

Title: There's no God like our God, pt.4  
Text: Isaiah 45.14 – 46.13  
Theme: There is only one who is God (and it is definitely not you)  
Series: Isaiah #39  
Aim: I aim to call my people to submit to the all-wise, and glorious purposes of our gracious and Sovereign God.

#### Prop Stmnt

Gabby Douglass in capturing the gold in women's gymnastics, captured our hearts as well, at least most of them. One writer was creeped out by the fact that Gabby would credit Jesus after her accomplishments. In her article in Salon magazine, she reveals her source of angst. Referring to Christians, she said "*A lot of them are insistent that everybody in the world should conform to what they know for an absolute fact is the one and only truth.*" This writer's response is not surprising. God's claim as the One and only infuriates the intelligentsia and is therefore assaulted, mocked and rejected. Alison Thomas was a young college student and she tells of an odd homework assignment given early on in one of her classes. Her class was instructed to make a map detailing all the paths that led to the main entrance of the university's library. The point of the project, as they found out, was to learn that it did not matter which path you took, they all lead to the library, just like, it does not matter which religion you chose, they all lead to God. Right? NO! Sadly, most students have never learned to think rationally, propositionally, and logically so a professor may appear to get away with that. But, what are the obvious problems with his conclusion? If you were Alison Thomas, could you immediately spot them? The fatal flaw of his argument is theological and logical. God is not the university library. The fact that all of the sidewalks around the library may lead to the library, does not mean that all of the sidewalks in the world do. Besides, God is not a university library. There is no God like our God, which means, there is no other Savior.

This message is part of a series through the spectacular, glorious, Old Testament book of Isaiah. It is also part 4 of a series within a series, where beginning in chapter 42, the prophet is boldly declaring that there is no God like our God who has planned and accomplished our salvation, who is all in and totally engaged with us, who understands the depth of our need, who cares for you, who controls all things, who has no equal, who finishes what he starts and who determines the means and the end. Today's text is a summary of those 8 points. There is no god, like our God, who is God! As we read this text, and then as I take us through it, we are going to see why this is the case. No other god is Creator and Savior. No other god can save. No other god can save itself. So, how are you going to respond?

#### Read Text:

Since this passage is a summary of this section, I am going make two observations from this section as a whole, and then look at our text for today. 1) Thus says the LORD

Has someone ever said "Cause I said so." to you? It is usually the attempt to provide a definitive (sometimes deafening) answer to someone who is challenging the authority of

someone making rules. The conversation usually goes something like this: “You can’t do that.” “Why not?” “Cause I said so.” Now, comes the moment of decision. Are you going to accept that answer as a reasonable argument, or are you going to challenge the one who claims to have enough authority to tell you what to do? If the person, who says it, is 350 lbs of steel and can run like a deer, then you are probably inclined to accept the response as a perfectly logical and reasonable statement of reality. If, however, the person who says it, is a twerp, and has absolutely no leverage over you, then you are more than likely going to ignore them.

Well, in this section of Isaiah (42-46), where we are treated to a feast of truths that give us more of a picture of how glorious God truly is, there is a phrase that is repeated 11 times. It is at once, the most comforting or enraging, or intimidating statements that you can imagine. Our text begins with it. It is the statement, “Thus says the LORD”. But God is doing so much more than simply making rules.

## 2) Thus says the LORD who loves you like no other

As I mentioned, when someone lays down a rule, we instinctively react, with “who says?” We naturally distrust others, not only because we are sinners who want to rule our own lives, but in our defense (at least a bit) we are aware of so many examples in life and history how the people who make the rules, do so for their own purposes. They make rules to hurt others and favor themselves.

Shirley Chumley served as a missionary in the Congo and then in the Comoro Islands, an Islamic Republic off the east coast of Africa. She taught in a school, where the twin sons of the President attended and was charged with giving one of the boys his final exam in his English course but the boy knew nothing about English. It did not matter; the adult guardian of the children informed her that this was the president’s son and that he was expected to pass. So, what do you do? Shirley took the issue up with the administration of the school and was told she could put down whatever she wanted to, because the boy had already been given his diploma, with honors! Does that shock you? NO! Why not? Because our world lives by the golden rule. He who has the gold makes the rules and he makes the rules so that he will get more gold. That is what makes God so unique. He not only has the power, the position, the indisputable authority to make the rules, but he does not use his authority to derive sick pleasure from crushing people. Rulers in this world tend to make rules to favor themselves because they want an unfair advantage to gain more power, wealth or pleasure. But, God is all-powerful. We have no resources that God is in need of. And God is the source of infinite joy. There is nothing that we can give to God that provides him with something that he is lacking. He does not need us to make up for some deficiency that he has. No, he (and this is where the Trinity is such a critical component), the Father, Son and Spirit, who have from eternity past enjoyed and continue to enjoy a relationship of perfect fellowship, love and complete delight, so that they do not need anything or anyone else. But, God chose to create us that we might be brought into fellowship with Him. He created us that we might be an extension of his pleasure. Therefore, all of the rules that God makes are designed to draw us to him, by revealing who he is, and revealing our need of him. He makes rules because he loves us

like no one else could ever love us. We see that emphasis in this section. Isaiah is crying out to his people in order to help them recover their trust in God.

In this section God says, I am your Creator, I am your Redeemer, I am your Savior, I am your protector, I am your King, I am the one and only God, I am the Rock, I am the one who calls you by name, who knows everything about you, who has planned the end and the beginning and calls you to trust me. Not only are these claims made by God, but then, they are backed up by God. He goes on record to show his authority as the King of History, the Sovereign of the universe. His claims have no rival, no equal, and cannot be threatened. Now, comes your moment of decision. Are you going to accept God's claim as God as a reasonable argument, or are you going to challenge him as if, you are in a position to question His authority in your life?

Judah has rejected God's authority, which means that Judah is in soul-bondage. Freedom from God is not freedom; it is bondage to sin. God warned Judah that when they rebelled against him, he would be faithful to discipline them. Isaiah is warning Judah that she will go into physical bondage to Babylon in order to be and experience an undeniable illustration that she is in soul-bondage to sin. Bondage and oppression to another nation is not the ultimate problem, it is the immediate problem. The immediate problem points to the heart problem. They are going into physical bondage because of their soul-rebellion. Isaiah, however, looks forward to when Judah will be delivered from her physical bondage by a very unlikely redeemer – Cyrus. But Judah has a two-fold problem. She needs to be delivered from sin, not just bondage. God goes on the record in this section to say that deliverance is coming from physical bondage. He is also about to go on the record and reveal that He is sending a deliverer who rescue us from sin. But, before he does gives us those details, he is making it abundantly clear, that no one else can pull this off. No one else can predict history and pull it off because there is no God like our God. But, God wants us to do more than realize his authority of history. He is proving his power in history to make you aware that no one can rescue you, redeem you, forgive you, and provide for you like our God. There's no god, like our God...

## 9. **Who alone is God.** – 45.14 – 46.13

### A. **No other god is Savior.** (45.14-17) (15 – statement)

God is promising, that one day instead of Judah going in chains to another nation, not only will Judah return to her land, but other nations will come to Israel because they will recognize that there is no other God but God! Wow! Here are the people of Judah who are overrun, wiped out, scattered throughout the Babylonian empire who have this promise, that God is not done with them. These people, slaves once more, will be redeemed. This time, not through Moses but through a savior whom they can hardly fathom, who will accomplish all that God has promised. So, this entire section is brought to a conclusion. There is no other God. Don't even waste your time.

- 1) God is generous with his salvation.

God's plan is not simply to rescue Judah, but to draw the nations to Judah, because it is from Judah (as we will see) that the Savior comes. The God who is generous to save Judah is also generous to save others. This was a huge problem for many of the Jews and it was a problem in the early church. The God who has enough grace to rescue you has enough grace to rescue others. Mercy, there was great, and grace was free. And if it was free for you, it is free for others. We distort the gospel when we have stingy attitudes towards the salvation of others. We don't mind people just like us becoming followers of Christ, because that does not stretch us and challenge us. And we do not mind people who are different than us becoming followers of Christ as long as they go to another church. Oh no! God is not only generous with his mercy, but he is saying to the Jews – look out! I am going to bring people from other nations to you. They are people of wealth and means and strength (14). They are coming voluntarily and will bind themselves to you because they will recognize me. He saves like no one else can save. He saves with an everlasting salvation (17). This is supported by the next section.

#### **B. No other god is Creator (45.18-19)**

God not only claims to be the Creator in the beginning of this verse, but he claims that he stands alone as God in the end of this verse. The point is clear. He alone is responsible for creating the world. Now, I fully recognize that what stands behind the angry, unrelenting, passionate, data-twisting, fact-distorting blind determination of evolutionists, is a heart that cannot stand the thought that there is a God to whom we must give an account. Ironically, we who do not even believe in Neanderthal man are painted as such because of our belief in what God says about himself. However, look at the middle of this verse and notice the phrase, "he formed it TO BE inhabited." What do those words tell you? These words scream – intentionality. God is revealing not only the "how" of it happened, but he is revealing the "why". This has always been the Achilles heal of the theory of evolution. Evolution cannot answer the question "why" which is why evolution is intellectually so unsatisfying. Not only is the very definition of science stretched beyond any form of credulity when applied to evolution, but evolution leaves the human soul completely empty of any meaning. Evolution tries to say, "how" the world came into being, but it cannot tell you "why". Therefore, in man's arrogant attempt to throw God off the train, he is now discovering that when he threw God out, he also threw out all meaning, purpose, and intentionality. If there is no God, then there is no meaning. All that is left is the survival of the fittest. Prominent atheist, Richard Dawkins said that Darwin finally made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist. Hold the phone! If survival of the fittest is indeed the law, then why do we get upset when some guy shoots up a crowded movie theater? The victims were the weak ones; the killer was the strong one. He figured out how to survive, and according to the evolutionary model, he was doing us a favor by ridding the world of the weak – right? You cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that what this guy did was wrong and believe in evolution. If you believe in evolution, there is no wrong, there is no right, there is nothing but random chance. All that evolution has to offer is this: Suck it up and get over it because your life has no value, no meaning, no purpose, no goal and no hope. There is nothing out there.

Oh, beloved, I am so grateful to be able to speak to your mind and your soul. It is so satisfying, and so comforting to know that God is, that he has spoken, (19c – “*I speak the truth; I declare what is right.*”) that he made this world, and that he made it in order to be inhabited. As we see from the entire story line of the Bible, there is a meta-narrative. There is an over-arching, picture that the master Artist has painted on purpose. There is a point to history. God made this world for his people. His people are the ones who acknowledge Him and trust him. And this absolutely critical because...

**C. No other god can save. (45.20-25)**

...and we need to be saved. The idol makers are doomed to confusion and shame (16) because they are wasting their worship on a god that cannot save (20). This should be obvious when you have to carry your wooden god. So, God issues the challenge (21) again. Put up or shut up! Show me a god who can save (21a). You cannot because “there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.” They do not exist. Therefore, stop wasting your worship, stop wasting your life, stop wasting your life on yourself and other gods. “Turn to me and be saved.” Do you see how turning to God demands a deliberate turning away from all other gods? This is the OT doctrine of repentance. Christianity is not Hinduism. You do not add Jesus to your list of deities, or that he is simply on the top of the heap. There is no heap. He stands alone. That is why salvation is in God alone, who is about to reveal to us, how he is going to pull it off (chapters 52-53) where we are going to read that God is going to send a Suffering Servant who will die for our sins, and will satisfy God’s wrath. Here we read of how the entire story ends. (23) Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance and God says, (in essence) I will never have to eat my words.

**D. No other god can save itself. (46.1-7)**

Bel and Nebo are two of Babylon’s primary gods. Bel was the city-god of Babylon, and Nebo was his son who was the city-god of Borsippa. (Nebuchadnezzar was named after Nebo) Every new year, Nebo would be carried by carts in procession to Babylon, where Bel and Nebo would write down what was going to happen in the new year. The picture here is of the gods being hustled out of town before the enemy destroyed the city, which was rather ironic. Babylon would, for a time, conquer Judah, and therefore the Jews, who were so prone to idolatry, would be tempted to believe that perhaps Bel and Nebo were indeed superior. Isaiah anticipates this. And says, ok, let’s be logical. (1) These gods have to be carried. If they cannot carry themselves, then how can they carry you? The fact is, following these gods will lead Babylon into captivity (2). Why would you follow a god that cannot carry itself, or save itself, when (3-4) I am God and I have carried you and will carry you, when you trust me. These 7 verses point out the contrast between following a god that cannot save itself (much less save you), with the God who can save.

How do we know that God can really save? God has not only gone on record to demonstrate that he is Creator and Sovereign, and not only claims to be Savior (which he has the right to do), but he backed up those claims by predicting how he is going to save his people, and then doing it in Christ. We are rapidly approaching chapters 52 and 53

which are an amazing description of the death of Christ, 700 years before it happened. God promises to save his people, and just like he promised, he sent a Savior, and just like he predicted, this Savior dies as a suffering servant in our place. But, here is the irony. While Christ was dying, the Pharisees mocked him and said, “If you are God, save yourself!” (Mt. 27.42) And what did they say that would do, if he got himself off of the cross? They said, “We will believe you.”

Now, we know full well, that they would not have believed him, because they did not believe anything else that he had done, including raising Lazarus from the dead. So, everyone knows, themselves included, that they were not going to believe Christ. However, did they have a point? After all, isn't this the argument that Isaiah is making? How can you trust a god to save you, when that god cannot save itself?

The answer to that has two parts. 1) The only way for God to save you from sin, was for him not to save his Son from the cross. But, there is another part. God did save himself, didn't he? Only he didn't save himself from the cross, or from taking our sin upon himself, or experiencing the just wrath of our sin, or from dying itself. He did something even greater than saving himself from the cross, He saved himself from the dead and in so doing; he rose again that we might live forever! Bench-press that!!

**E. So, what will you do? (46.8-13)**

The appeals in these verses (remember, recall, remember – 8; listen – 12) are all appeals to embrace these truths. And that is where we are today. Will you “Turn to God and be saved?”

45.22 – on screen