

Isaiah 45:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

Analysis

God calls Cyrus 'his anointed' (mashiach - the same word for Messiah). This is extraordinary: a pagan Persian king receives the title usually reserved for Israel's kings and priests. God holds his 'right hand' (position of power and favor) to subdue nations and loose kings' armor. The Hebrew 'pathach' (open) promises that gates and doors will not be shut before him.

Historical Context

Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC by diverting the Euphrates River and entering through unguarded river gates - doors were literally opened. Ancient historians Herodotus and Xenophon confirm this remarkable fulfillment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of the term 'anointed' for a pagan king expand your understanding of His sovereignty?
2. What does it mean that God holds the right hand even of those who don't know Him?

Interlinear Text

בְּחִזְקָתִי אָשֶׁר לְכָ וּרְשָׁא לְמַשְׁיחָו יְהֹוָה אֶם רָכָה
H3541 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed to Cyrus I have holden
H559 H3068 H4899 H3566 H834 H2388

מֶלֶךְ יְמִינֵךְ בַּיָּמִינֵךְ לְפָנֵי גּוֹיִם לְפָנֵי מַמְלָכָה
whose right hand to subdue before nations the loins of kings
H3225 H7286 H6440 H1471 H4975 H4428

דַּלְתַּת יְמִינֵךְ לְפָנֵי לְפָתַת חַדְשָׁתְךָ
him and I will loose him and I will loose before him the two leaved gates
H6605 H6605 H6440 H1817

לֹא אַשְׁכַּר יְמִינֵךְ יְמִינֵךְ לְאַשְׁר
and the gates shall not be shut
H8179 H3808 H5462

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:6 (References Lord): I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

Isaiah 44:28 (Parallel theme): That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Psalms 73:23 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

Isaiah 41:13 (References Lord): For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Isaiah 45:5 (References Lord): I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

Jeremiah 51:11 (Kingdom): Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.

Jeremiah 50:35 (References Lord): A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men.

Ezra 1:1 (Kingdom): Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Isaiah 13:3 (Parallel theme): I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

Job 12:21 (Parallel theme): He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.