

Bible and Prayer
March 11, 2015

Opening Prayer

Bible

Isaiah 45:1-8 (pew Bible reg. print – p.592; pew Bible large print – p.1132)

We will focus on the sentence in 45:2 in which the Lord says, “I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.”

We recall from our studies these past few weeks that the Lord addresses these words to Israel when His people would be living in exile in Babylon. What we have not yet discussed is that these words of Isaiah were written 200 years before Israel was deported into Babylon.

That means that 200 years in advance the Lord chose *by name* the person He would use to set Israel free. Who would that be, and what title did God give to him? See 45:1.

But Babylon was invincible. How could the Lord set Israel free? 45:2 is a reference to the walls of the city of Babylon. Actually, it had two city walls, one inside the other. The inner wall was 21 feet thick. The outer wall was eleven feet thick. There was a moat around the outer wall. There were 360 watchtowers around the outer wall. The Ishtar Gate (part of which is now in a museum in Berlin, Germany) opened up onto a street called *Aibur-Shabu*. That means *the enemy shall never pass*. The city was impregnable. But God promised what to Cyrus? See 45:3.

The question is, How would the Lord deliver the city of Babylon into Cyrus' hands? See Daniel 5:25-31 (reg. print – p.725; large print – p.1386). This helps to explain what the Lord says in 45:7.

There are times when we, too, are trapped behind gates of bronze and stuck behind bars of iron, trapped and imprisoned. We can be stuck in the past, stuck in a bad place within a relationship, trapped in illness, stuck in debt, stuck in a dead-end job. We can be stuck in guilt, trapped in gloom, surrounded by obstacles, trapped by our sins, locked in habits we cannot beat. And the devil locks the gate and throws away the key. See Romans 7:23, 14, 21 (reg. print – p.916; large print – p.1754).

What does the Lord say about things that lock us in? See Revelation 1:17-18 (reg. print – p.991; large print – p.1913), John 8:36 (reg. print – p.869; large print – p.1663), and Isaiah 42:6-7 (reg. print – p.589; large print – p.1125).

“I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.”

Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Blessing