

88 44:22--45:7

LORD has done it! Shout for joy, lower parts of the earth. Break out into singing, you mountains, you forests, and every tree in it. For the LORD has redeemed Jacob and he will be glorified in Israel. (24a) Thus says the LORD, your redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb:

Verse 22 must be taken as a prophetic perfect, pointing, as does 43:25, to the future fulfillment of God's plan to blot out the transgressions of His people, but adding a plea to return to Him in view of His promised salvation. Such a verse seems at first to contradict the many statements that condemn sin so strongly and stress its terrible effects; it raises the question how God can fulfill this promise and still be just and holy. Full understanding of the answer is not reached until Isaiah 53. This wonderful promise calls forth a beautiful doxology in verse 23.

The first part of verse 24, while stressing God's redemptive love, introduces the great declaration of verses 24b-28 that has been translated and discussed in the chapter on the king of Persia. ^* Such a long sentence rarely occurs in Isaiah. It all leads up to the climactic statement that Cyrus is God's instrument to cause Jerusalem to be rebuilt.

The first four verses of chapter 45, which continue the predictions about Cyrus, have already been translated and discussed in chapter 3. Verses 5-7 again stress the unique existence and almighty power of the LORD.

(5) I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no God. I will gird you though you have not known me, (6) that men may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is no one besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. (7) I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create calamity. I am the one who does all these things. ^21 (8) Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness; let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and let it cause righteousness to spring up with it. I the LORD have created it.

Although verse 5 briefly refers to Cyrus, its main idea is the fact that the LORD is the only God. Verses 6 and 7 continue to

*See pp. 25-28.