

July 27th 2014 Isaiah 45#3 The Sovereign God Who Offers Salvation
Isaiah 45:18-25

As is mentioned in our Participaper we come this morning to our third and final study in this 45th chapter of Isaiah, looking specifically at verses 18-25. And immediately we note that the words we are looking at are the words of our Almighty, Sovereign and Creator God. V18 says:-

***For this is what the LORD says—
he who created the heavens,
he is God;
he who fashioned and made the earth,
he founded it;
he did not create it to be empty,
but formed it to be inhabited—
he says:
"I am the LORD,
and there is no other.***

With those words "I am the Lord and there is no other", God begins to talk directly to the people. For a moment the importance of Isaiah as God's messenger fades away as God commences to address Israel and other peoples on a personal basis.

And what we need to recognize is that God in the same way is speaking directly to our hearts from this passage this morning. Because these are timeless truths addressed by the Sovereign God to all mankind including you and me.

God speaking to us; using again these words contained in Isaiah. Speaking out of love and yet commanding us to hear and to respond.

And He begins by assuring us that he has never spoken in secret. He has never hid from us the realities of the perilous position we are in because of our sin. Never hid from us the reality of a judgment to come. Never hid from us the fact that the only salvation we can ever hope for is found in Him.

And then God gives an invitation. V20 "***Gather together and come;***"

It is such a beautiful word that word come. If you have ever entered, as a stranger, a place full of people who all seem to know each other, and stood by yourself, a little scared, unsure, isolated—and then someone has approached with a smile and said, Hi, I'mcome and join us. What a wonderful sound that word made in your ears right then.

And here it is the Awesome God who says to us as a group and to us as individuals, come.

At times when I pray I imagine myself arriving in heaven. I see Almighty God immediately for He is high and lifted up and glorious to behold. His power and His majesty fill the place. But there are thousands upon thousands of other people there between God and me. Yet I envisage Him looking directly at me as I enter into His presence and despite the crowds and the distance I can hear His voice clearly speaking just to me: calling me with great love to come to His side.

There is a sense of that type of coming being requested by Almighty God here and it is a request to those seeking safety, security, protection, and a home.

***"Gather together and come;
assemble, you fugitives from the nations.
Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood,
who pray to gods that cannot save.***

God on High calls those who are fugitives from the nations to come before Him. His call is not just restricted to those Jews who were given the chance to depart from Babylon but also those from other Nations who had been held in captivity there too. They have been given this chance to be free from the oppression of Babylon and God offers them the chance of true freedom with Him. The CEV puts v19b-20 like this:-

***The LORD speaks the truth,
and this is what he says
to every survivor
from every nation:
"Gather around me!
Learn how senseless it is
to worship wooden idols
or pray to helpless gods.***

So God's call to come is also the call to leave behind. To leave behind the other gods once depended upon and trusted in because God is Sovereign over all and only He can save.

I read the other day that Abraham was a maker of idols before God called him to leave Ur and to follow God wherever God lead, trusting only in Him. What a challenge that was for a man who had previously worshipped other gods to now commit himself and his family, body and soul, to one God as the One and only. And he did. And he stuck by his decision through thick and thin because he knew there was no other God than the Lord.

And that challenge of God has not changed. He calls all who accept their need for safety, security, protection and an eternal home to realize that outside of God we have no hope, and therefore when we find that hope in Him we must be prepared to follow Him with all our heart, our strength, our mind. Not with half heartedness or in a lukewarm fashion.

For He alone has the right to receive such total commitment from us because of His Sovereign power.

And in v21 God gives us just one example of that power being proven by the fact that what He foretells always comes to pass.

He foretold the destruction and exile of His people and it came to pass. He foretold through Jeremiah the amount of years Israel would remain in exile and it came to pass to the exact year. He foretold the coming of Cyrus the great who would free His people and send them back to rebuild His Temple and it came to pass. He foretold the coming of the Messiah as a servant who would suffer, die, and triumph over death, and it came to pass. He foretold the spread of the Gospel and the growth of His church throughout the world and it has come to pass.

But what is even more relevant to us in this uncertain age is what He has foretold for the future. V23

***By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.***

As Christians we immediately think, "I've heard that somewhere before", and indeed we have. It became part of a Christian hymn about God the Son that Paul quoted in Philippians 2:8-11

***And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.***

God is letting all people know that the day is coming when there will be a separation, and those who are safe in Him are only those who have accepted Him as the One true and Sovereign Lord of their Lives.

And because God yearns for all to be safe in Him, He offers salvation to all. V22:-

***"Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.***

I do like the way the CEV puts it:-

***"I invite the whole world
to turn to me and be saved.
I alone am God!
No others are real.***

It is a mighty call of God's grace indeed. It involves turning away from reliance on all other gods including the myth of one's own goodness. It requires the recognition that God alone is righteous and the only way to gain His righteousness is to receive it as a gift. To accept our own sinful dirtiness, and to load those sins on Jesus so that He can then make us righteous before the Father.

And we all need to know in our hearts with a deep assurance that we have indeed walked that path.

But just knowing that is not enough. Because it is the Sovereign God who has called us to come and receive His salvation, then He must be sovereign of our lives as we live it out for Him here on earth. That's the hard part for every Christian and we cannot attempt it in our own strength. We must rely on the power of God working in us by His Spirit.

And then be prepared to go where He sends us, even when we don't really want to go. To speak the word of life as He guides us, even when it may cause us embarrassment or rejection. To give over to Him what He seeks even when the sacrifice seems too much. To present to our family an example of total commitment to Him even when they do not understand. To be as available as he needs us to be in every area of this life till he takes us home, for He who has called us is Sovereign Lord.

This morning will you join me in saying once more to our Holy and unique God who first loved us: Here I am again my Sovereign Lord, take me, cleanse me, fill me, and use me.