

The Only God of Salvation

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[0 : 00] Isaiah 45, page 732, Pulpit Bible, Isaiah chapter 45.

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. I will go before you and level the exalted places. I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel, my chosen, I call you by your name. I name you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other.

Besides me there is no God. I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me.

[1 : 18] I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things.

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness. Let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout.

I, the Lord, have created it. O to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots. Does a clay say to him who forms it, what are you making?

Or your work has no handles. O to him who says to a father, what are you begetting? Or to a woman, with what are you in labor? Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him, Ask me of things to come.

Will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? I made the earth and created man on it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.

[2 : 24] I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways levels. You shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts.

Thus says the Lord, the wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabaeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours. They shall follow you.

They shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying, Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no God beside him. Truly, you are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior.

All of them are put to shame and confounded. The makers of idols go in confusion together. But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation.

You shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, he is God, who formed the earth and made it.

[3 : 27] He established it. He did not create it empty. He formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret in a land of darkness.

I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, Seek me in vain. I, the Lord, speak the truth. I declare what is right. Assemble yourselves and come.

Draw near together, you survivors of the nations. They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a God that cannot save.

Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together. Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord?

And there is no other God beside me, a righteous God and a Savior. There is none beside me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.

[4 : 28] For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return. To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.

Only in the Lord it shall be said of me, a righteousness and strength. To him shall come and be ashamed all who are incensed against him. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.

Amen, and may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. Amen, and may God bless you. We sing again from Psalm 36 and sing Psalms, page 44. And the tune is Free Church, Psalm 36, from verse 5 to verse 10.

That's on page 44. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep. Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep. How precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings.

[5 : 45] Both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings. They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight. For with you is the source of life.

In your light we see light. And so on. Verses 5 to 10 of Psalm 36. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.

It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.

[7 : 26] It Rocketapp in your?) Amazingism. It brings both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings.

The feast within your house and reek from streams of pure delight.

For with you is the source of light, in your life we see light.

To those who know you as their God, your steadfast love impart.

Maintain your righteousness to those of you and of bright heart.

[8 : 53] Let's turn again to Isaiah chapter 45. And we'll read from verse 20.

And there is no other God beside me. A righteous God and a saviour, there is none beside me.

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.

For I am God and there is no other. One of the things that God continually does in his word, over and over again, is to declare his majesty, his dominion, his authority, his rule.

He highlights to us over and over again that he alone is God of heaven and earth. That there is no other God. People make gods of their own imagination.

But whatever God a person has in his or her imagination is not the living and true God at all. He is God alone and there is no other.

[10 : 28] Indeed, right throughout this chapter, it's one of the features that you find. For instance, in verse 5, he says, I am the Lord and there is no other. Besides me, there is no God.

Again, in verse 14, he says, really much the same, that there is surely God is in you and there is no other. No God beside him.

Verse 18, that again we find, I am the Lord and there is no other. Verse 21, again he says that, and there is no other God besides me.

And in verse 22, for I am God and there is no other. And whenever you find God repeating over and over and over again particular statements like this, it is because he is driving home to us the importance of what he is saying.

And it is very often because there is a tendency within us to either not grasp what he is saying or to forget what he is saying. Because we have got to remember that the number one thing that God requires of us is an acknowledgement of him as the living and true God.

[11 : 47] It is the very first commandment. There is no other God. That is what he says. It is right at the very commandment. You shall have no other gods before me.

I am number one. There is no other God in heaven or on earth. We have always got to remember that. And when God highlights something over and over, as we said again, it is because there is a tendency in us to replace God.

With someone else or with something else. In the Old Testament, with regard to God's people, the great sin that they were so prone to was idolatry.

And we say to ourselves, oh, well, that was then. We are not idol worshippers. We don't worship images made out of wood or stone or card. In some way, we don't worship the sun, the moon, all these things.

No. Some throughout the world, there are many who still do. But it is very easy for us to be idolatrous in our thinking. Because we can put other things, legitimate things, in the place of God. [13:01] What consumes us in life? What is it that consumes us in life? Now, our families are incredibly important to us. And God wants us to be taken up with our families.

Wants us to provide and care and love for them. And, of course, we do. But important, although our families are, we mustn't raise them up to the position that God requires for himself.

It's the same about our work or our leisure or our ambitions or our talents or all the different things that make life what it is. Nothing must be put in the place of God.

So it's very easy for us. And sometimes we have to stop and think and say, Am I putting things? Are things subtly moving in my life? So that God is being displaced.

God is being pushed down. That I'm not making room for God. That I'm not making a place for God. Well, whenever that is happening in our lives, when God is being pushed down and we don't have time for him, then we are putting other things in his place.

[14:07] So God is coming back into us again and saying, Come on, I alone am God and there is none other. Now, God is bringing before us here very forcibly the importance of all people.

All people recognizing who he is. And grasping who he is. And that's something that we should be about. It's always trying in the world that we live in to promote the knowledge of God.

Because we live in a very difficult day. A day where God is not having his rightful place within our society.

That is so evident. And if we love the living and true God, we should always be trying, whenever we have the opportunity, of promoting him.

It is our duty to do. Because when you think about it, when you look at so many people who want themselves up and they are so, as it were, almost impudent before God, so full of their own importance, and they try either to deny the existence of God.

[15:25] And you know, when you think about it, there are so many people who use their God-given talents in this life to try and deny the existence of God and to try and promote that thinking amongst others.

It's quite extraordinary. Really, you know, when you think about it, there are other people who have very misguided views of God. They make their people say, Oh yes, I do believe in a higher power. I do believe. Yes, I believe in God. But the God they believe in is a figment of their own imagination. Something that they worked out. Something in the way they've just kind of thought. Not with God's word, but just in their own thinking.

And we will never, ever, ever come to a true understanding of who the living and true God is apart from the word. This is his revelation to us.

And he wants us to delve into it and to come to a greater understanding. And you know, when we do, we take a step back. We take a step down. We are humbled and he is exalted the more we read about him and understand about him in his word when we see his greatness and his majesty and all his glory.

[16:37] And so, the Lord here, as we say, is highlighting over again and again, I am the God and there is none other. And he highlights this with regard to different things.

For instance, he highlights it in verse 18 with regard to the creation of this world. We could look at various things because he says there, For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, he is God, who formed the earth and made it, he established it, he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited.

I am the Lord and there is no other God. And you know, when you think about it, there was a time when there was nothing. There was no sun, moon, planets, stars.

There was no earth. This great universe wasn't here. God was there. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit in all the fullness of who they ever were and who they always will be.

Although there came a point when the second person of the God, the Son of God, took to himself human nature, which he has forever. But always and ever, there they dwelt in incomprehensible glory and majesty.

[17:55] But there came a point when the triune God said, let there be. And they brought everything into being. And they were told by the word of his power.

You know, there's people and they try and work out, how was that possible? I haven't a clue. And nobody, the greatest scientist, the greatest mind that this world has ever knew, cannot understand

how God brought everything into being.

but he did, by the word of his power. And you know that we live and people say we have to be able to understand. Everything has to be explained. No, it doesn't.

Faith goes beyond what can be explained. We've always got to remember that. God himself says that with regard to the whole way of salvation. Great is the mystery of godliness.

Christ manifests in the flesh. Jesus, the Son of God, coming in human flesh, coming into this world to live and to die and to rise again.

[18 : 57] It's a mystery. There are so many mysteries. And we, when God asks that very question elsewhere, were you there?

I think it's in Job. And he's asking Job, were you there when I called into being the foundations of this world? Were you there when I called into being the planets, the sun, the moon, the stars?

Were you there? Job has to say no. Nobody was there. You see, God brought all that into being.

And he's reminding us of this. He says, I am God and there is no other.

And the reason he's doing that is he's saying, look, I am still in authoritative control over everything and over everybody.

and when we think about it, it makes us realize really how insignificant we really are. And, again, when you look at the history of this world, we see how nations have come and nations have gone.

[20 : 06] You look at the great Babylonian Empire, you look at the Persians, the Medes and the Persians, you look at the Greeks, you look at the Romans, and when they were in the ascendancy and in power, that great nation Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar ruling the world with an iron fist, people would say, it's going to be there forever.

Today, these great nations, these great empires, we're finding bits and pieces in excavations. We know where they were. But you see, nothing lasts except God.

The gods that they worshipped, the gods that you were forced to worship at pain of death. Where are these gods? They're gone. Living and through God, He goes down every generation.

And so, this is what the Lord is showing us. He says, I alone am Lord. And again, in this chapter, we find something quite extraordinary because at the very beginning of the chapter, it states, thus says the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, to his servant Cyrus.

Now, this prophecy by Isaiah was given 150 years before Cyrus became the great king that kind of, he was a great Persian ruler, he kind of overcame the Medes, it was the Medes and Persians, but the Persians became the dominant force.

[21 : 36] Cyrus became the great king. But God calls him 150 years earlier, before Cyrus ever was. He says, you know, he's going to be my servant.

He's going to do, he's my appointment. He's going to do things for me. He's going to open up the way for my people to be restored.

That's what the prophecies in Isaiah are remarkable. We've got to remember that at this particular point, the Jews are still in Jerusalem. They're still worshipping in the temple.

The walls of Jerusalem are still standing. And God is saying, Cyrus is going to be the man who's going to be responsible to start the work for my people to come back after the exile.

And where the walls of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the temple restored. And you know, one of the things this highlights to us is God is in control of all that's happening in the world right now.

[22 : 40] Because there would have been times back amongst the Jews at the time of the invasion of Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem and all that was happening there and the exile had took place and they were saying, what's happened?

God has forgotten us. We've been abandoned. But no, God has told them before anything happened that this is what was going to happen. And he told them that they were going to be restored.

And we've got to have that same implicit trust in the Lord in the day that we live. Because sometimes when we look around it seems so chaotic. And we wonder what exactly is happening.

What is going to happen? What is going to happen to the church? We look at our own nation. We say, what is the future? Well, let's always remember God is the God of the future.

God is in control of the future. He sets one up and he takes another down. He told that to Nebuchadnezzar. He showed it to Belshazzar.

[23 : 45] He showed it to everyone. Here's this heathen king, Cyrus, who didn't know that he was fulfilling God's work here on earth. That God was using him.

And it's still the same today. God is his appointed leader. He raises up one and he puts another down. And his leaders will be there till the appointed time. And nobody can change that. Because they will do his work. And that's exactly what is happening and God is showing back here. And then from verse 20 through to excuse me to 22 the Lord now becomes as it were almost more personal.

And he says right. Look at all these other God. It's high time. You haven't got your focus right. And he says turn to me and be saved.

And he says turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth. In other words turn round. If you have a navy it will probably be look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth.

[24 : 59] Here it is turn. And it's the same meaning. It's to turn round and look. Turn back. You're going in the wrong direction. Your gaze is in the wrong way.

Turn back to me. That is what the Lord is saying. And I get excuse me now one of the things that we know is that there is within the human heart a knowledge of two things.

A knowledge of eternity and a knowledge of God. Despite what so many people say. Because when you follow down through human history right all the way down there's a multitude of gods that have been worshipped.

And a multitude of things people have believed in. But by and large with the exception of periods where maybe communism was very strongly in the ascendancy and there was this powerful where there was no God and there are periods like that in history.

By and large people have always believed in an afterlife. And they've always believed in a God. Although the idea of God was extraordinarily distorted and they wanted but there was always this need to worship and to believe in a higher power.

[26 : 28] And there was always this awareness that death is not the end. And it's quite extraordinary that we are living in a particular time where humanism and atheism is so on a rampage.

And people are trying to deny these two things. That there is a God and that there is an afterlife. People's belief or non-belief is there is nothing.

There is nothing. There is no higher power over us. We are God within ourselves. That's it. And when we're dead, we're dead.

That's what a lot of people today believe. How empty and despairing is that? And you know, I think it requires incredible effort to come to that type of persuasion.

Because God, we're told in the Bible, God has put eternity into our heart. It's not that we are eternal. We're not. We never will be. When we die, we will go into eternity.

[27 : 35] Only God is eternal. To be eternal is you don't have a beginning and you don't have an end. But we will go into eternity when we die. Either to be with God or set apart from God or banished from God.

But the thing is that God has put eternity into our heart so that we know there is this inbuilt knowledge that this world is not all that there is.

And that when we die, it's not the end. So people have to fight against that. To come to the persuasion that there is nothing afterwards flies against what God has actually put within our person's heart.

They have to work at it. And they also have to work at suppressing all the knowledge that the creation reveals to us about God.

Because it tells us in the Bible that this creation speaks to us about his eternity, about his power, and his Godhead. So when you put these two things together, you can see that an atheist has to do an awful lot of work in order to suppress and stand upon and push down on the evidence that is there.

[28 : 54] And that's why the Bible is showing us over and over and over again that the atheist who said it is a fool. Psalm 14, the fool has said in his heart that there is no God.

God is here saying, look, turn to me. There is no other God. Don't spend your life looking down other roads and going down other avenues.

I am the only living and through God. And verse 21 tells us he's a righteous God and a savior. Now, the thing is that with regard to religion, people have always looked on religion as something that they have to do themselves in order to be right with God.

That's one of the things that you will find a common denominator amongst all the religions is what you have to do, the doing part.

The Christian faith, in a sense, is unique. although there is doing, the doing is really afterwards. Because all that the Christian has to do is to accept, to believe.

[30 : 12] Because all the doing has already been done. And that's very hard for people to understand. Even people under the gospel. Because self-righteousness is something that we're born with.

And we somehow think that God will accept us for who we are just because we're pretty decent. We don't mess up too badly. And we've got this idea that God at the end of the day will accept us. Yes, none of us will hold up our hands and say, oh, I was perfect. But they'll think, I was good enough. God says, no. All your righteousness, all your best efforts on your own don't work.

All your righteousness, as we're told in the Bible, are as filthy rags. That's a very humbling thought. But if God had said, right, in order to get to heaven, you have to row the Atlantic, you have to pay the church 400,000 pounds in the course of your life, you have to walk from John O'Groats to Lanzane backwards, loads and loads and loads of people would be doing that.

They would make it their life's aim. Well, that's what I've got to do. Don't know how I'm going to pay 400,000 when I start when I'm young. I'm going to have to get an extra job and do other things. But I've got to pay my way.

[31 : 34] It's what we've got to do. This is what God wants me to do. Got to get strong shoes and walk that. Got to get practicing in the rowing. People would be doing it because they'd say, I've got to do.

God says, no. You can't do. All the doing's been done. You couldn't do. You've nothing that you can do to earn your salvation. Turn and look to me.

Because I alone, Jesus, has said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. There is no other way. And that's why we're asked to look.

Look to the cross. Look to what happened 2,000 years ago. Look at Jesus there with a crown of thorns rammed into his skull. Stripped and battered and bruised and beaten.

Hanging on that cross with the nails rammed through his hands and his feet. Crying out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And he's there for people like you, like me.

[32 : 41] Not because of himself. He's come there to do what God wanted, God required. It is in order to save us. To save us from the power of sin, the dominion of sin, from the ravages of sin, from the punishment of sin, and to save us to life forevermore.

To save us to eternal life. That's what Jesus has done. So that's what the great command is. Turn to me and be saved.

And if you've never turned, I ask you tonight to do so. Just turn. Turn round. Turn and look. It means, in that looking, it means accepting.

It's a gift. Lord's arm is outstretched and he's saying, look, here's the gift of my son. All I want you to do is to take, to accept that gift.

I want you to trust your life to me. I want you to believe in me. That's all I want you to do. It's that simple. It's so important to grasp the fact that salvation is a gift.

[33 : 57] Then he says, look unto me and turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth.

Finally, just looking at that, there's two ways of looking at it. First of all, as it is in the context, here, we've got to remember that when the revelation of God was first of all given and when God had begun the building of his church, it was began with a small group.

And there was his people, his growing people. But this is speaking prophetically about a day when the gospel, when the word of God will spread right throughout all the nations of the world.

And we're living in such a day. And there are no barriers to the gospel of language or color or creed or culture. It's one and the same for all.

That's the beauty of the gospel. It's suitable and it is fitted for all. So it's going out to all the ends of the earth. But it's also all the ends of the earth can mean with regard to how we are personally with regard to the gospel.

Speaking of the distance, do you know, you could be here tonight and still a mega distance from God. You could be hearing this and you're still in the far country.

[35 : 20] And you know, when a person's in the far country, when a person's away, when a person is not united to God through Jesus Christ, they're not nearly saved, they're still lost.

A person is either saved or lost. A person is either in Christ or out of Christ. You can't be half and between. You're either in or out.

And if you're out, spiritually, you're at the ends of the earth. And it's to you tonight, the Lord is saying, turn. Turn tonight. Doesn't matter who you are, doesn't matter where you are, I'm here and I will hear your cry.

And if you call to me, I will answer and your soul will live. So I appeal to you tonight to call out to him and say, Lord, here's your invitation.

You've said to me, turn to me and be saved. We all know the story of Spurgeon, the great preacher. And this is a verse that Spurgeon was converted under. It was a snowy day.

[36 : 27] He couldn't get to his normal church. He went to this, I think it was to this wee Methodist church. The minister that was there didn't manage to make it through the snow. So one of the men got up and he preached from this sermon.

And he didn't say much. He repeated the text over and over again. And he said, the Lord doesn't require that we have to move our feet or move our hands.

All we have to do is to move our eyes and to look. He said, the preacher said, you don't need a lot of education. All you need to do is to look.

And then he seemed to, as it were, point to Spurgeon and say, you look miserable, young man. Look and be saved. And Spurgeon said, that's exactly what I did.

I looked. I turned and I looked. And I believed and I accepted. and we know the rest is history. And it's the same for you tonight. Will you turn?

[37 : 35] Will you look to the Savior, to the Jesus who has done it all? It's there for you. Let us pray. Oh Lord, we pray that you will indeed bless us.

That you will enrich us in the knowledge of Christ. We pray that you will do us good and that you will cleanse us from our every sin. We ask, Lord, that you will watch over us and take us to our home safely.

That your light will shine upon the path. That our ears will hear your word behind us, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it. Bless us and pity us, shine your face upon us.

Do us good and cleanse us from our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We conclude singing Psalm 72. And we're singing singing from verse 16.

In fact, it's from the middle of verse 16. The last four stanzas and the tune is Effingham. It's on page 314. page 314.

[38 : 46] The city shall be flourishing. Her citizens abound in number shall like to the grass that grows upon the ground. His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall.

Men shall be blessed in him and blessed. All nations shall him call. Now, blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone doth wondrous works and glory that excel.

And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen. So let it be. Psalm 72 from the middle of verse 16.

The city shall be flourishing. Our citizens above In number shall lie through the grass that grows upon the ground.

His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall.

[40 : 18] Men shall be blessed in heaven and blessed all nations shall him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God to this O God who God God excelled.

Unblessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The hope there flexed his glory filled. Amen.

So let it be. Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.