

Commentary on Isaiah 45:18-24

By L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, January 9 , 2011**, is from **Isaiah 45:18-24**. Five **Questions for Discussion** follow the *Bible Lesson Commentary* below. The **International Bible Lessons** can be read at: <http://internationalbiblelessons.org>. The lesson is also published each Saturday morning in [The Oklahoman](#).

Isaiah 45:18-24

18 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 a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Through Isaiah, God declared these and other truths about His intentions and actions, and also elaborated explanations. God, whose name is YHWH (LORD) as revealed to Moses, created the heavens and the earth. God does not create chaos, but overcomes chaos caused by rebellion and sin. God even works good out of chaos for those who love Him (see Romans 8:28). God intends for the earth to bless and sustain living creatures. No other god did or could do all this.

19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, "Seek me in chaos." I the Lord speak the truth, I declare what is right.

God did not hide himself from those He created, but chose to walk in the garden with the first man and woman. When God created the heavens and the earth with all their glorious detail, God did so in the light and not in the darkness for all to see (and see how good His work was and is). God taught about himself and what He expected from people, beginning with the first people He created; people who God created with the ability to think, choose, discern right from wrong, and know that God always did what was right. People can find abundant evidence that God exists from His orderly universe, but more than this God has spoken to us in the Bible and in the flesh through His only begotten Son, Jesus (see John 1:1-18).

20 Assemble yourselves and come together, draw near, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge — those who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save.

God decided to make himself easy to find, rather than hide himself, for He said, "When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart" (see Jeremiah 29:13-14). The offspring of Jacob had rebelled against God and had turned to worshiping idols; this led them into chaos and the discipline of the LORD when they did not repent and turn from idolatry and chaos back to the LORD. God told Isaiah to address this situation and gave Isaiah the words to

speak. Only fools would continue to pray to idols that must be carried around because they cannot move by themselves and they certainly cannot save.

21 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? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me.

God told the descendants of Jacob (Israel) not to worship idols. He also predicted that they would do so: God knew their nature and character. In punishment for their trusting in gods that cannot save, God sent them into exile among the nations that defeated them in battle. The Israelites and the Jews learned by bitter and harsh experience that no other idol or god was as great as the LORD, who had led them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. God is a righteous God; therefore, as a just judge, He needed to discipline His people for their sins. Since God maintains steadfast love for His people, He also became their Savior.

22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

God disciplined them with the purpose of turning those who would listen and heed His words back to Him in faith and repentance. If they turned from trusting in idols that were so weak people had to carry them about, and turned back to the LORD who was powerful to save, then God would deliver them from their enemies – both physical and spiritual enemies. From anywhere on Earth, people can turn back to the LORD and be saved.

23 By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

God has declared and will not change His mind that every person will bow down and acknowledge that He is the true God and there is no greater god than He is and no other god than Him. God has fully revealed himself in the Old and New Testaments – the only infallible record of God's words and works. If not willingly in this life, then under compulsion and/or sorrowful recognition of the truth of God in the next life, every atheist and idolater and unrepentant sinner will bow before YHWH and acknowledge that He is the true God, the LORD. Believers will worship God with hearts full of love and praise as they bow before Him in humble adoration.

24 Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; all who were incensed against him shall come to him and be ashamed.

Think of the people in the Bible; think of those throughout history that are famous; think of people today. Are any of them both righteous (never having

sinned) and strong, stronger than Samson or the Creator of the universe? What about the idols of the Greeks, the Romans, the Canaanites, and others in the Bible? Are any of these idols totally good in all they do and strong enough to do whatever is needed – even create the heavens and the earth? Truly, there is no god besides the true God, YHWH. Think of Jesus the Messiah, Who did demonstrate both righteousness and strength, even in His death and resurrection from the dead.

Five Questions for Discussion

1. How does God describe himself through Isaiah? What impresses you most about this description?
2. How can people find and come to know (and know about) the true God? How would you advise someone who said they did not have enough evidence to believe in the existence of God?
3. What attributes characterize idols? Think of the idols you have read about or heard about from the Bible and outside of the Bible? Does anything about these idols impress you? What do the priests of these idols normally lead people to do?
4. If people do not have wooden idols today or idols made with silver and gold, what idols do people have in our contemporary society? How do these idols influence the way people live day by day? In what ways might you show that the true God is better than these idols?
5. Why does God need both righteousness and strength? What might God be like if He did not have both of these attributes? What attributes of God in addition to these are most important to you? Why?

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