

## Fact Sheet for **“Impossible for Us, but Not for God!”** **Isaiah 44:24-45:8**

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There are a few prophecies of the Bible that stand out more than the others. Today we will be looking at one of them. All the prophecies of the Bible are impossible to have been given from human wisdom alone... but this is one that takes the cake.

Isaiah's ministry spanned the reign of four kings in Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:1). Isaiah's call to ministry came “in the year that King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1, around 740BC).<sup>1</sup> He lived long enough to record the death of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (Isaiah 37:37-38, 681BC).<sup>2</sup>

Sennacherib had his sights set on taking Jerusalem, but was dramatically prevented by God from doing so. God is now speaking to Israel.

Read Isaiah 44:24-28 slowly.

In Isaiah's day Jerusalem was already built! Solomon's temple stood on the temple mount! And what about Cyrus? His regal titles in full were The Great King, King of Persia, King of Anshan, King of Media, King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, and King of the Four Corners of the World. We read about him in the book of Daniel. Jerusalem had been destroyed, along with Solomon's temple. Daniel had been taken to Babylon, had grown old and come towards the end of his ministry.

In 539 BC Babylon fell to Cyrus.

### ***Herodotus, Histories 1.190-191<sup>3</sup>***

*(1.190) ...Cyrus, with the first approach of the ensuing spring, marched forward against Babylon. The Babylonians, encamped without their walls, awaited his coming. A battle was fought at a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian king, whereupon they withdrew within their defenses. Here they shut themselves up, and made light of his siege, having laid in a store of provisions for many years in preparation against this attack; for when they saw Cyrus conquering nation after nation, they were convinced that he would never stop, and that their turn would come at last.*

*(1.191) Cyrus was now reduced to great perplexity, as time went on and he made no progress against the place. In this distress either some one made the suggestion to him, or he bethought himself of a plan, which he proceeded to put in execution. He placed a portion of his army at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough: he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where [legendary former queen] Nitocris dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly: he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became fordable.*

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<sup>1</sup> ESV Study Bible.

<sup>2</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus was a Greek historian who lived from 484–425 BC.

*Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the, river-side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man's thigh, and thus got into the town. Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street gates which gave access to the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and so took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare) long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt about the capture. Such, then, were the circumstances of the first taking of Babylon.*

Darius the Mede was a general installed by Cyrus as king of the newly conquered Babylonian territory (Daniel 6:28). Cyrus allowed the Jews (who were exiled in Babylonia) to return home (Ezra 1:1-4).

Isaiah prophesied from 740-681BC. This means that Isaiah's prophecy about Cyrus wouldn't be fulfilled until about 150 years after he wrote Isaiah 44:28!

Read Isaiah 45:1-7 slowly. Then the Lord speaks of salvation (Isaiah 45:8).

You only have two choices with this prophecy. Either the book of Isaiah is what it presents itself to be... or it is a lie.

Now, here's the upshot. For the Christian there is confidence for today.

**ESV James 1:2-4** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

And confidence for eternity

**ESV John 14:2-3** In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

If you have never come to Christ and asked for forgiveness based on His sacrifice for you on the cross, then the Bible is also clear.

**ESV Revelation 20:15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The Bible is truth. Trust it!