

Sermon Study Questions

Sunday, June 28, 2026

1. Read Isaiah 44:24-45:13
2. In our text we have an incredible picture of God's sovereignty as He is shown to be governing and orchestrating the events of history for the well-being of His people utilizing whatever means He so chooses to use. In recognizing this, we first see God's plan for His people in v.26 and 28. What is this plan? The Lord undergirds His promise to fulfill this plan by referring to His work in creation in v.24. Why does He do this? What lesson do you learn from this?
3. The person whom the Lord will use to accomplish His plan for His people is Cyrus the Great. Who is Cyrus the Great? What strikes you about the Lord using Cyrus to accomplish His plan in the lives of His people, referring to Him as His shepherd (v.28) and His anointed (Messiah, v.1)? What do you learn from this, and what comfort do you derive from it?
4. In v.7 the Lord says, "I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things." In context, what is the calamity He is referring to? What general principle is the Lord telling us about Himself? Does this comfort you or trouble you? On what grounds should it provide comfort for the believer?
5. The Lord specifically names Cyrus in this account (v.28 and again in v.1). Why does He do this? Think about it in light of what one of His main points has been over the previous chapters.
6. The Lord anticipates some objecting to the fact that He makes well-being and creates calamity, and does so in advancing His purpose in the lives of His people. In responding to that objection He says, "Woe to him who strives with Him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no

handles'?" Who does He pronounce this woe upon? What does He mean by those who "strive" with Him? What do you learn from that? Think about His response to Job in Job 38-41, as well as the way He responds to those who challenge Him in light of the doctrine of election (Rom.9:13-26).

7. What do you learn about God from this passage? Reflect on the scene from C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*, where a girl named Jill bursts into an opening in a forest. She's thirsty. She sees a stream not far away, but she doesn't rush forward to drink. Instead, she freezes in fear because a lion is resting in the sun right beside the stream. (Throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia* the Christ figure is a lion.) The lion sees the little girl and asks, "Are you not thirsty?" "I'm dying of thirst," said Jill. "Then drink," said the lion. "May I – could I – would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill. The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. "Will you promise not to – do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill. "I make no promise," said the Lion. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer. "Do you eat girls?" she said. "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it. "I dare not come and drink," said Jill. "Then you will die of thirst," said the Lion. "Oh, dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then." "There is no other stream," said the Lion.

8. This passage intends to create a sense of awe about the Lord. Why is this so important for the church today? (Think about the way modern evangelicalism – especially in America, views the Lord). How does that sense of awe deepen and inspire your worship of, and commitment to, Him?

9. What practical application can you make from this text/sermon?

10. Pray!1. Read Isaiah 44:24-45:13

2. In our text we have an incredible picture of God's sovereignty as He is shown to be governing and orchestrating the events of history for the well-being of His people utilizing

whatever means He so chooses to use. In recognizing this, we first see God's plan for His people in v.26 and 28. What is this plan? The Lord undergirds His promise to fulfill this plan by referring to His work in creation in v.24. Why does He do this? What lesson do you learn from this?

3. The person whom the Lord will use to accomplish His plan for His people is Cyrus the Great. Who is Cyrus the Great? What strikes you about the Lord using Cyrus to accomplish His plan in the lives of His people, referring to Him as His shepherd (v.28) and His anointed (Messiah, v.1)? What do you learn from this, and what comfort do you derive from it?

4. In v.7 the Lord says, "I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things." In context, what is the calamity He is referring to? What general principle is the Lord telling us about Himself? Does this comfort you or trouble you? On what grounds should it provide comfort for the believer?

5. The Lord specifically names Cyrus in this account (v.28 and again in v.1). Why does He do this? Think about it in light of what one of His main points has been over the previous chapters.

6. The Lord anticipates some objecting to the fact that He makes well-being and creates calamity, and does so in advancing His purpose in the lives of His people. In responding to that objection He says, "Woe to him who strives with Him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?" Who does He pronounce this woe upon? What does He mean by those who "strive" with Him? What do you learn from that? Think about His response to Job in Job 38-41, as well as the way He responds to those who challenge Him in light of the doctrine of election (Rom.9:13-26).

7. What do you learn about God from this passage? Reflect on the scene from C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*, where a girl named Jill bursts into an opening in a forest. She's thirsty. She sees a stream not far away, but she doesn't rush forward to drink. Instead, she freezes in fear because a lion is resting in the sun right beside the stream. (Throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia* the Christ figure is a lion.) The lion sees the little girl and asks, "Are you not thirsty?" "I'm dying of thirst," said Jill. "Then drink," said the lion. "May I – could I – would you mind

going away while I do?" said Jill. The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. "Will you promise not to – do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill. "I make no promise," said the Lion. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer. "Do you eat girls?" she said. "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it. "I dare not come and drink," said Jill. "Then you will die of thirst," said the Lion. "Oh, dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then." "There is no other stream," said the Lion.

8. This passage intends to create a sense of awe about the Lord. Why is this so important for the church today? (Think about the way modern evangelicalism – especially in America, views the Lord). How does that sense of awe deepen and inspire your worship of, and commitment to, Him?

9. What practical application can you make from this text/sermon?

10. Pray!

Reading of Law: 1 Peter 5:5-6

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Prayer of Confession:

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Father, you call us to clothe ourselves with humility towards one another, knowing that you oppose the proud but give grace to the humble. And yet, knowing that you command this of us, we continue to act with pride before those around us. We so often think about ourselves, talk about ourselves, and give preference to ourselves over others,

believing deep in our hearts that we are better, more important, or more interesting than others. We confess that we are clothed with pride, and that we don't put much value or effort in seeking to clothe ourselves with humility even though you tell us you oppose the proud but give grace to the humble. Father, please forgive us. And please help us to long to be more like our Savior who provides the ultimate example of humility for us, as He did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but humbled Himself taking on the form of a servant. This is our great example, and we pray that by the gracious working of your Spirit within us, we would seek to emulate it. We thank you for Jesus, for it is because of Him that we are not condemned for our pride, but are forgiven through faith in Him. Thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness: Psalm 130:3-4

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

Heidelberg Catechism: Lord's Day 42

Q.110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A. God forbids not only such theft and robbery as are punished by the government, but God views as theft also all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we seek to get our neighbor's goods, whether by force or by deceit, such as unjust weights, lengths, measures, goods, coins, usury, or by any means forbidden of God; also all covetousness and the misuse and waste of His gifts.

[1] [1 Cor. 6:10](#). [2] [1 Cor. 5:10](#). [3] [Lk. 3:14](#); [1 Thess. 4:6](#). [4] [Prov. 11:1](#); [16:11](#). [5] [Ezek. 45:9–10](#). [Deut. 25:13–15](#). [6] [Ps. 15:5](#); [Lk. 6:35](#). [7] [1 Cor. 6:10](#). [8] [Prov. 5:10](#); [*1 Tim. 6:10](#); [*Jn. 6:12](#).

Q.111. But what does God require of you in this commandment?

That I further my neighbor's good where I can and may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me, and labor faithfully, so that I may be able to help the poor in their need.

[1] [Matt. 7:12](#). [2] [Eph. 4:28](#); [*Phil. 2:4](#); [*Gen. 3:19](#); [*1 Tim. 6:6–7](#).

NT Reading: Romans 9:13-26

As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion,¹ but on God, who has mercy.¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory--²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"²⁶ "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"