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Improvised introduction by Mark Fidely and congregational hymn



Oct 12, 1971

Isaiah 45:1-7 New International Version (NIV) (*next week –Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

45 “This is what the LORD says to his anointed,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of
to subdue nations before him
and to strip kings of their armor,
to open doors before him
so that gates will not be shut:
² I will go before you
and will level the mountains^[a];
I will break down gates of bronze
and cut through bars of iron.
³ I will give you hidden treasures,
riches stored in secret places,
so that you may know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

⁴ For the sake of Jacob my servant,
of Israel my chosen,
I summon you by name
and bestow on you a title of honor,
though you do not acknowledge me.
⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other;
apart from me there is no God.
I will strengthen you,
though you have not acknowledged me,
⁶ so that from the rising of the sun
to the place of its setting
people may know there is none besides me.
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
⁷ I form the light and create darkness,
I bring prosperity and create disaster;
I, the LORD, do all these things.

Footnotes:

- a. [Isaiah 45:2](#) Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint;
the meaning of the word in the Masoretic
Text is uncertain.

“[Isaiah 45:1-7](#) . These seven verses should have been appended to previous chapter, and the new chapter should begin with [Isaiah 45:8](#) ... Reference to the deliverance by Messiah often breaks out from amidst the local and temporary details of the deliverance from Babylon, as the great ultimate end of the prophecy. “ www.biblestudytools.com

“GOD'S WILL CONCERNING HIM ANNOUNCED TO CYRUS. This direct address of God to a heathen king is without a parallel in Scripture. Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, Abimelech, were warned through dreams. Nebuchadnezzar was even promised Divine aid ([Ezekiel 30:24, 25](#)). But no heathen monarch had previously been personally addressed by God, much less called "his anointed," and spoken to by his name (ver. 4).

Three motives are mentioned for this special favour to him:

- (1) that he might acknowledge Jehovah to be the true God;
- (2) that Israel might be benefited and advantaged by him;
- (3) that the attention of the whole world might be attracted, and the unity of God made manifest far and wide (vers. 3-6)."

Pulpit Commentary www.biblehub.com

“Messiah Cyrus and the sovereign will of God:

The name Cyrus won't ring a bell for many worshipers, unless perhaps it's *Miley Cyrus* of "Hannah Montana" fame. Preachers are likely to strike a chord, however, if they announce that this Cyrus is the Lord's *Messiah* (Hebrew for "anointed one" = "Christ" in Greek), which is precisely what Isaiah 45:1 calls the Persian ruler who conquered Babylon in 539 BCE. Cyrus's messianic status should give us pause, if not surprise and offense. Two thousand years of Christian history have solidified the connection of the name *Jesus* with title *Christ*, and rightly so, for that is what Jesus is: God's anointed one.

It is also likely that the first recipients of the royal oracle in Isaiah 45:1-7 -- exiled Jews living in Babylon -- would have been stunned to hear the prophet say such a thing. While the term messiah (māšîaḥ) is not abundant in the Old Testament, occurring about thirty five times, the remnant of Judah would have associated "messiah" almost exclusively with their own king from the house of David.¹ How could that office be assumed by a foreign conqueror? So what are we to do with Cyrus, the only non-Israelite leader to be called a messiah?

The role of Cyrus in God's plan for Israel opens a door to theological and pastoral insights in this Sunday's Old Testament lection. It is theological, first and foremost, because the biblical passages in which Cyrus appears are not really *about him* but about Yahweh and his special plans for Israel's redemption. The larger literary unit of which our passage is a part (Isa 44:24-45:13) is a virtual litany of God's attributes and actions. As evidence

of this preoccupation with God, one scholar points to "the repeated first person pronoun in Yahweh's speech (nine times) and the verbs in the first person," which total over thirty instances.² In contrast, Cyrus is mentioned by name only twice in the Hebrew (44:28; 45:1) and all of his actions are prompted by God's prior influence in his life. Cyrus succeeds only at the behest of the One whom he does not know."

www.workingpreacher.org James K. Mead is associate professor of religion at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. An ordained Presbyterian (PCUSA) minister who has been a pastor of churches in Louisiana, Arkansas, and New Jersey. In addition to academic and church-related publications, he is the author of *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Westminster John Knox, 2007).

A side note about the term “messiah”

“In Hebrew, the Messiah is often referred to as מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ (Meleḵ ha-Mašīaḥ in the Tiberian vocalization, pronounced ['meleχ hama'ʃiaḥ], literally meaning "the Anointed King."

The Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament renders all thirty-nine instances of the Hebrew word for "anointed" (*Mašīaḥ*) as Χριστός (*Khristós*).^[6] The New Testament records the Greek transliteration Μεσσίας, *Messias* twice in John.^{[Jn. 1:41][4:25]}

al-Masīḥ (proper name, pronounced [mæ'si:ḥ]) is the Arabic word for messiah. In modern Arabic, it is used as one of the many titles of Jesus. *Masīḥ* is used by Arab Christians as well as Muslims, and is written as *Yasū' al-Masīḥ* (يسوع المسيح) by Arab Christians or *ʿĪsā al-Masīḥ* (عيسى المسيح) by Muslims. The word *al-Masīḥ* literally means "the anointed", "the traveller", or the "one who cures by caressing".^[9] In Qu'ranic scripture, Jesus is mentioned as having been sent down by Allah, strengthened by the holy spirit,^[10] and hence, 'anointed' with the task of being a prophet and a "recipient of sacred scripture".^[9] The Israelites, to whom Isa was sent, had a traditional practice of anointing their kings with oil. An Imam Bukhari hadith describes Jesus as having wet hair that looked as if water was dripping from it, possibly meaning he was naturally anointed.^[11] Muslims believe that this is just one of the many signs that proves that Jesus is the Messiah.” www.wikipedia.org



www.godisalwaysfaithful.com

Sarah Beth (Lindberg) Malanowski
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Psalm 96:1-9 10-13 (*Psalm 46*)

Psalm 96

- ¹ Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- ² Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
- ³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
- ⁴ For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ⁶ Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.
- ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.
- ⁹ Worship the LORD in the splendor of his^[a] holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.
- ¹⁰ *Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.*

¹¹ *Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.*
¹² *Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*
¹³ *Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

a. [Psalm 96:9](#) Or *Lord with the splendor of*

See LSB Hymn 817, “Earth and All Stars”

“Ancient Thessalonica - (Thessaloniki) formerly ‘Thermae’ (hot springs). It was named after wife of Cassander of Macedon, she was the daughter of Philip and sister of Alexander the Great. During the Roman Empire Thessalonica was the capital of Amphaxitis, Macedonia, and it was a large and flourishing city. It was situated at the N.E. extremity of the Sinus Thermaicus. Paul’s did his work there around 53 A.D. The Bible makes mention of Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-13; 27:2; Phil. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 2 Tim. 4:10. Modern Salonica.”

www.bible/history.com

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 (*Romans 3:19-28*)

1 Paul, Silas^[a] and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

²We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴For we know, brothers and sisters ^[b] loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

- a. [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#) Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas*
- b. [1 Thessalonians 1:4](#) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters (adelphoi)* refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 27.



Matthew 22:15-22 (*John 8:31-36*)**Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar**

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax^[a] to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

- a. [Matthew 22:17](#) A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens

"The pericope for this day lies within Tuesday's busy agenda. Here we have the failed attempt by the Pharisees and Herodians to trap Jesus on what appears to be a political issue: whether or not it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. We might imagine the smugness with which they employ this trap. The Pharisees are against the Roman occupation government, so they bring along the Herodians, people obliged to Rome for keeping Herod in puppet power.

Together, it ought to be easy to catch Jesus up. Note the false flattery of their opening remarks: "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth . . ." (22:16). Their own insincerity is palpable. Then, they spring the trap: "Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor or not?"

By this time in the day, Jesus is well warmed up for this treacherous game of chess. He sees through their sarcasm to the malice that lies beneath and brands them hypocrites. This is why: Jesus seems to carry no coins. The Pharisees dare not carry Roman coins, for they bear the blasphemous image of Tiberius Caesar and the inscription proclaims him divine. Yet, when Jesus asks for a Roman coin, they readily provide it. There, in the sacred space of the temple, the Pharisees possess the idolatrous image.

The Pharisees are thinking two moves ahead in this game. If Jesus says that it is lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, he alienates the people who hate the Roman occupation and its Caesar. If he says it is unlawful to pay taxes, the people will be pleased, but Jesus will then be liable for arrest by the Romans.

A clever gambit. But, not clever enough. Jesus asks them whose inscription is on the coin. Caesar, they answer. Then render to the emperor what is due him, he says, and to God what belongs to God. Checkmate.”

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