

## Isaiah 45B-48A

- Last week, we heard God the Father telling Israel that the man who would deliver them from bondage in Babylon wouldn't be their Messiah
  - He wouldn't be a David or Solomon
  - He wouldn't be a Moses or Joshua
  - He wouldn't even be a JEW
    - He would be Cyrus, a Gentile conquerer
  - And this fact was so offensive to the Jewish reader that God spends a good chapter or so explaining that His sovereignty permits Him to do as He wishes
    - Including creating light and darkness, well-being and calamity
  - So what follows in this last part of our "God the Father" section is an a boost of confidence for the Israelites
    - The chapters emphasize God the Father as a deliverer, stronger than idols and righteous

Is. 45:14 ¶ Thus says the LORD,

"The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush  
And the Sabeans, men of stature,  
Will come over to you and will be yours;  
They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains  
And will bow down to you;  
They will make supplication to you:  
' Surely, God is with you, and there is none else,  
No other God.'"

Is. 45:15 Truly, You are a God who hides Himself,  
O God of Israel, Savior!

Is. 45:16 They will be put to shame and even humiliated, all of them;  
The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation.

Is. 45:17 Israel has been saved by the LORD  
With an everlasting salvation;  
You will not be put to shame or humiliated  
To all eternity.

- Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans (also from Egypt) are enemies of Israel
  - But in a future day (the Millennium) they will be subject to Israel

- God describes a reversed role with Israel
  - They bow to Israel, they come over in chains, meaning in serving Israel
  - This is reversed from Israel in the time of captivity when the Gentiles made Israel slaves
  - In a sense, God hid Himself during this time only to emerge in the future to put the Gentiles to shame
    - And bring Israel to glory
- So Israel is called upon to have confidence in their God
  - We can see proof here of what we learned last week concerning our perspective problem in judging God by our circumstances
    - From the perspective of the Jew in captivity, is God "good?"
    - From the perspective of the Jew in the Millennium He is
      - But can He be good sometimes and not others?
      - Or good to some and not to others?
      - He's either always good or never good
    - Also remember our description of Israel as a lack of water
      - The individual molecules in the lake may change, but it's still the same lake
      - God is dealing with Israel throughout history,
      - And while the people who make it up vary over the course of history, from God's point of view it's always the same Israel
  - And God is good to Israel and shows that goodness fully in the end
    - Just as He promises to do here

Is. 45:18 ¶ For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited),

"I am the LORD, and there is none else.

Is. 45:19 " I have not spoken in secret,

In some dark land;  
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,  
' Seek Me in a waste place';  
I, the LORD, speak righteousness,  
Declaring things that are upright.

Is. 45:20 ¶ " Gather yourselves and come;

Draw near together, you fugitives of the nations;  
They have no knowledge,  
Who carry about their wooden idol  
And pray to a god who cannot save.

Is. 45:21 " Declare and set forth your case;

Indeed, let them consult together.  
Who has announced this from of old?  
Who has long since declared it?  
Is it not I, the LORD?  
And there is no other God besides Me,  
A righteous God and a Savior;  
There is none except Me.

Is. 45:22 " Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;

For I am God, and there is no other.

Is. 45:23 " I have sworn by Myself,

The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness  
And will not turn back,  
That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

Is. 45:24 "They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.'

Men will come to Him,  
And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.

Is. 45:25 "In the LORD all the offspring of Israel

Will be justified and will glory."

- Let's put aside verse 18 for a moment and briefly look through the remainder of the text
  - In v.19 God declares that His words have not been kept secret
    - He has told Israel what they must do to remain in His pleasure
    - And He told them what would happen if they didn't
    - And He told them through the prophets that they weren't heeding His word

- And He told them the coming punishments
- And He is now telling them that there is yet to be a future redemption
  - Everything has been declared
- So in v.20 and onward God says as He did before, what did your idols do for you?
  - None of them could save you
  - But God will save Israel
    - And His word applies to the entire Earth
    - It has gone forth and will not turn back
      - Doesn't that just thrill you to know?
      - God's word is so sure, there is nothing to stop it from accomplishing His will
  - Every tongue will confess in the end
  - And the Lord and Israel will receive the glory they deserve
- Now to v.18, Isaiah records that God is the creator of the Heavens and Earth
  - And God didn't create the Earth a wasteland
    - He created it as a place to be inhabited
  - The word for waste is tohu
    - We can see that same word used in Genesis in the story of creation

Gen. 1:1 ¶ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen. 1:2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

- In v.2, the Hebrew word for formless is tohu, which Isaiah 45:18 translates waste place
  - Isaiah says this is not how the Lord created the Earth

- Yet Gen 1:2 says this is how the Earth appeared on the first day of creation
  - This is where the gap theory originates and gains its proponents
    - The Theory says that there is a gap of time between verses 1 and two of Genesis 1
      - And some unknown period of time existed between them
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- Consider these points
  - God uses water as a picture of judgment, sin and death
    - He judges the earth in Noah's day with a flood
    - The Hebrew word for the depths of the sea is the same word for hell or the abyss
    - In the New Earth there are no seas because there is no longer any sin to represent by the picture of a deep dark place
  - And yet in the beginning of the creation story, the world is covered in a sea
    - And it's a waste place
    - Yet Isaiah seems to say that's not the way the Earth was created
- What was the original creation then?
  - They point to Ezekiel 28

Ezek. 28:12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,  
"You had the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

Ezek. 28:13 "You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
 Every precious stone was your covering:  
 The ruby, the topaz and the diamond;  
 The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;  
 The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;  
 And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,  
 Was in you.  
 On the day that you were created  
 They were prepared.

Ezek. 28:14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers,  
 And I placed you there.  
 You were on the holy mountain of God;  
 You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezek. 28:15 "You were blameless in your ways  
 From the day you were created  
 Until unrighteousness was found in you.

Ezek. 28:16 "By the abundance of your trade  
 You were internally filled with violence,  
 And you sinned;  
 Therefore I have cast you as profane  
 From the mountain of God.  
 And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,  
 From the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezek. 28:17 "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;  
 You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.  
 I cast you to the ground;  
 I put you before kings,  
 That they may see you.

Ezek. 28:18 "By the multitude of your iniquities,  
 In the unrighteousness of your trade  
 You profaned your sanctuaries.  
 Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you;  
 It has consumed you,  
 And I have turned you to ashes on the earth  
 In the eyes of all who see you.

Ezek. 28:19 "All who know you among the peoples  
 Are appalled at you;  
 You have become terrified  
 And you will cease to be forever."""

- Satan was placed on an earth in the Garden
  - He sinned, and fell and God brought judgment waters upon the Earth
  - Followed by the days of creation in Genesis 1:2 and onward

- Arguments against the gap theory abound as well
  - First, they point to Gen 1:1-2 as simply an introduction showing that God first created the raw materials
    - Then proceeded to fashion them into a final form
    - The raw materials were formless until they were formed into something better
  - From this interpretation, then Isaiah 45:18 is read differently
    - We would see Isaiah's statement that the world was created formless or as a waste place to simply remind the reader that God didn't stop there
      - He continued on to create a perfect inhabitable planet for man
      - Which would then supports Isaiah's conclusion that God's purposes are good from the eternal perspective
  - Finally, there are some internal contradictions in the Gap Theory
    - For example, the Gap Theory says Ezekiel 28 is a description of Earth during the Gap
      - Ezek 28 says that Satan was in the garden of Eden
      - But the garden wasn't created until Day Six, according to Genesis 2, which is after the suppose Gap
    - I don't Isaiah means that God's intent in the creation was not to create something formless, but to continue forward toward a final product for man
  - Now God ends the section for the Father with a series of pronouncements against Neb's Babylon and reminders to Israel to rely on the Lord

Is. 46:1 ¶ Bel has bowed down, Nebo stoops over;  
 Their images are consigned to the beasts and the cattle.  
 The things that you carry are burdensome,  
 A load for the weary beast.

Is. 46:2 They stooped over, they have bowed down together;  
 They could not rescue the burden,  
 But have themselves gone into captivity.

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- Bel and Nebo were idols of Babylon
  - Bel is Bel-Marduk, which later became the god Jupiter of the Romans
  - Nebo was the son of Bel-Marduk and later the god Mercury
  - They were a burden to carry around on beasts
    - And they have stooped over or fallen over because they are lying in the backs of carts as Cyrus carries them off to Babylon
  - In contrast to that, Israel's God carries Her:

Is. 46:3 ¶ " Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,  
 And all the remnant of the house of Israel,  
 You who have been borne by Me from birth  
 And have been carried from the womb;

Is. 46:4 Even to your old age I will be the same,  
 And even to your graying years I will bear you!  
 I have done it, and I will carry you;  
 And I will bear you and I will deliver you.

Is. 46:5 ¶ " To whom would you liken Me  
 And make Me equal and compare Me,  
 That we would be alike?

Is. 46:6 "Those who lavish gold from the purse  
 And weigh silver on the scale  
 Hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god;  
 They bow down, indeed they worship it.

Is. 46:7 "They lift it upon the shoulder and carry it;  
 They set it in its place and it stands there.  
 It does not move from its place.  
 Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer;  
 It cannot deliver him from his distress.

- Jehovah is carrying Israel through history
  - Both into and out of these circumstances
  - And of course, idols are a futile pursuit
    - Remember these reminders and these images had their greatest impact on the audience that lived through these circumstances
    - It seems clear that because of these specific pronouncements, God cured Israel of idol worship as they read these words and realized their folly

- Furthermore, remember God's works

Is. 46:8 ¶ "Remember this, and be assured;  
Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

Is. 46:9 "Remember the former things long past,  
For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is no one like Me,

Is. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times things which have not been done,

Saying, 'My purpose will be established,

And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

Is. 46:11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,

The man of My purpose from a far country.

Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.

I have planned it, surely I will do it.

Is. 46:12 ¶ "Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded,  
Who are far from righteousness.

Is. 46:13 "I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off;  
And My salvation will not delay.

And I will grant salvation in Zion,

And My glory for Israel.

- God says trust my word by reflecting on my past works for the sake of Israel
  - And consider that I have called a bird of prey from the East (Cyrus)
  - Who will accomplish my plan
  - And His plan to bring Israel righteousness is "not long off"
    - Time is a relative thing
- If chapter 45 spoke about the end of Babylon's idolatry, then chapter 46 speaks of the empire itself coming to an end
  - This follows the same pattern of Revelation
    - Spiritual Babylon is judged in Revelation 17 while the empire of Babylon is judged in Revelation 18
  - That similarity tells us that this is another example of a near term version of the prophecy and a far term version of the prophecy
    - Neb's Babylon experiences a judgment against idols first, followed by the nation itself coming to an end

- The antichrist's empire experiences the same events in Tribulation

Is. 47:1 ¶ "Come down and sit in the dust,  
O virgin daughter of Babylon;  
Sit on the ground without a throne,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans!  
For you shall no longer be called tender and delicate.

Is. 47:2 "Take the millstones and grind meal.  
Remove your veil, strip off the skirt,  
Uncover the leg, cross the rivers.

Is. 47:3 "Your nakedness will be uncovered,  
Your shame also will be exposed;  
I will take vengeance and will not spare a man."

Is. 47:4 Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name,  
The Holy One of Israel.

Is. 47:5 "Sit silently, and go into darkness,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans,  
For you will no longer be called  
The queen of kingdoms.

Is. 47:6 "I was angry with My people,  
I profaned My heritage  
And gave them into your hand.  
You did not show mercy to them,  
On the aged you made your yoke very heavy.

Is. 47:7 "Yet you said, 'I will be a queen forever.'  
These things you did not consider  
Nor remember the outcome of them.

Is. 47:8 ¶ "Now, then, hear this, you sensual one,  
Who dwells securely,  
Who says in your heart,  
'I am, and there is no one besides me.  
I will not sit as a widow,  
Nor know loss of children.'

Is. 47:9 "But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day:  
Loss of children and widowhood.  
They will come on you in full measure  
In spite of your many sorceries,  
In spite of the great power of your spells.

Is. 47:10 "You felt secure in your wickedness and said,  
'No one sees me,'  
Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you;  
For you have said in your heart,  
'I am, and there is no one besides me.'

Is. 47:11 "But evil will come on you  
 Which you will not know how to charm away;  
 And disaster will fall on you  
 For which you cannot atone;  
 And destruction about which you do not know  
 Will come on you suddenly.

Is. 47:12 ¶ "Stand fast now in your spells  
 And in your many sorceries  
 With which you have labored from your youth;  
 Perhaps you will be able to profit,  
 Perhaps you may cause trembling.

Is. 47:13 "You are wearied with your many counsels;  
 Let now the astrologers,  
 Those who prophesy by the stars,  
 Those who predict by the new moons,  
 Stand up and save you from what will come upon you.

Is. 47:14 "Behold, they have become like stubble,  
 Fire burns them;  
 They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame;  
 There will be no coal to warm by  
 Nor a fire to sit before!

Is. 47:15 "So have those become to you with whom you have labored,  
 Who have trafficked with you from your youth;  
 Each has wandered in his own way;  
 There is none to save you.

- There are a number of important things to note in the imagery of this description
  - And the images will teach us a lot about how God uses Babylon as a picture or symbol
  - First, notice that this nation is described as a woman
    - She thinks herself beautiful
    - Her clothing becomes a way of measuring her beauty
  - Let's start drawing a comparison to another woman associated with Babylon
    - The Harlot of Revelation
      - She is clothed in fine clothes until she is made naked

Rev. 17:16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her **flesh** and will burn her up with fire.

- Then second the number of references to pride
  - Babylon's pride is her downfall
  - She claimed to be most powerful, indestructible
  - No one besides me (v.10)
- This compares to the description of Satan we read in Ezekiel 28
  - His pride and attempts to be the only one led to His downfall
  - It was also his appearance that caused Satan to swell with pride
- Next, notice the references to the occult throughout the passage
  - Sorcery, spells, etc.
- We know from Scripture these secret dark arts are accessing Satan's power
- What this chapter suggests clearly is that Babylon is the Bible's creation to give us a clearer understanding of who Satan is and how he works within creation
  - He is the author of the occult, the father of lies
  - He is the one behind every form of opposition to God
  - His calling card is pride and his desire is to challenge God for His throne
  - He takes the form of a seductive woman, who entices men into spiritual harlotry
    - Trading a true relationship with the living God for a cheap, immoral, imitation relationship with false gods
  - When God decides to judge Babylon, He will first make Babylon a poster child for Satan and judge both together
- Finally, chapter 48
  - The chapter is a summary of the entire first section of Second Isaiah

- It reviews the same themes but it also introduces some new concepts
- It begins with a review of His sovereignty as evidenced in God's unique ability to pronounce future events and bring them about exactly as He intended

Is. 48:1 ¶ "Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are named Israel  
 And who came forth from the loins of Judah,  
 Who swear by the name of the LORD  
 And invoke the God of Israel,  
 But not in truth nor in righteousness.

Is. 48:2 "For they call themselves after the holy city  
 And lean on the God of Israel;  
 The LORD of hosts is His name.

Is. 48:3 "I declared the former things long ago  
 And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them.  
 Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

Is. 48:4 "Because I know that you are obstinate,  
 And your neck is an iron sinew  
 And your forehead bronze,

Is. 48:5 Therefore I declared them to you long ago,  
 Before they took place I proclaimed them to you,  
 So that you would not say, 'My idol has done them,  
 And my graven image and my molten image have commanded them.'

Is. 48:6 "You have heard; look at all this.  
 And you, will you not declare it?  
 I proclaim to you new things from this time,  
 Even hidden things which you have not known.

Is. 48:7 "They are created now and not long ago;  
 And before today you have not heard them,  
 So that you will not say, 'Behold, I knew them.'

Is. 48:8 "You have not heard, you have not known.  
 Even from long ago your ear has not been open,  
 Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously;  
 And you have been called a rebel from birth.

Is. 48:9 "For the sake of My name I delay My wrath,  
 And for My praise I restrain it for you,  
 In order not to cut you off.

Is. 48:10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;  
 I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Is. 48:11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act;  
 For how can My name be profaned?  
 And My glory I will not give to another.

- We'll finish the summary next week and then use it as a bridge into the next section, The Suffering Servant