

“If one confesses that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth (45:18), that he has spoken his plans and foretold the future before it happens (45:19a), that God speaks the truth and accomplishes his promises (45:19b,23), and that there is no other righteous God and Savior for humanity (45:21), then it is possible to turn to God and be saved (45:23). It does not matter who that person is, where that person is from, what their background is, or what they have thought or done in the past” (Smith 2009: 281).

v22 “If the Lord is the sole God of the whole world and if he is a savior (v. 21), then he must be the savior of the whole world as well. This understanding has run through the book from start to finish. Ch. 2 looks forward to the day when all the world will come to Jerusalem to learn the torah of God. Likewise, 66:18–19 speak of a day when representatives of all nations and tongues will come to Jerusalem to see the glory of God and go out to the ends of the earth to declare that glory” (Oswalt 1998: 223).

“This is a radically exclusivist message. There is only one God, and only one savior, and he is the God of Israel. This is the biblical message. If this message is correct, then there is only one response: surrender and worship. If the message is incorrect, then the Bible cannot be salvaged. Its central view of existence, its fundamental premise, is wrong, and everything that then flows from that premise is wrong too. Isaiah’s challenge is perennial: you must accept my word or deny it; what you cannot do is modify it” (Oswalt 1998: 220-21).

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What stands outside of God’s control? How do your decisions reflect this? How do your thoughts reflect this?

Does God have as much control over world politics (the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms) today as he did in Isaiah’s time? How should this affect our thinking about presidents and dictators?

What application of verse 23 can we make today? What application did Paul make of it in Romans 14:10-11 and Philippians 2:9-11?

## ISAIAH 45: GOD GLORIFIED AS SOVEREIGN AND SAVIOR

### OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 45

- I. God will raise up Cyrus to accomplish his purposes (45:1-8)  
[God is sovereign over pagan kings]
- II. Do not quarrel with God over his plans (45:9-13)  
[God is sovereign by virtue of being Creator]
- III. God will glorify himself through Israel’s restoration (45:14-17)  
[God is sovereign in Israel’s salvation]
- IV. God declares his plans in advance that he may be glorified as the only God (45:18-21)  
[God is sovereign over the future]
- V. God will receive glory from all people (45:22-25)  
[God is sovereign over all mankind]

### SOURCES CITED

John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT, 1998.  
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, New American Commentary, 2009.  
Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, The Bible Speaks Today, 1996.

## NOTES

v1 “If Isaiah’s hearers were shocked at Cyrus’s being called God’s shepherd (44:28), they must have been even more so at his now being called *his anointed* [Messiah]. This title had previously been reserved for priests, prophets, and kings of Israel. Surely God could only use persons from his own elect people to accomplish his purposes. But that is exactly the point that Isaiah has been trying to make: God is not the Lord of Israel alone; he is the God of the whole world” (Oswalt 1998: 200-201).

v6 “The first is that Cyrus might know (v. 3), the second is that Israel might know (v. 4), and the third is that the world might know (v. 6)” (Oswalt 1998: 203).

v6 “It is because of Cyrus that an Israel survived through whom the Christ could come for the salvation of the world” (Oswalt 1998: 203).

v7 “The point is that everything which exists, whether positive or negative from our perspective, does so because of the creative will of God. The alternative to this view is that things happen in the world of nature or history that have their origin in some being or force other than God, things that he is powerless to prevent. If that alternative is correct, then God is but one of the gods and is as powerless to save us from ourselves as they are” (Oswalt 1998: 204).

v7 “What the prophet is saying is that if bad conditions exist in my life, they are not there because some evil god has thwarted the good intentions of a kindly but ineffectual grandfather-god, who would like me to have good conditions but cannot bring them about. They are there solely as a factor of my relations to the one God. They may be there because I have sinned against his natural and moral laws, or they may be there because by their means I can become more like him, or they may be there for reasons that he cannot explain to me. But they are not there in spite of God. He is the only uncaused cause in the universe” (Oswalt 1998: 205).

v8 “What this verse tells us is that if 45:7 leaves us with some difficult questions by its rather cool assertions that God is ultimately responsible for everything, we must never forget that all of his actions are governed by the absolute right(eous)ness with which he treats every person, and by his determination to deliver every person from the consequences of his or her own sin, if only he or she will let him” (Oswalt 1998: 206).

vv9-13 “When we put ourselves into the position of the Hebrew people, it is not hard to realize what a dissonant note this prophecy of Cyrus would sound. When they think of return from the Babylonian exile, they think of a second exodus, with manna from heaven, water from rocks, and another Moses. How shocking for them to hear that their deliverer would be a pagan who did not even know the Lord, Yahweh (45:5). The contrast with Moses, the center of whose call was the revelation of the name and nature of Yahweh, could hardly be more complete” (Oswalt 1998: 208).

v9 “Woe, a funeral cry, emphasizes the seriousness of what is taking place here (cf. chs. 5 and 28–33). To disagree with God’s ordering of one’s life or one’s world is not merely a matter of preference or outlook. At bottom, it is a refusal to let God be God, a reversal of roles, in which the creature tries to make the Creator a servant to carry out the creature’s plan” (Oswalt 1998: 208).

v9 “What we are is as different from God as the lifeless clay is different from the potter. Like the pots, we neither know from whence we came nor where we are going; we exist solely as an expression of the will of God. On what basis, then, can we pass judgment on God’s methods of accomplishing his will?” (Oswalt 1998: 208-9).

vv18-25 “God began to institute his plan long ago when he first created the heaven and the earth. He will successfully complete it on that final day when every knee shall bow before him. Comfort for every believer is available in knowing that God has planned the future and will accomplish it” (Smith 2009: 274).