



Sermon Discussion Questions

October 1, 2023,

The Gospel According to Isaiah

OUR REDEEMER IS SUPREME OVER PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Isaiah 44:21 – 45:7

1. Opening Discussion Question

As this is being prepared there is increasing concern that the Federal Government will be at least partially shut down by Sunday when the sermon is given. Discuss how you think a Christian should respond. What opportunities might a shutdown give us to show our love and to share the Gospel?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Praise God Who Is Supreme Over Past and Present (Isaiah 44:21-25)
 - i. Israel called to compare the foolishness of idols with the greatness of God.
 - ii. All creation should praise God, the Lord of past and present.
- b. Be In Awe of God Who Is Supreme Over the Future (Isaiah 44:26-45:4)
 - i. God is supreme over the future as well.
 - ii. Future History!
 - iii. Realize that God is **STILL** in control of the future.
- c. Embrace God's Missionary Purpose (Isaiah 45:5-7)
 - i. God displays His supreme power so that people all over the world would know Him.
 - ii. We must embrace God's mission and participate in it.

3. Study/Discussion Points:

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to prayerfully ponder these questions:
 - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what forgotten truth were you reminded?
 - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
 - iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. **Monday** – *Foolishness of idols when compared to the greatness of God.*

- i. Read Isaiah 44:21-22
 1. Verse 21 starts by telling those being addressed to “Remember these things”. What did God want them to remember?
 2. The verses immediately preceding verse 21 include some of the strongest condemnation of idols in the Bible.
 - a. How would you describe the tone used in verses 9-20? Why does God use such a tone?
 - b. Compare these verses with Psalm 115:1-8. What aspect of idolatry do these two passages primarily hold up to ridicule?
 - c. While you may not know anyone that worships a physical idol, what are some examples of idols in our culture today?
 3. In addition to remembering what God has said about idols, what three other things does verse 21 suggest Jacob should remember? How/why are these three things points we should also remember?
- ii. Verse 22 is one of great encouragement. How does it point to Christ? Based on verse 23 what should our response be to verse 22?

c. **Tuesday** – *Praise God, the Lord of past and present.*

- i. Read Isaiah 44:23-25
 1. What does verse 23 remind you of?
 2. Read and meditate on Psalm 98 and Psalm 148 to reinforce the message of verse 23. If you get no further in this section don’t worry – the time spent praising God will be more than adequate.
- ii. In what ways do verses 24 and 25 show that our God is Lord of the past? Lord of the present?
- iii. Verse 25 tells us that God “makes fools of diviners.”
 1. What is a diviner and why would God making fools of them have been of particular relevance to the Jewish exiles? (consider Jeremiah 27 and 28 for clues)
 2. What are modern examples of “diviners” and how should we respond to them?
 3. Verse 25b is particularly relevant in this age when many would claim that science disproves the Bible. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.
 - a. Where should we turn for true wisdom?
 - b. What does Proverbs 9:10-12 add?

d. Wednesday – God is supreme over the future.

- i. Verses 26-27 begin some amazing predictions of the future. Remember that Isaiah was writing before the Southern Kingdom was taken into captivity in Babylon and about 150 years before the Jewish exiles would begin returning to the promised land.
 1. With that in mind what is so significant about what God says about Jerusalem and Judah in verse 26b?
 2. Read Jeremiah 39:16, Lamentations 2:17 and Daniel 9:12. How likely is it that God's word provided by His prophets will be accomplished exactly as stated?
 3. As you think about God's promises for the future being fulfilled what does Jesus' comment in Matthew 5:18-19 say to you?
- ii. Read these verses and consider how each set show that we should be in awe of God who is supreme over the future:
 1. Jeremiah 32:17, Matthew 19:26 and Ephesians 3:20
 2. Job 37:16, Psalm 139:1-2, Hebrews 4:13, and 1 John 3:20
 3. Matthew 11:21-23 and 1 Samuel 23:11-13
 4. Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3, and 2 Peter 3:7
 5. Job 14:5, Psalm 139:16, and Galatians 1:15

e. Thursday – Future History – God controls the future!

- i. Read Isaiah 44:28 – 45:4.
 1. What does the fact that Isaiah the prophet mentioned Cyrus the Great by name more than a century before he was born teach you about God?
 2. What does it teach you about the Bible?
- ii. Compare these verses with Deuteronomy 2:20-23, Amos 9:7 and Acts 17:26.
 1. Collectively, what do they teach us about God's providential control of history?
 2. How should our understanding that God controls the rise and fall of every nation/kingdom/empire that has ever existed influence our thinking about our country during this time of apparent moral decline and political discord?
 3. How do you think Romans 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13-14 and Titus 3:1-2 should influence our answer?

f. Friday – Embrace God's Missionary Purpose

- i. God fulfilled the prophecy to raise up Cyrus and used him to return the Jewish exiles to the promised land and to rebuild the Temple, but God's purpose was far greater. What does Revelation 7:9 suggest was His ultimate purpose?

- ii. Read Isaiah 45:5-7
 - 1. How does verse 6 relate to the passage you just read in Revelation?
 - 2. Verse 7 can be difficult for some to accept. God creates “calamity” (“disaster” in the NIV). Compare verse 7 to Job 2:10, Lamentations 3:38, and Jeremiah 32:42.
 - a. Why is it important that we accept this truth and not just see God as providing the good things?
 - b. How would you see Romans 8:28 and James 1:2-4 relating?

g. *Saturday – Embrace God’s Mission*

- i. Read the Great Commission passages: Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47-49, John 20:21-23, and Acts 1:8.
- ii. We know from Revelation 7:9 that the Great Commission will be fulfilled but there remains a huge amount left to be done. Spend some time on-line researching the need. Some good places to start are:
 - 1. <https://www.imb.org/>
 - 2. <https://joshuaproject.net>
 - 3. <https://www.peoplegroups.org>
 - 4. <https://alliancefortheunreached.org>

4. Application: Spend serious time in prayer with God considering how you are being faithful to His command to “make disciples of all nations.” What more could you be doing?

5. Prayer Points:

- a. **A**doration – 1 Peter 4:16
- b. **C**onfession – James 5:16
- c. **T**hanksgiving – Philippians 4:6
- d. **S**upplications – James 4:2-3
 - i. That God will provide opportunities for each of us to share the Gospel with someone this week.
 - ii. That God will bless the activities of the Love Our Neighbor weekend and that we as a church will meaningfully follow-up on these events.
 - iii. For the continuation of the “Grow Deeper” Discipleship class and the new Vines and Branches cohort.
 - iv. The almost 60 kids that are now enrolled in the Wednesday evening Awana program and that additional volunteers will accept God’s call to serve in this ministry.
 - v. For the entire staff of Lake Ridge Baptist Church and especially for Bobbi Thele as she returns to her home in Texas.