

Series: Isaiah
Title: Nature of Grace
Text: Isaiah 45: 8
Date: January 8, 2012
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

This entire 45th chapter of Isaiah is a sermon from God himself to his people. The messenger is Isaiah; but the message is from God.

We saw a type of Christ Jesus in Cyrus. As Cyrus came from a distant land and fulfilled the word of the LORD so Christ came from heaven and fulfilled the law taking the sin of his people upon himself, laying down his life. Christ made the crooked places straight, opened hells gates of defense and the gates shall not be shut. Like as Cyrus went into Babylon and took back the treasures which Babylon had stolen, delivering them to Zion, so Christ has redeemed all his elect children, his treasures, which were hidden in captivity of sin (vv1-3.)

We saw three reasons God calls his child to life in Christ.

1. For you personally (v3)—*that thou mayest know.*
2. For God's elect (v. 4)—*For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have called thee by thy name.* God calls his child to life to be an instrument in his hand, to help those here and other places whom he has already called and to send forth the gospel for the elect whom God has yet to call out of darkness.
3. For his glory and praise (vv. 5-7)—*I am the LORD, and there is none else.* Some think that there are two powerful forces in the universe—good and evil, light and darkness—one prevailing over the other at certain times. God says, “Not so!” God alone rules the world! The evil is the wrath of man, but even “the wrath of man shall praise thee and the remainder thereof shalt thou restrain.” (Ps76: 10.)

Proposition: Having seen the picture of Christ coming forth, finishing the work of delivering his people from our sins—taking *captivity captive*—today we will consider Christ having ascended to the Father, *that he might fill all things.*

Ephesians 4:8...When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive...10:...that he might fill all things.)

Colossians 1: 19: For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell.

John 1: 16: And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Proposition: In Isaiah 45: 8 we see an analogy of how the Lord gives the command and regenerates his child from death to spiritual life creating them anew.

Since the analogy is of nature—of rain coming down into the earth causing life to spring up thereby—we will title the message: **The Nature of Grace**

Divisions: Verse 8 has 3 commands and a declaration. This will make up our divisions: **1:** The LORD commands, “*Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.*” **2:** The LORD commands, “*Let the earth open,*” **3:** The LORD commands, “*and let them bring forth salvation; and let righteousness spring up together*”; **4:** Is the declaration--the LORD declares, “*I the LORD have created it.*”

I. THE FIRST COMMAND OF THE LORD, V8: “DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES POUR DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS”

Throughout the scripture, God condescends to speak in pictures and types, simile and metaphor, which our finite minds can grasp.

Hosea 12:10: I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

One of those figures used is “dew and rain.” Dew and rain are often used as an emblem of the the Word of the gospel and of the Holy Spirit’s power working in the hearts of God's people.

Isaiah 44: 3: For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Deuteronomy 32: 2: My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

It was a custom on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews poured out water in the courts of the temple as a figure of the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. So we find the Lord Jesus:

John 7: 37: In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Again, we see the type fulfilled when on the day of Pentecost Christ sent forth the Holy Spirit, baptizing the church into the Holy Ghost.

All life in the earth depends upon the LORD dropping down dew and pouring down rain from heaven. It is the same with all spiritual life. All spiritual life depends upon his blessing from above.

God’s elect child is born into this world the first time like a dry field, dry bones, without life, without anything spiritually good, without spiritual understanding.

- Our Sovereign Savior sends his doctrine
- Our Sovereign Savior sends forth the Holy Spirit
- Christ Jesus the Righteousness of his people comes down in the doctrine by the Holy Spirit and is formed in his child, “as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth. (Hosea 6:3)

Like the dew and rain, the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts through the gospel of Christ comes not by the power and will of the creature. Spiritual life comes at the LORD’s command, not mans; by God’s grace, not by man’s merit; from the Lord above, not from man below.

Illustration: Dew suddenly seen on clothes at night

Is it because God the Savior gives the command--**V8: “DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES POUR DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

II. THE SECOND COMMAND, V8: THE LORD SAYS, “AND LET THE EARTH OPEN”

The earth is a spiritual representation of the heart of man for we are but a lump of clay in the potters hand (Isaiah 45: 9)

Adam was formed out of the dust—hence his name “Red”. Before God breathed life into Adam he was a lifeless lump of clay. That is every sinner dead in trespasses and in sins—his heart is as dead as a lifeless lump of clay. We cry as we preach the gospel...

Jeremiah 22: 29: O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

But sinners are as dry and unable to bring forth life as the earth was unable of itself to bring forth life until God gave the command. But when the LORD speaks the effect follows.

Genesis 1: 11: And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

When the Lord speaks to man who is but dust and says “Let the earth open”, immediately the heart opens.

Acts 16: 14: And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

C. The Spirit of God enters with the word

Psalms 119: 130: The entrance of thy words giveth light.

The soul is illuminated by this flood: all from the covenant fullness of our covenant Head—who is the Light! Life is created where there was none—by the Life! The conscience is turned to the Voice of the Lord and the new inward man begins to hear.

Aren't you glad we are born of the Spirit of God and not our own will? God shows us from time to time how cold we can be—and I am so glad it is the Spirit of God who commands our hearts be opened.

If we could make our own hearts alive, we would not depend upon our Lord. If we could revive our own souls, we would never be as “the hart who panteth after the water brooks.”

What grace! The Lord keeps us ever knowing, "in our flesh dwelleth no good thing," and that "power belongeth unto God." "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. 9:16.)

Even in the driest seasons, when God says "Let the earth open;" our hearts open immediately and the rain of righteousness penetrates to the very roots of our soul. Like parched earth drinking up the rain, God causes us to once again drink of Christ's fullness.

Illustration: Spring Tulips

His rain of grace makes faith, hope and love—God-created virtues—to spring forth in revived life like thriving tulips spring forth in the beams of the sun after the bulb lay lifeless from fall through the dark cold of winter.

III. THE LORD GIVES THE THRID COMMAND, HE SAYS, V8: “AND LET THEM BRING FORTH SALVATION, AND LET RIGHTEOUSNESS SPRING UP TOGETHER”

Illustration: The seed planted will be the kind of plant produced.

When Christ our Salvation enters into a sinner, from the womb of the morning, a saved child is brought forth. When Christ our Righteousness is formed in you—like seed implanted into the earth—a babe of righteousness springs up.

There are two kinds of righteousness. Some speak of an *inherent righteousness* (righteousness of our flesh, in our flesh), we have no such thing—in our flesh dwells no good thing.

1. There is the righteousness of Christ imputed which is our justification. Christ accomplished the justification of all for whom he died.

Romans 4: 3: For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4: Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5: But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6: Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7: *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

2. But we know nothing of his justifying righteousness until he has imparted righteousness, by making us to be born again of the Spirit of God, made new creatures.

Ephesians 4: 24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This is the righteousness the Lord described when he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 5:20.) We must have the righteousness wrought out by Christ's obedience to the law for his elect. We must be created anew internally in righteousness, born of the Holy Spirit. SINNERS CANNOT PRODUCE EITHER. BUT CHRIST OUR KING CAN

Psalm 14: 13: The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.

V. NOW, THE DECLARATION HE MAKES IN OUR HEARTS V8: "I THE LORD HAVE CREATED IT"

The Lord plucks up all the weeds of our vain boasting with this last word.

1 Corinthians 1: 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Here is how you know when this work of grace has been wrought for and within a sinner. Those who are the planting of the Lord do not boast that we did any of this--but we declare in agreement with God, "The Lord created it." All we are and all we bring forth to God is all our hope—it is Him who God brought down to us—Christ our Righteousness.

Isaiah 45: 24: Surely, shall one say, in the Lord I have righteousness and strength (margin: In the LORD is all righteousness and strength) 25: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

Application:

For you who are yet waiting on some dear loved one who is yet parched and dry in the drought of their flesh.

James 5: 7: Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

For you who have been watered from on high—rejoice in the blessings of his grace:

- In our flesh we have nothing, yet in Christ we possess all things
- In our flesh we are ignorant, yet we have Christ our Wisdom
- In our flesh we are sinner, yet in Christ we are righteous and holy
- In our flesh we are captives in a body of death, yet in Christ we are redeemed

What is your hope? What do you say about how you “got saved”? Here is what the believer says, “I did the sinning, but God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit did the saving! All glory to God—the Lord hath created it!”

Amen!