

Isaiah 45-46, 1 Thessalonians 3(New King James Version)

Isaiah 45

Cyrus, God's Instrument

¹ “Thus says the LORD to His anointed,
To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—
To subdue nations before him
And loose the armor of kings,
To open before him the double doors,
So that the gates will not be shut:

² ‘I will go before you
And make the crooked places^[a] straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of bronze
And cut the bars of iron.

³ I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden riches of secret places,
That you may know that I, the LORD,
Who call *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.

⁴ For Jacob My servant's sake,
And Israel My elect,
I have even called you by your name;
I have named you, though you have not known Me.

⁵ *I am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
There is no God besides Me.

I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

⁶ That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
That *there is* none besides Me.

I am the LORD, and *there is* no other;

⁷ I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace and create calamity;
I, the LORD, do all these *things*.’

⁸ “Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring up together.
I, the LORD, have created it.

⁹ “Woe to him who strives with his Maker!
Let the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’
Or shall your handiwork *say*, ‘He has no hands’?

¹⁰ Woe to him who says to *his* father, ‘What are you begetting?’
Or to the woman, ‘What have you brought forth?’”

¹¹ Thus says 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, you command Me.

¹² I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
And all their host I have commanded.

¹³ I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways;
He shall build My city
And let My exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

The LORD, the Only Savior

¹⁴ Thus says the LORD:

“The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over in chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you, *saying*, ‘Surely God *is* in you,
And *there is* no other;
There is no other God.’”

¹⁵ Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!

¹⁶ They shall be ashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who are makers of idols.

¹⁷ *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or disgraced
Forever and ever.

¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,

Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
“I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.
¹⁹ I have not spoken in secret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
‘Seek Me in vain’;
I, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.

²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped from the nations.
They have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
²¹ Tell and bring forth *your case*;
Yes, let them take counsel together.
Who has declared this from ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?
Have not I, the LORD?
And *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.

²² “Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
²³ I have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.
²⁴ He shall say,
‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And all shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
²⁵ In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and shall glory.’”

Isaiah 46

Dead Idols and the Living God

¹ Bel bows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.

Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
A burden to the weary *beast*.
² They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
But have themselves gone into captivity.

³ “Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
⁴ Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.

⁵ “To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?
⁶ They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
⁷ They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.

⁸ “Remember this, and show yourselves men;
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
⁹ Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I am God, and *there is* none like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,’
¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it*;
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it*;
I will also do it.

¹² “Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,
Who *are* far from righteousness:
¹³ I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;

My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.

1 Thessalonians 3

Concern for Their Faith

¹ Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ² and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, ³ that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴ For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Encouraged by Timothy

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see you*— ⁷ therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

⁹ For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

Prayer for the Church

¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.