

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Isaiah Message 108*

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*The Law and The Gospel by Lucas Cranach the Elder Cir. 1529*

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# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message One-Hundred-Eight

THE LORD CHOICE TO CALL CYRUS THE PERSIAN

April 18, 2021

Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 45:5–13

*<sup>5</sup>I am Jehovah, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; <sup>6</sup>that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Jehovah, and there is none else. <sup>7</sup>I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.*

*<sup>8</sup>Distil, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, that it may bring forth salvation, and let it cause righteousness to spring up together; I, Jehovah, have created it.*

*<sup>9</sup>Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? <sup>10</sup>Woe unto him that saith unto a father, What begetteth thou? or to a woman, With what travailest thou?*

*<sup>11</sup>Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: Ask me of the things that are to come; concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let my exiles go free, not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts (ASV, 1901).*

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Isaiah 45:5–7

*<sup>5</sup>I am Jehovah, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; <sup>6</sup>that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Jehovah, and there is none else. <sup>7</sup>I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.*

Now begins another discussion from God concerning His sovereignty. He again says that He is God alone, and there is no God besides Him. This is here presented as a most fundamental truth. Because when it is not firmly believed, it begets the practice of idolatry and many other isms in the world. These include atheism, pantheism, polytheism, materialism, dualism, humanism, and evolutionism. These philosophies are different ways

to say there is no God, and are expressions of unbelief. The Lord uses a very commanding, sense of majesty and authority, encouraging defiance, to all pretenders, as He proclaim it to the world: *I am the Lord, I the Lord, Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God besides me*, no other self-existent, self-sufficient, being, none finite and eternal. And again (v. 6), *There is none besides me*; all that are set up in competition with me are counterfeits; they are all vanity and a lie, for *I am the Lord, and there is none else*. He is Lord of all, and there is nothing done without Him (v. 7): *I form the light*, which is grateful and pleasing, and *I create darkness*, which is grievous and unpleasing. *I make peace* (put here for all good) and *I create evil*, not the evil of sin (God is not the author of that), but the evil of punishment through disorder or chaos. *I the Lord* order, and direct, and *do all these things*.

He that is the first Cause of all: *I the Lord*, the fountain of all being, I Am the fountain of all power. He who formed the natural light (Genesis 1:3) still forms the well-timed light of the awareness of Him by mankind. Throughout Scripture He shows us the two broad categories of His will. 1) The creative where He makes events happen and the 2) Permissive where He allows events to happen.

Nothing happens by chance in God's universe. Events deemed to be "by chance" to us is preplanned by Him. Exodus 21:13 affirms that God even plans for "accidental" deaths:

Exodus 21:12–13

*<sup>12</sup>He that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death. <sup>13</sup>And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee (ASV, 1901).*

"However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate." Even what appears to be happenstance is determined before by God—Proverbs 16:33 informs us that "*The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah.*"

" Jesus said in Matthew 10:30, "*The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*"

Even evil events are permitted in God's providence for a greater good. Joseph said to his brothers, who left him for dead, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives*" (Genesis 50:20). No detail is too small for God's concern.

GOD POURS OUT HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Isaiah 45:8

*<sup>8</sup>Distil, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, that it may bring forth salvation, and let it cause righteousness to spring up together; I, Jehovah, have created it (ASV, 1901).*

Here now the Lord anticipates His Divine purpose resulting in an ultimate sense during the Messianic Kingdom. Here He uses a high form of the imagery. The refreshing rain (Psalms 65:10-12; 72:6; Hos. 10:12; 14:5; Joel 3:18), and the (clouds) to pour down righteousness, the refreshing ministry of the as soil opening up to receive the rain (the blessing of God), will then bear salvation

and righteousness will spring up with it (Isaiah 60:21; 61:11). The Gospel bearing the fruit of salvation will be disseminated worldwide providing the justifying righteousness of God to all mankind.

#### NOTHING CAN STOP THE LORD

##### Isaiah 45:9–10

*<sup>9</sup>Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? <sup>10</sup>Woe unto him that saith unto a father, What begettest thou? or to a woman, With what travailest thou (ASV, 1901)?*

The Lord's Purpose for Israel cannot be stopped. These verses first anticipate the doubts of the fainthearted and the skeptical within Israel. They ask, why did the Lord allow their captivity in the first place? Why did they get rescued by a Gentile (Cyrus) and not a Jew? But more important, why He will eventually adopt all nations of the whole world into His spiritual program. The Jews, in considering themselves exclusively God's children, resented His adopting Gentiles into the Abrahamic Covenant and sharing His Grace with them too.

Woe calamity, tragedy to the one (Job 15:25; 40:8-9; Psalm 2:2-3; Proverbs 15:25; 40:8-9; Psalm 2:2-3) who questions God's sovereignty. A potsherd, that is a broken, discarded piece of pottery, has no right to question the potter. Nor does a child have the right to question why his parents brought him into the world. In the same way Israel has no right to question God her Maker (Isaiah 45:9, 11), the world's Creator (v. 12), in His plans to raise up Cyrus (v. 13). Cyrus' task was stated: to allow freed exiles to rebuild God's city, Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28).

#### GOD WANTS OUR PRAYERS

##### Isaiah 45:11–12

*<sup>11</sup>Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: Ask me of the things that are to come; concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. <sup>12</sup>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 (ASV, 1901).*

With these verses the Lord begins His reply. After the previous double woe, which is expressed in general terms, the Lord now directly addresses the presumptuous Jewish citizens of Israel when He says, "*Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: Ask me of the things that are to come; concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.*" The names by which He calls Himself express His absolute blamelessness, and His absolute right of sovereignty over Israel and the world which He made. The nation is reminded that the Speaker is the Holy One in Israel and also Israel's God and creator, therefore they are in no position to complain about what He does. God will not keep Israel in the dark respecting the things to come, but commands the nation to ask of Him concerning these things, for He alone can give information about them. He not merely grants Israel permission to ask but commands them so to do.

He says that they should pray for the revealing of the future events and insist upon and demand them that He promised. The Lord not only allows his people to put Him in remembrance of His promises and prophecies, but to plead for, and, require the performance of them. These words are an encouragement to the prayers of the faithful. Faith in prayer has great power with God. It can be seen as a kind of command over Him in that it energizes Him to perform His promises given in His word. Instead of complaining, and opposing his administration, it was their privilege to come before Him and spread out their desires, and even to *give direction* in regard to future events, so far as the events of His administration would concern them, and He would meet their desires. This accords with the numerous passages of the Bible which command us to pray; and with the promises of God that He will lend a loving ear to our cries.

*I have made the earth.* God here asserts that He had made all things, demonstrating that He is able to hear our cries, and to grant an answer to our requests. His creation is visible everywhere. He has formed and sustains all things, and in has raised up for all a deliverer (Jesus). They might, therefore, go before Him with confidence, and spread out all their wants.

*Have stretched out the heavens And all their host.* The stars *Have I commanded.* All are under my direction and control. What more can be needed by his people than the friendship and protection of Him who made the heavens and the earth, and who leads on the stars?

On the fourth day of creation God made the stars in the heavens.

Genesis 1:14-18

*<sup>14</sup>And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: <sup>15</sup>and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day (ASV, 1901).*

One of the reasons for making the stars in the heavens was for a sign. A sign signifies or represents something. One dictionary defines a sign as:

*An object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the presence or occurrence of something else*

Signs therefore, are meant to lead one to something else. The sign itself is not the end meaning. It is the method employed to direct our attention to something else. In the stars God is the direct object the signs point to. We should realize that His entire creation which theologians call “general revelation,” speak to Him and coming from Him. In fact, God charges all mankind to know Him through the “signs” He has provided.

Romans 1: 20

*For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse (KJV).*

God is trying to tell us things about Himself through the stars in the heavens. The heavens declare His creative output.

Psalm 19: 1-6

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them he has made a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run it's race. It's rising is from one end of heaven, and it's circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from it's heat thereof (KJV).*

This psalm of David announces that the heavens declare the glory (splendor) of God's handiwork. Verse one is a summary statement: the majestic Creation is evidence of the even more majestic Creator-God. The heavens continually (every day and every night) display the fact that there is a Creator. Even though Creation does not speak audibly as humans do its message goes out for all the earth to witness. The message from nature about the glory of God reaches all nations, and is equally intelligible to them all. It is a universal language. The stars in the heavens move around a circular path. The band of stars on both sides of this path (circuit), which is known today as the Zodiac, is called the Mazzaroth in Hebrew. The names of these stars, Virgo, Pisces, Capricorn, Leo etc., are familiar to us today, because astronomers and navigators designate various areas of the sky with them. The 12 signs have nothing to say about man, however they do have a great deal to say about God's plan of redemption for mankind - from the virgin birth (Virgo) to the triumph of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Leo).

The stories He is trying to tell us about are directed straight at Himself. He wants us to know and acknowledge Him through these "signs."

Isaiah 40:26

*Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (KJV).*

God wants us to see Him *through* these stars. He is not in the stars, as some would believe. He created them. He wants us to realize just how powerful He is. God, who cannot be compared to anyone or anything knows everything about His Creation and sustains it. In His strength He created and also controls and sustains millions upon millions of stars, each one of which He, amazingly, has named. In Isaiah chapters 40-66, God is revealed as the Creator and Maker. He does not want

us to worship the stars, as in astrology (Isaiah 47: 13-14; Deut. 4: 19; 17: 2-5; Isaiah 47: 13-14). *He wants us to worship Him.*

Amos 5:8

*[Seek him] that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD [is] his name*

The psalmist also tells us that God has provided names for the stars as well as knowing exactly how many there are. He is clearly demonstrating His sovereign control over His creation.

Psalms 147:4

*He counteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names (KJV).*

Isaiah 40: 26

*Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (KJV).*

Since God has created the heavens and the stars as signs pointing to Him and His message for us it should not be surprising that Satan has corrupted it along with the rest of God's creation. The specific signs that the stars told have been obscured with satanic corruption.

CYRUS WAS GOD'S CHOICE

Isaiah 45:13

*<sup>13</sup>I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let my exiles go free, not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts (ASV, 1901).*

This verse is a conclusion to the thoughts the Lord has just expressed. Through His sovereignty as the almighty Creator, God will give victory to Israel through Cyrus. The creation of all things is proof of the divine power. Cyrus' appearance is not by chance nor an event that should be questioned by the Israelites, for he has been raised up in righteousness. In his appearance the righteousness of God has been displayed, which shows itself in His dealings with His people and in His faithfulness to the promises made to the fathers. Cyrus' appearance, therefore, should be a sign of hope to the Israelites and the Church, for it reveals God's righteousness and that He fulfills His promises.

Next message ISRAEL'S FUTURE RESTORATION INFLUENCES OTHERS  
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