannot save. He tells us that he is a God who can save; and in this verse he asserts his own glorious, saving character. This is God's description of God. He who is God indeed is sovereign, just, and saving! — "*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.*

Look at this verse closely. Too often we read a familiar text too quickly and miss the full scope of its teaching. In this verse of Scripture the Lord God declares five things about himself, five things which identify him as God. Observe what the text says. **If the god you worship, if the god to which you pray, if your idea and concept of God lacks any of these five characteristics, then your god is but a graven image, a useless, imaginary god.** This, I repeat, is God's description of God.

1. **He who is God has an absolute, unalterable, sure purpose, by which all things are governed.**

In the opening part of verse twenty-one, the Lord God challenges men to bring all their peanut gods and let them all take counsel together. I challenge you to do the same. Gather up all the gods of men, the Baptist gods, the Mormon gods, the Catholic gods, the Protestant gods, the Russellite gods, Hindu gods, Islam gods, Jewish gods, and all the other gods of men. Let them all take counsel together. Find me one in the whole bunch who has declared absolutely, from ancient times, from eternity, all things that are, have been, and shall hereafter be. He who is our God has (Isa. 14:24, 27; 46:9-11).

(Isaiah 14:24) "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so shall it stand:*"

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

(Isaiah 14:27) "For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

(Isaiah 46:9-11) "Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (11) Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it."

He who alone is God has an absolute, unalterable purpose; and he "*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*"

2. **He who is truly God truly is God, he declares himself to be, "I the LORD."**

Do you see that? He is not a lord. Our God is "*the LORD.*" He is the only LORD. He is LORD everywhere, at all times, over everything. He controls the universe absolutely. He has his way in the whirlwind. The clouds are the dust of his feet. The thoughts of men's hearts, the roll of the dice, and the paths of the fish in the sea are all under his total rule (Isa. 45:5-7, 12; Ps. 76:10; 115:3; 135:6). This God truly is God!

(Isaiah 45:5-7) "*I am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: (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. (7) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things.*"

(Isaiah 45:12) "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

(Psalms 76:10) "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

(Psalms 115:3) "But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

(Psalms 135:6) "Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

This great and glorious God, whom we worship, is the absolute, sovereign Monarch of the universe. He is sovereign over all men. He is sovereign over all the events of the universe. He is sovereign in the salvation of his people.

3. He who is God is God alone.

He declares there is none with him, none like him, and none but him. Most people are really pantheists and polytheists. They believe God is in everything and everybody. They believe that just about every man's notion of God really is God: Buddhists, Mohammedans, Jews, Papists, Mormons, Barbarians, and Baptists; but most people are wrong. There is but one God.

4. He who is God is a just God.

Much could and should be said about God's justice; but I will say just two things regarding it here. These two things simply must be understood. (1.) A just God must and shall punish all sin. And (2.) a just God cannot save sinners apart from the satisfaction of his justice. — "*By mercy and truth iniquity is purged*" (Pro. 16:6), but not by any other means.

Blessed be his name, the justice of God has been satisfied for sinners by the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus Christ his dear Son! In him mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Therefore, upon the grounds of Christ's obedience and death as the sinner's Substitute, the Lord God declares this *fifth* thing about himself.

5. He who is God indeed is both "a just God and a Savior."

That is exactly what the Lord told Moses about himself back in Exodus when he showed him his glory; and that is exactly what Paul tells us in the third chapter of Romans (Ex. 33:19-23; 34:5-7; Rom. 3:24-26).

(Exodus 33:19-23) "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee;

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (20) And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (21) And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: (22) And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: (23) And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."

(Exodus 34:5-7) "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (6) And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, (7) Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

(Romans 3:24-26) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF FAITH

In Isaiah 45:22 this great and glorious Lord God, who is both a just God and a Savior, shows us the salvation he performs. The only way any sinner can ever be saved is by looking to this great and glorious God, who reveals himself in Christ. The Lord God, our great Savior, says, "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*"

Salvation is in Christ. He alone is the Savior of men. The only way sinners can get God's salvation is by looking to him! We are saved by "*looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.*" Look to Christ. Look to Christ alone. Look to Christ for everything (1 Cor. 1:30-31). Look to Christ always.

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

As the children of Israel looked to that brazen serpent in the wilderness and lived, so every sinner who looks away to Christ shall be saved by the grace and power of this great God, who is our Savior. This thing we call “salvation,” in so far as our experience of it is concerned, begins looking to Christ (Isa. 45:22). It is sustained looking to Christ (Heb. 12:2). And it shall be consummated looking to Christ (1 John 3:2).

GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF PROVIDENCE

Read Isaiah 45:23-25, and learn this. — When God gets done with this world, everybody is going to know who he is. — *“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. 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. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”*

God almighty raised up Pharaoh and destroyed him for the saving of his people, to make all men know who he is. When God was done, at the end of the day, everybody in Egypt as well as Israel knew who God is. They did not all know him; but they all knew who he is.

God raised up Cyrus to deliver Israel out of Babylon. He was a splendid type of Christ. But God raised him up to deliver Israel and to deliver them in a specific way, for the reason stated in 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.”*

Now, hear me. — God created, rules, and disposes of all things in the universe, for this one great reason, that everyone may know him and glorify him in the salvation of his people (Isa. 45:7-18).

(Isaiah 45:7-18) "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*. (8) 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. (9) Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth.* Shall the clay say to him that

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? (10) Woe unto him that saith unto *his* father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? (11) Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. (12) I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. (13) 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. (14) Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and 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. (15) Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. (16) They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together *that are* makers of idols. (17) *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. (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."

That which he has purposed, he will do. Nothing in earth or in hell can prevent it, or even hinder it.

Our God is the God of purpose. He is accomplishing his purpose. Here the Lord God declares to the assembled angels and men before his august, sovereign and holy throne exactly what he is going to do. You can mark it down. — When God gets done with this world, these five things will be accomplished. God has bound himself with an oath to do them!

1. Every knee shall bow to the Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as Lord (Isa. 45:23; Phil. 2:8-11).
2. The Lord Jesus Christ shall have a people to worship and serve him forever. — There shall be a people called out of this world who shall confess that Christ is all their righteousness and strength. — “*Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength*” (v. 24).

WHAT GOD HAS SWORN TO DO

3. All God's elect shall come to Christ. — “*Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come*” (v. 24; John 6:37-40).
4. Every rebel in the universe, both men and devils, will lick the dust before the throne of Christ in utter shame and confusion of face. — “*Even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*” All will bow to Christ. Some will bow in repentance by the power of his grace, and some in terror before the throne of his holy justice; but all will bow!
5. Every chosen sinner will be saved, and being saved by grace alone, they will all glory in the Lord forever (Rom. 11:36; Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:30-31). — “*In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*”

(Romans 11:36) "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."

(Jeremiah 9:23-24) "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD."

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Then, and not until then, shall our Lord Jesus Christ stand up in the midst of glory, and say to all his creation, — “*Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely*” (Rev. 21:5-6).

Amen.