

July 14

Isaiah 43, 44, 45

Hey, I'm Terry Ebers. Thanks for joining me for the July 14th Accelerator for Project 4:4. Today you read Isaiah 43, 44, & 45. I'm going to focus in a little more on chapters 44 & 45 today & these are important chapters for a few reasons.

First of all, there seems to be a real sense in which these chapters sum up the main message of the Old Testament up to this point. We've seen in every book of the bible we've read up to this point, God is driving home one main message. And it can be summarized as this: there is only one God and there are no runners up.

This idea that there is one true God, who created all things, and who sovereignly rules over His creation, is absolutely foundational. We see this theme way back at the beginning in the first part of Genesis & it ripples throughout scripture. And it was this basic truth that Israel had such a difficult time mastering. Israel experienced both blessing & cursing throughout her life as a nation because she either remembered or forgot this great central truth.

Now as we continue to read more of the Old Testament, we'll discover that with the Babylonian exile, the people of Judah finally did learn that great lesson. And that set the stage for the coming of the promised Messiah.

So, what about you? Have you claimed this foundational truth for yourself, that there is one God & no runners up. Often our culture teaches something much different & confuses this central idea of the Bible. We sometimes hear the message that there are many ways, many religions, many gods & its just about finding the one that works best for you. But the Bible tells us something much different. The Bible teaches us there is only one God & no runners up.

The second thing I want to note today is a powerful testimony, embedded in these two chapters, to the deity of Jesus. Now there are some people & some whole groups of people who deny that Jesus was anything more than the son of God – a "son" – in the same way that you & I can be called "sons" of God. Well, what we read in Isaiah today demonstrates the error in that kind of thinking.

There are two passages I want to look at. The first is Isaiah 44:6..."This what the Lord says – Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." This verse sounds strikingly similar to the first chapter of Revelation. There, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid, I am the first and the Last." Those are the words of Isaiah 44 and Jesus, in Revelation, takes the words of Jehovah and attaches them to Himself.

Let's also look at Isaiah 45:23..."Before Me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. They will say of me, 'in the Lord alone are righteousness and truth.'" There's a connection between this verse and the second chapter of Philipians.

There, Paul says, "Every Knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus is Jehovah God of the Old Testament.

Well, the last thing I want to touch on today is the name of Cyrus mentioned in chapter 44 & 45. Interestingly, Isaiah writes the exact name of a ruler of a nation two hundred years before that ruler had been born & named & came into power. Another remarkable thing is that this is a pagan ruler (he's not one of the good guys) & God calls him in chapter 44 "My shepherd" – who "will accomplish all that I please" and, in chapter 45 the "anointed one" of the Lord.

Well another place in which God uses that kind of language to describe a pagan ruler is when he calls King Nebuchadnezzar his "servant" in the book of Daniel. There are, of course, other examples of God using pagan rulers to accomplish his will, notably Pharaoh in the Old Testament, and Augustus Caesar in the New Testament. This should give us great confidence that God is still capable of using the rulers of this world to accomplish His Divine purposes in history. I wonder how God is working today behind the scenes in the rulers of our world? It's a great reminder to be praying for our rulers & leaders...that God would accomplish all that He pleases in & through them. And he does this in Isaiah's words..."So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its going down men may know that there is none beside me."

Well God truly is sovereign over all things! Thanks for joining in today & be reminded that God is the one true God, with no runners up!