Isaiah 45:22 Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, because I am God and there is no other.

 The first thing I want to do is simply to look at the very beginning of this portion of God’s Word. Here is what verses 20-21 say to us. **20Gather! Come! Draw near together, you survivors from the nations. They have no knowledge —those who are lifting up their idols of wood and praying to a god that cannot save. 21Make an announcement and come close. Let them consult together. Who made this known ahead of time? From time past who announced it? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no god except me, a righteous God and Savior. There is no one except me.”**

 I will tell you, these words are fantastic. Here is Isaiah writing about something that hasn’t even happened yet, actually, won’t happen for about another 180 years. These words are speaking of the return from the Babylonian captivity. That captivity will take place 100 years from the time of Isaiah. And the return will be in 80 years exactly in accord with what the Lord says will take place. Not only does he tell us it will take place, he even names the King who will do it, though that king and his kingdom doesn’t yet exist!

 Now go back and read the words found in these two verses. God challenges: **“Who made this known ahead of time? From time past who announced it?** There it is. There is one of the ways that you can know beyond all doubt that God, is just that, God. He calls things that are not as though they were and sees to it then, that what wasn’t, would be! That just makes my mind spin. Here is a wonderful truth of God. He is over and commands all. He is not a God who can be manipulated and bent to what the world wants but rather is one who sees to it that His will, His plan is always the one that is done.

 Now, do we know and grasp all that God is and all that God has planned? Not even close. I feel I am lucky to just be able to serve the Lord and grasp a portion of his majesty and wisdom, let alone figure out what He is doing in the entirety of the world. Yet one thing I have learned. God is trustworthy. God never breaks or backs off on any promise He has ever made. And that is what makes the next words of our text so absolutely stunning. Our theme for today will be: **THE GOD OF SALVATION!**

 So I want you to know, that as we look at what is written here, we believe that the verses before us are the words of the Lord Himself. He is the one calling us together. He is the one who is challenging us to consider and grasp his truth. And as far as God is concerned, an honest look at the facts will yield only one truth to the question of who does this? The answer from God, **Was it not I, the Lord? There is no god except me, a righteous God and Savior. There is no one except me.”**

 Now just as a small aside, I know what is being said out there in the religious world. Liberal theology, in the name of science, is saying that much of this stuff, this prophecy stuff was added after the fact. Here is the problem with that. We have no record of the truth of that. It is all theory, because the modern liberal religious world can’t accept the idea and truth of a God who does know and who does things they can’t explain. Nor is this embellishment. For that matter, the testimony to the fanatical passing down of Scripture by the Jewish people is confirmed. The Dead Sea scrolls, found in 1947 produced manuscripts of the Old Testament dating back to 200 B.C. Looking at and reading these manuscripts is still very much an ongoing process. One of the scrolls found was the entire book of Isaiah, intact and identical to the texts we have. In other words, proof that it was not changed. The Jewish people were fanatical in their copying and preserving of the Biblical texts. Not to mention that God himself was also working to make sure his way and will are known.

 So here is the Lord saying, when you see this thing happen, this captivity and return then you will know I am true and real. But what excites me even more than this truth of the opening verses is the revelation of what is found in the next verses.

 God says, **“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, because I am God, and there is no other.** Here is God revealing and confirming the message and truth of salvation. It is not going to be about us but rather because he has acted and he has done it. This salvation, as it is revealed here, is not just for one race of people but rather will be for the whole world. Keep this thought in mind.

 Next, **“I have sworn by myself. From my mouth a righteous word has gone out, and it will not return unfulfilled. Indeed, to me every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear allegiance.”** Here is another truth that God wants you to grasp. God has given us his record, given us his wisdom and his revelation that reveals all. God calls it a **“righteous word”** and even more he says, **“it will not return unfulfilled.”** Here are a few things to simple grasp and rejoice in.

 First God is affirming the truth of his Word, affirming it based on His marvel and wonder. Second, God is telling us this word is righteous, it is his revelation and his sharing of the plan of salvation he has prepared for all. Third, you will find that this word will prove true, especially when it comes to the work of redemption. In other words, what God’s Word reveals will be true and will show the truth of God.

 I want you to understand it is for this reason that the modern world works so hard to undermine the truth and reality of the Bible. They are painfully aware that if the Bible is shown to be true and right then these words must stand as a testimony to the truth and reality of God. Yet the world doesn’t want to answer to God. The world doesn’t want to admit to God. The world will do anything to destroy this truth of God.

 Yet, how do you account for the hundreds of prophecies that have been shown to be true? Concerning Jesus himself you have some, by very conservative numbers, 350 prophecies fulfilled. 350! That is not coincidence. That is not imagination. That is the historical record of fact. Is it any wonder that the world works so hard to undermine and pull your mind from the one solid truth that really stands out? God had foretold that his Messiah would come, die for the sins of the world and then rise from the dead, actually physically rise. That’s what happened in Jesus. The world works hard to deny it, to destroy this truth of God but the fact stands, Jesus has been raised from the dead and proven to be God’s Son and our Savior. Yet there is more.

 The text says, and these are our last two verses, **“Only in the Lord, they will say of me, Only in the Lord is there true righteousness and strength.” To him they will come and be ashamed—all those who are angry at him.” In the Lord, all the descendants of Israel will be justified. They will be praised by him.”** Now, we are going to combine these words with some of the previous words to come to a full understanding.

 I want you to grasp that these words are especially pointing to Jesus and what Jesus will and has done for the entire world. Here is a fact, from beginning to end the Holy Bible is about the history and revelation of salvation to be found in Jesus. God not only promised this Savior, he foretold this Savior and fully revealed the marvel of what this savior would do. Right from the very beginning God has always made it clear this His salvation is what He will do, do for all, in such a way that the hope and comfort of His salvation will be crystal clear.

 So here are the facts found in Jesus. Jesus came into our world, came just as God had promised: born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem of descendants of David. God’s Word foretold that “wise men” would come see him. Foretold his fleeing to Egypt to escape the killing that would seek him. God foretold the weeping and mourning in Ramah that would follow this birth, a weeping and mourning as Herod has all the boys two years old and younger murdered in Bethlehem. And I haven’t even touched on the things connected to John the Baptist and his coming too.

 God’s Word foretold how Jesus would be hung on a tree, the cross made of wood, there to suffer the punishment of God for our sins. You are familiar with Isaiah and his revelation? Listen: **“Surely he was taking up our weaknesses, and he was carrying our sufferings. We thought it was because of God that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted, but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced. He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”** What Jesus would do is die for the salvation of our souls, die to pay the price of sin and to buy us back as the children of God.

 That’s why our text tells us **“Only in the Lord.”** Only God could do this. Only the Son of God could serve to redeem and save. What are we told that Jesus brings for us? The truth of his work is put this way in Romans: **“But now, completely apart from the law, a righteousness from God has been made known. The Law and the Prophets testify to it. This righteousness from God come through faith in Jesus Christ to all and over all who believe. In fact, there is no difference, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”** Dear people that is just one of the sections that declares the wonder of what Jesus has done. It tells us what our text says, but more fully. Only in the Lord is there righteousness. Jesus is the only one who stayed righteous. He went through every temptation we do, yet Jesus was without sin and then Jesus became our righteousness. By his suffering and death, by his resurrection from the dead Jesus offers us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In other words, Jesus says that His righteousness will become ours by faith. Yes, because we are clothed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

 I could go on and on in this wonder. What it boils down to is that in Jesus we have the forgiveness of sins and with that forgiveness, life and salvation, SURE AND CERTAIN! That’s where the strength part comes in. Jesus is our righteousness because Jesus is our strength. He endured. He won the victory over sin, death and the devil for us. He is the one who makes this salvation sure and certain, or as our text put it, **“Only in the Lord is there true righteousness and strength.”** Here is the raw truth and wonder of salvation by grace through faith. Jesus has done it all. Jesus is our Savior.

 At this point let me cover a few of the other things found here and how they point to Jesus. The previous verse had said, **“Indeed to me, every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear allegiance.”** Do you hear in those words the end result of who and what Jesus is? Jesus has been proclaimed the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Because of the truth of His salvation and his total victory over all things we are told that on the day of his return this will happen: Philippians 2: **“Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Christ the Lord.”**

 In that same light, our text said, **“To him they will come and be ashamed—all those who were angry at him.”** Just to help you grasp the continuity of Scripture Psalm 2 puts this same truth this way: **“Why do the nations rage? Why do the people grumble in vain? The kings of the earth take a stand, and the rulers join together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.”** These words all foreshadow the cross of Jesus. Yet again, Jesus has won the victory. Our verses today, say that these people who acted in rage and anger to Jesus will come and will feel the shame and horror of what they did. You see, **“every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ.”**

 Or I could point of the words of our text that say, **“In the Lord, all the descendants of Israel will be justified.”** Here I will direct you to Romans, chapters 9-11. Here the Apostle writing under God’s inspiration tells us how the true Israel are those who have the same faith as Israel. One such verse says, (9:8) **“This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are counted as his descendants.”** This whole section of Romans and the whole book of Hebrews declares that it is faith in the promised Jesus that makes us the children of Israel. And faith in the promised Jesus brings us justification.

 Honestly, there is so much more that could be said and revealed here in these words. But let this suffice for now. Please know that Christmas is about this Savior, about how God came to win for us eternal life and salvation. It is the consistent and the persistent message of God’s Word from beginning to end. I will end with the encouragement found in our text: **“Turn to the Lord and be saved, because He is the God of salvation!** Amen.