

Isaiah 45:23-25 + 46:3-5, 8-11

This Haftarah reading is paired with **Numbers 30** concerning vows and the disannulment of vows. That is the focus of the first verse.

Isaiah 45:23 - "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

God swears, and then "every tongue shall swear" at His final victory.

Rashi associates this with the saying in **Zephaniah 3:9** - "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."

Our vows and oaths will always be inadequate and imperfect until our language/tongue/speech becomes one with His. Then there will be no vows or oaths, only the confession and agreement that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Paul quotes this here:

- **Philippians 2:9-11** - "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and [hath] given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And here...

- **Romans 14:10-12** - "Why, then, do you judge your brother? Or why do you belittle your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God." 12So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God"

Compare **Numbers 14:21,28** - "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD..."

And **Psalms 72:11** - "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

When the Jews heard the name of Yahweh, the sacred Tetragrammaton, pronounced by the high priest on Yom Kippur, they "bowed, and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever." (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 2. sect. 7.)

"swear" = *shaba* - (compared 'shabbat' or 'Sabbath') to "seven" oneself, i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times); to vow or make an oath.

Seven being a sacred number, oaths were often confirmed by seven sacrifices (**Genesis 21:28**) or seven witnesses.

Only God can legitimately swear an oath and keep it. That's why this passage is included with **Numbers 30**.

Isaiah 45:24 - "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed."

Or "surely in the Lord that speaketh with me alone are righteousness and strength."

The Targum has "in his word they shall confess, and all the people shall be confounded with their idols, who rush upon his people."

Only in Christ can I have true righteousness, by abandoning my own attempts at righteousness and putting on Christ like a garment.

The point is that God wins. In the end, He has victory even over death, Satan and all other implacable enemies.

Isaiah 45:25 - "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Rashi - "Through the promise of the support of His love they shall find righteousness and boast of His strength."

We can't glory in our flesh, in which there is no merit or strength. We can only glory or boast in Him.

- **1 Corinthians 1:28-30** - "He chose the lowly and despised things of the world, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no flesh should glory in his presence. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, holiness, and redemption"

Isaiah 46:3-4 - "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

God has carried us from infancy and promises to carry us through old age. In contrast, idols are impotent and have to be carried about by their human creators.

David has a similar comparison: **Psalms 22:10** - "I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly."

Compare **Exodus 19:4**: "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought

you unto myself."

"will deliver you" - I will deliver you out of all affliction, out of all temptations, out of the hand of every enemy, from a final and total falling away, from a body of sin and death, from death eternal and wrath to come, and even at last from the grave and all corruption. - *Gills Exposition*

Isaiah 46:5 - "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?"

Any image, or description or metaphor of comparison from our fallen and feeble mind fails to reflect who God is. Only in Jesus do we see the Father.

- **John 14:9** - "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

The Haftarah now skips to **verses 8-10**:

Isaiah 46:8-9 - "Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,"

i.e. fortify yourselves against the arguments and persuasions of idolatry. Be strong with zeal to "revenge the disobedience" you find within yourselves.

Isaiah 46:10 - "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

This is again a commentary on vows and swearing - God's purposes and plans always get done completely and perfectly.

Biblical prophecy is the proof of this, providing numerous examples of future events being predicted, in both short term and long term visions -

- **Jude 1:14** - "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

- **Luke 1:69-70** - "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke through His holy prophets, those of ages past"

Isaiah 46:11 - "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

The "ravenous bird" or "bird of prey" is Cyrus the Great of Persia, called by God to defeat Babylon and later to release the Jews to return to their land. The standard of Cyrus was a golden eagle upon the top of a high spear, and which was a symbol retained by the later kings of Persia.

Cyrus was also seen as prefiguring the Messiah, and several Rabbis interpreted this verse as referring to Messiah.