



## **Concept of Monotheism in Isaiah 45 as a Basic Alternative to Addressing the Reality of Religious Plurality in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

Religious plurality is an unavoidable reality in Indonesia. This research seeks to explain the attitudes that Christians may embrace in responding to the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia. The alternatives to the study are based on the implications of Isaiah 45, which is part of the Christian Bible. Researchers looked at the characteristics of Isaiah 45 and the concept of monotheism to get the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 for alternatives to Indonesian Christians. This type of research is qualitative descriptive research with the use of hermeneutic methods and socio-historical approaches. Researchers conduct a literature study of sources related to the research topic. The results explain that the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 show that Yahweh, who is God, is not exclusive in relationships with mankind. Based on the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45, Christians can choose transformative inclusive attitudes in establishing relations with other religious people.

**Keywords:** Isaiah 45; Monotheism; Religious Pluralty; Transformative Inclusiveness.

### **Abstrak**

Pluralitas agama merupakan kenyataan yang tidak dapat dihindari di Indonesia. Penelitian ini berupaya menjelaskan sikap yang dapat dianut umat Kristen dalam merespons realitas pluralitas agama di Indonesia. Alternatif bersikap dalam penelitian ini didasarkan pada implikasi dari Yesaya 45 yang merupakan bagian dari Alkitab umat Kristen. Peneliti melihat karakteristik Yesaya 45 dan konsep monoteisme untuk mendapatkan implikasi konsep monoteisme dalam Yesaya 45 bagi alternatif bersikap umat Kristen Indonesia. Jenis penelitian ini yaitu penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan penggunaan metode hermeneutik dan pendekatan sosio historis. Peneliti melakukan studi pustaka terhadap sumber-sumber yang terkait dengan topik penelitian. Hasil penelitian menjelaskan bahwa implikasi konsep monoteisme dalam Yesaya 45 menunjukkan Yahweh yang adalah Tuhan, tidak bersikap eksklusif dalam menjalin relasi dengan umat manusia. Berdasarkan implikasi konsep monoteisme dalam Yesaya 45, umat Kristen dapat memilih sikap inklusif transformatif dalam menjalin relasi dengan umat beragama lainnya.

**Kata Kunci:** Yesaya 45; Monoteisme; pluralitas agama; Inklusif Transformatif.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a country that is closely related to the reality of plurality. The reality of plurality in Indonesia, on the one hand, is due to the condition of the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which consists of around 17,508 large and small islands (Hasanah, 2020) which therefore gives birth to cultural diversity. On the other hand, Indonesia's strategic location is between two continents (Asia and Australia) as well as two oceans (Indian and Pacific), resulting in Indonesia becoming a country traversed as a trade transportation route by foreign ships such as China, Arabia, India and Europe. This geographical state of affairs, of course, allowed interaction with foreigners who made voyages and trade. The impact of those interactions can shape racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. At this point, it becomes clear that the reality of plurality of both ethnicity, race, religion and between groups is the authentic "face" of Indonesia.

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In this paper, the author will limit the discussion to the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia. Officially, the government gave formal legal recognition to Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and added also believers in God Almighty. Based on the data portal from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, the composition of the Indonesian population, namely those who are Muslim, is 231,069,932 people; Christian 20,246,267 inhabitants; Catholic 8,325,339 people; Hindus 4,646,357 people; Buddha 2,062,150 people; Confucianism 71,999 people and Believers 112,792 people (Kementerian Agama, 2022). The reality of this religious plurality, in addition to the potential to become social capital in the development of the state nation, on the other hand, also has the potential to trigger interfaith friction for the people of Indonesia. Therefore, the spirit of religious tolerance in Indonesia is a necessity.

Tolerance is an attitude of accepting the existence of others who have different beliefs (Kementerian Agama, 2019). With an attitude of tolerance, openness to the opinions and rights of others can occur. Therefore, the attitude of superiority should be avoided so as not to become an exclusive attitude in religion. Religious exclusivism is a religious understanding that believes that only the religion that is adhered to is the best and true so that those who differ in religion from it are considered wrong (Casram, 2016; Trinitapoli, 2007). The result of religious exclusivism is that one wants religious uniformity to occur. If there are those who do not conform to their beliefs, then there may be acts of discrimination against others of different religions.

For example, some of the acts of discrimination that have occurred in Indonesia can give us an idea of how the vulnerability of exclusivism has an impact on social interactions of society. First, the burning of residential houses and gathering places of the Lalang Rondor Malesung (Laroma) Believers in Tondei Dua Village (Litha, 2022). In addition to arson, acts of intolerance are also carried out by labeling the Laroma Believers as adherents of heretical teachings. The result of the burning was not only material but also psychic losses. Victims who experience these acts of discrimination lose their homes and are traumatized by these unjust acts. Second, the attack on a family in Solo who carried out the Midodaremi event (Gusman, 2020). The attack was carried out simultaneously with the destruction of the car of a family member who was conducting a midodaremi procession. This destruction was solely because the family adhered to the Shia sect. These kinds of actions will continue to occur when an attitude of superiority and exclusiveness always comes first.

Christianity itself undeniably has the potential to become an exclusive religion. Titaley states that the cultural roots of Christian exclusivism are the story of Israel in the Bible as a nation devoted to being chosen and blessed; Biblical Israel is a Holy nation (John A Titaley, 2013). The fact that the cultural roots of religious exclusivism can affect the religious life of Christians in Indonesia. In reality, Indonesian Christians no longer live in the days of Jewish Israelites with their monolithic culture. Instead, living in Indonesia with the reality of plurality, especially in the realm of religion. Therefore, looking further into the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 and its implications is important.

The author finds that there are three studies that talk about the Deutro -second volume- of the book of Isaiah, the concept of monotheism, and religious plurality. The first research by Jozef M. H Hehanussa which talks about Yahweh and Israeli Monotheism (Hehanussa, 2014). Hehanussa stated that Israeli monotheism speaks not only of the concept of religion, but also of an ethic for the lives of Israelites. Second, research conducted by Hasbi Arijal, The Problem of the Concept of Monotheism in Semitic Religion (Arijal, 2015). Arijal (2015) explained that there is no consensus regarding the meaning of the concept of monotheism in semitic religions (Jews, Christians, and Islam). Thirdly by Biyanto (2015), Making Peace

with the Plurality of Religious Understandings which states that religious plurality is a necessity so it needs to be addressed wisely.

Different from the three studies above, this study focuses on examining the basics of the main implications on the prophecy of the liberation of the Jewish people from exile in Babylon by Yahweh (GOD) through the anointing of Cyrus which ultimately also reflects on the concept of monotheism contained. This can be a foundation for Christians and help Christians to understand what God is like. Furthermore, the implications of the concept of monotheism became the basis for formulating relevant attitudes towards the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia. Thus, Christians in Indonesia can have considerations of religious passion that are in line with the reality of the context that is lived based on the reference to the passion of faith, one of which is the core meaning in the Bible as Scripture. In line with this, the purpose of this study is to describe the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 and examine, carefully study and rehabilitate the implications that exist as a basis for determining the attitude of Christians towards the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia.

Some of the benefits that can be obtained from this study are as follows; this study can accurately describe the biblical statement based on Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus who was Persian in order to be the basis for Christians to build a passion for his godly understanding which has implications for the passion of noble religious attitudes. This research can also be used as a reference for Christians in Indonesia to anticipate themselves from the potential religious exclusivism contained in the Bible. While realizing the potential for inclusiveness which is also expressed through the story of Yahweh as a basis for behaving towards the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is included in descriptive research carried out with the aim of explaining or describing certain phenomena systematically, factually and accurately regarding facts and properties (Sanjaya, 2013). This descriptive research was conducted through a literature study. The author searches, reads and understands literature that corresponds to the background and purpose of the research as research data. The results of data processing are expected to answer the formulation of the problem under study.

The qualitative research method in this study uses data mining based on hermeneutic methods with a Socio-Historical approach. The author will only expound an interpretation of the verses directly related to Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus in Isaiah 45, so that not the entire result of the verse-by-verse interpretation is presented. Then, the author will make a historical critique of the documents based on the view that the text has a relationship with history and that the text has its own history. On its basis, we can distinguish "history within the text" and "history from the text" (Hayes & Hollod, 2006).

This method will help the author to see the purpose and purpose of Isaiah 45 assuming that Isaiah 45 has certain interests and purposes. The author will see the purpose and purpose of this Isaiah 45, intertextually which is further associated with the concept of monotheism to know what are the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45. Then by knowing the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45, this method will help the author to study how Christian attitudes towards the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia. This is done so that the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 are relevant for the life of Christians in Indonesia by not ignoring the identity of a country that has religious diversity but also not ignoring one of the guidelines of Christians contained in the Bible passage.

Based on the purpose of the above research, religion, which is the construction of society, is closely related to its teachings. Each religion has different religious guidelines based on their individual needs and

passions. Further reviewing the teachings of religion in this case, especially Christianity, it is hoped that this research will help Christians understand their teachings as a whole as well as get to the basic essence of the value of their teachings. Thus, an evaluation of religious passions and attitudes that respond to the reality of religious plurality can be answered, whether they are in line with the doctrinal principles as contained in the text (the Bible) or not, as well as how the context of the text should be understood in order to find the doctrinal essence of the text holistically. This is done because each religion has a uniqueness that cannot be compared so that Christians and even other religious people can learn how to develop a passion for the plurality of religions that has its roots in the essence of the teachings of the sacred text. However, the reality of religious plurality clearly requires a spirit of tolerance that accepts the existence of adherents of other religions and their religious choices as those that must be respected.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Characteristics of Deutero Isaiah**

Isaiah is found in the Old Testament chapter. The book of Isaiah consists of 66 chapters. Gertz (2017) divides Isaiah in 3 parts, where each can refer to a figure of a different prophet and era. This division of Isaiah consists of the Proto Isaiah (Chapters 1-39), the Deutero Isaiah (Chapters 40-55), and the Trito Isaiah (56-66). Based on the above division, Isaiah 45, which is the focus of the author's research, is included in the Deutero Isaiah section.

The characteristics of Deutero Isaiah can be recognized through the story of the exile in the territory of the Babylonian Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as Babylon) because this Deutero Isaiah was written during the exile of 585 SZB (Groenen, 2015). This Deutero prophet Isaiah lived and worked among the Jews in Babylon (Hinson, 2004). This is because the purpose of the Deutero Isaiah sent by Yahweh was to proclaim the salvation that would occur to the Jews so that the period of punishment for their disloyalty towards Yahweh would end (Bloomendaal, 1996).

The reason the Jews were in exile was because their kings in Jerusalem were affected by worshipping the statues at Bethel (1Kgs. 12:30). In 600 SZB, King Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon. After the rebellion, three years later Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin ruled for three months, then he faced the ruler of Babylon and surrendered (2Kgs. 23:31-25:26). As a result, Jehoiachin and the entire upper layer (military, clerk, priest, and handyman) were banished to Babylon (Schumann, 2013). The Jews who were in exile were quickly affected, including in the field of religion. It appears that the god Marduk (Noth, 1962) who was the god of Babylon was understood as if as being stronger than Yahweh, their God. This is due to the custom of the Jews who believe that the defeat of a nation means also the defeat of its god (Bloomendaal, 1996).

The Jews who were banished to Babylon were actually required to remain holy or unaffected so as not to get carried away and lose their identity as Jews. In fact, people who are in exile are divided into groups in terms of beliefs (Oesterley & Robinson, 1951). Some of the Jews who were in exile were hesitant about the proclamation that they would come out of Babylon as Deutero Isaiah said. This is because of three main things, namely first: the Jews who were convinced of the father's promise of land ownership had to accept the harsh reality of being expelled from the land they had been living in. Second, the king's position in Jerusalem was no longer led by David's descendants because Babylon took power in Jerusalem. This is contrary to their tradition of derivative stories that continue continuously from one generation to the next such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses (Gottwald, 1985). The generational

sustainability that was key to the Jewish tradition was completely cut off. Next, third: that is, the Temple in Jerusalem which is believed to be the dwelling place of Yahweh in the midst of the Jews has been razed to the ground. This means that their existence was also destroyed as Jews because the religious cult activities in the Temple symbolizing their identity as Jews had been destroyed in 587 SZB (Weiden, 2000). Deutero Isaiah responded to by emphasizing two of the main beliefs of the Jews that were passed down and down, namely: First, the Jews believed that Yahweh was the Creator. Second, the Jews believed in God as the one who ruled history (Weiden, 2000).

Cyrus was used because by the time the Jews were in Babylon, Cyrus was in its heyday (Lawrence, 2016). Cyrus victory included with the many loots could be a way to defeat Nabonidus thus also liberating the Jews from exile in Babylon. Realistically, in order to be able to escape the power of Babylon, there really needs to be a third party capable of conquering Babylon, which is certainly stronger than Babylon. This third party, in addition to being stronger than Babylon, should also have a policy that is not oppressive than Babylon. Cyrus of Persia met that criterion, so it is clear that Cyrus could even be worthy of being a third party (Coote & Ord, 2015). Deutero Isaiah states unequivocally that the age of David (descendants of the Jews) is over, now the messiah is a foreign emperor, Cyrus (Singgih, 2014). This can happen because Yahweh with His omnipotence is never limited by situations and conditions.

### **Theory of Addressing in the Theology of Religions**

Religious plurality in Indonesia is an unavoidable reality. This reality has both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, religious plurality is a gift. A gift that allows humans to live together in diversity and understand others with their uniqueness without having to abandon what they believe in. On the downside, religious plurality is often the subject of opposition, even more so when a desire arises to make what it believes in one that everyone should also believe in. This selfish attitude can lead to divisions and dissensions of the nation so that the loss of a sense of unity and unity. It is this reality of the reality of religious plurality that in turn results in the emergence of diverse attitude responses.

*Sikap* (in Bahasa) or attitude mean actions that are carried out based on personal stances and beliefs (Ronis, Yates, & Kirscht, 1989, pp. 213–214). The establishment of each individual's religious attitude depends also on the beliefs formed based on the teaching of his religion so that the teaching of each religion to his people needs to be considered. This is important considering that religious teaching becomes a reference interpretation for the people who study it, which then the interpretation greatly influences the response of people's attitudes to the reality of religious plurality (Schmidt-Leukel, 2017). Some classifications of religious attitudes that can be caused by religious interpretation are: exclusive, inclusive, pluralist, and inclusive-transformative attitudes.

#### ***Exclusive***

An exclusive attitude is one that rejects the truth of another religion because they present themselves as the best and truest religion. This exclusive attitude is also present in Christianity that arose from the early Christian understanding of the concept of monotheism that there was only one eternal God who revealed himself to mankind through Jesus of Nazareth (Netland, 1991). This exclusive attitude is embraced by people who want religious uniformity. Adherents of an exclusive attitude are racing - a race to Christianize the not yet Christian. Likewise, the Bible must be read according to what is written in it (Knitter, 2003). This results in adherents of an exclusive attitude acting in accordance with the Bible literally.

### ***Inclusive***

An inclusive attitude is one that considers the Christian faith to be the end and the highest among other religions (Race, 2013). Adherents of an inclusive attitude believe that the fulfillment of salvation is found only in Jesus. This is in line with the statement in Vatican Council II which says that Christ is a light for all nations (Departemen Dokumentasi KWI, 2019). This inclusive attitude is based on the thought in Vatican Council II that says that God provides His Spirit for all (Departemen Dokumentasi KWI, 2019). However, adherents of an inclusive attitude still include a missionary spirit in their cooperation with the aim that people of other religions have perfect salvation in Jesus.

### ***Pluralist***

A pluralist attitude is one that is indescribable that the Ultimate Reality (God) is indescribable (Hick, 1995). It is indescribable because it goes beyond the scope of the concept of human thought. He is indescribable because His nature is much richer than the limited thinking of man. Reality is derived and based on everything, including religious traditions so that tradition influences man towards the concept of Reality.

The pluralist approach states that salvation no longer resides in Christianity alone but also exists in other religions (Hick, 1995). That means that there is no single truth, what the adherents of pluralist attitudes should do is to live in relation to Reality. The downside of pluralist attitudes is that no experience of God is the same for all mankind and religion so the experiences arising from religion vary (Knitter, 2003). Pluralist attitudes contain the implication that a person has a normative concept of religion/God so that it can endanger religious diversity.

### ***Inclusive-Transformative***

The fourth attitude is an inclusive-transformative attitude. Based on the exclusive, inclusive and pluralist attitudes described above and given the limitations of inclusive attitudes, it is necessary to accompany inclusive attitudes so that the limitations of inclusive attitudes can be resolved. If you look at the inclusive attitude juxtaposed with the exclusive attitude, this attitude is not appropriate because from the understanding of an exclusive closed attitude and superiority is not in line with an inclusive attitude that is open and willing to cooperate with other religious people. If an inclusive attitude is juxtaposed with a pluralist attitude then the limitations of an inclusive attitude that includes a missionary spirit are incompatible with the pluralist attitude that declares God with its omnipotence is indescribable (Koan, 2006). Transformative attitudes are those that emphasize openness to accept and learn or be equipped from the similarities and differences of other religions. Thereby if inclusive and transformative attitudes are juxtaposed together, this attitude is an attitude that allows every religious person to maintain his identity -uniqueness- while continuing to strive to accept, recognize and learn until experiencing self-renewal from the presence of other people (Koan, 2006). This attitude struggles on actualization against habits, anxiety, and defensive attitudes. This attitude exists in the human experience, no longer an eccentric doctrine (Cobb, Swidler, Knitter, & Hellwig, 1990). Through this attitude, Christ is not bound to any particular religious system, beliefs and practices. Adherents of this attitude can feel Christ fully immanent (John A Titaley, 2001). Adherents of this attitude are open to changes that have a reciprocal influence (Cobb et al., 1990). Furthermore, this transformative inclusive attitude enables people to change for the better and be able to appreciate truths beyond their beliefs in the form of dialogue (Phan, 2015) so

that each people can adapt and open themselves to other cultures in order to enrich their experience through respect for each people's belief in the search for the Transcendent.

Based on the classification of religious attitudes consisting of exclusive, inclusive, pluralist, and inclusive-transformative attitudes; the realization of this attitude depends on the way each people perspective the reality of religious plurality. The perspective and characteristics of religious attitudes also correlate with the sacred texts of each of its adherents, because between the choice of religious attitudes and religious teachings are interconnected; thereby it is important to pay attention to the religious teachings and the various attitudes that exist in order to design the right form of attitude towards the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia.

### **The Concept of Monotheism**

Monotheism based on the Greek language is *mono* which means one, singular and *theos* means God so that if it is drawn to religious understanding, then monotheism is an understanding that teaches that God is one (Arijal, 2015). The concept of monotheism, in religion can be recognized (Hidayat, 2003). First, it is found the existence of *logos*, prophets, scriptures, incarnations, or a number of direct incarnations of the realm of divinity which are then communicated through a very human and natural medium. Second, there are sacred laws, symbols and monuments (such as temples), doctrines encroached upon by traditional authorities, and prayers that bring religion to life. Third, in every religion there is a phrase of God that states "I" so that the One is present and captured in space and community by each group that claims that they have actually captured the words "I" authentically. Athanassiadi and Frede (1999) argue that monotheism is a belief in which God as the one who possesses/exercises power over events that are beyond human control, such as creating the earth and man.

### ***The Concept of Monotheism in the Jewish History of Israel***

In the middle of the 14th century SZB Amenhotep IV (Akhnaton) who was the king of Egypt performed adoration to the sun (Weber, 2012). The worship of the Sun God shows that the other god is rejected and denied. Aten became the only God, creator and regulator of life in the world. Amenhotep IV (Akhnaton) developed the idea of God into a religious imperialism reflected under the influence of the Sun God (Freud, 1939). Akhanaton made Heliopolis a religious center. Akhnaton elevated Aten to be an official religion and thus became the only God (Mitchell & Van Nuffelen, 2010).

The concept of the Sun God that existed in Egypt influenced the Jews, namely: related to the concept of the only creator and singular God (Albright, 1941; Cochrane & Albright, 1941). This concept of the Sun God can reach the Jews because Moses, the ancestor of the Jews grew up in the Egyptian Palace. At the time of living in Egypt, the concept of Akhnaton's God influenced Moses' religious views because Akhnaton had strong support from the Aten religion. Later, Moses also learned about Yahweh's religion from the tradition of his own people (Israel) called "*bedouins/nomads*" (Gottwald, 1985). At that time the Israelites came from an Asiatic group identified in Egyptian texts as Shosu (looters) who were in Syria. The place name "Yahweh Shosu" indicates a relationship with Yahweh. The Amorites in Syria believed in Yahweh which comes from the word *Yahwi-ilu* (meaning Yahweh is God, the creator and maker of everything). After being influenced by Egypt and Syria, Moses was influenced also on the recitation of Yahweh, along with the cult and legal practices of his father-in-law Jethro who was the priest of Midian (2Kgs. 10:15-27).

On the way out of Egypt the Jews with Moses arrived at the Mount of Zion (Gottwald, 1985). While on the Mount Zion, Yahweh introduced Himself to Moses as Yahweh (Exodus 3:14 "God's Word to Moses: I am I"). Based on the Hebrew word "I am I" namely "*Ehyeh 'asherehyeh*" can be interpreted as "He who

created" (Mangililo, 2006). Mangililo (2006) explains that "*ehyeh*" comes from the verb *hiphil* due to the construction of *idem per idem*. This word '*ehyeh*' later became the word Yahweh which changed the single first person "I" to the single third person "He". Based on this introduction of Yahweh, the Jews believed that Yahweh was the only God of the whole earth. Jews consider the "Most High God" to refer to the singular God (Dhavamony, 1995). This depiction of the singular God demanded the faithfulness of the Jews to worship Yahweh as their God.

### ***The Concept of Monotheism in Isaiah 45***

In this passage the author will only expound an interpretation of the verses directly related to Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus in Isaiah 45, so that not the entire result of the verse-by-verse interpretation is presented. The first concept of monotheism can be seen from the power of Yahweh (Smit, 1955). Yahweh's power was able to make the Jews in Babylon as outcasts due to their unfaithfulness. However, it was also because of Yahweh's omnipotence that He would deliver the Jews as stated in verse 1 of chapter 45. Yahweh anointed Koresh whose origin is *mashiyach* (Bibel Works, 2021). This anointing of Cyrus is to explain that Cyrus was the one whom Yahweh sanctified so that Yahweh was pleased with Cyrus (Gertz et al., 2017). Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus is like Yahweh anointing Saul and David the previous king of the Jews (Coote & Ord, 2015). Cyrus' anointing asserts that Yahweh could use the Gentiles to free them from exile (Hick, 1983). Meanwhile, from Koresh's side, it is a good thing to emphasize Koresh's sovereignty as the powerful one (Douglas, 2007).

According to the Dead Sea Mountain text, the messiah is not restricted to Jews alone because in Jewish tradition, the messiah is expected to release Jews from oppression even though the messiah is not of Jewish origin (Ucko, 1995). Messiahs can come up with the diverse functions that Jews need: some function as kings, priests, and prophets (Ucko, 1995). Based on His dominion, Yahweh promised to give strength and sustain Cyrus. Yahweh would direct Every move and intention of Cyrus to deliver the Jews; Yahweh will make Cyrus accepted as a friend not an enemy so that Cyrus does not get into trouble (Bibel Works, 2021). Yahweh will subdue the nations before Cyrus.

In verse 5 it is affirmed of Yahweh's singular and sovereign dominion. The words "though thou do not know me" are intended to describe Cyrus being blessed and given a title beyond his knowledge (Singgih, 2014). Thereby in verse 4 it is emphasized that all this happened for Israel. No other gods were in power except Yahweh so the Israelites had to turn away from pitting Yahweh.

Verse 6 explains "from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun" which means from the beginning of life until the end there is no God except Yahweh. The statement about "I, Yahweh, nothing else" also intends to explain that only Yahweh is Divine so that Yahweh can make Cyrus the ruling emperor in Babylon (Singgih, 2014). Verse 6 which states that he is mentioned again about Yahweh's solitude becomes a reference to monotheism in Isaiah 45 (Singgih, 2014). Thus, Yahweh who introduced himself is a monotheist (singular), not a polytheist (plural)(J. A. Titaley, 2006). In verse 7 it is explained that all power is in His hands. It means that all things come from Yahweh. Verse 7 also intends to explain Yahweh who had the power to punish the Kings of the Jews for their unfaithfulness, Yahweh could also have the power to use Cyrus to be His right-hand man in the plan to deliver the Jews from Babylon (Singgih, 2014).

The subsequent concept of monotheism regarding Yahweh's immortality written in verse 8 for the Jews who remained faithful and made Yahweh the only God until they were in exile, the comfort that Yahweh would deliver the Jews from exile (Smit, 1955). That the redemption of the Jews would begin with the formation of a rightness. The Jews who were in Babylon would be renewed in life because salvation would come to those who were right. Salvation and righteousness are two things that grow together and



it is Yahweh who grows them. Jews who were loyal to Yahweh were also encouraged to rely on Yahweh's power (hand) because when they were in a very low state and completely incapable of helping themselves, their help was in Yahweh who made the earth and created man (verse 12). Yahweh was the creator and ruler of the world so the Jews had to rely on Yahweh as their God (Freud, 1939).

In Verse 12, it is also emphasized that Yahweh's sovereignty was given as a rebuke to the Jews because quite a few among the Jews were shocked and angry by the prophecy that Cyrus was the messiah (Singgih, 2014). This verse is to convey that it was Yahweh who made the earth and man so that there was no need to doubt Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus. Thus, Yahweh was free to wear Cyrus (Barth, 2011). Yahweh had sufficient authority, wisdom, and power to govern man on earth.

For the Jews who doubted Yahweh's prophecy because they lost the promised land of Canaan and were in Babylon, Yahweh reminded His strength (verse 18) that He was Yahweh who created the heavens and the earth. Yahweh will improve (to establish) as he did at the beginning. Yahweh did not create the earth in vain (not in vain) but He formed it to be inhabited by man. Everything was in Yahweh's plan for a purpose that was the faithfulness and right attitude of the Jews. In verse 19 it is affirmed Yahweh's moral attitude that he speaks righteousness because Yahweh does the right in himself and he will also make his people behave rightly. Yahweh did not hide Himself (verse 15) nor was He like the gods who gave uncertain answers. Yahweh shows that He is upright (uprightness)(Ury, 2022) responsible and moral for everything He says.

### **Implications of the Concept of Monotheism in Isaiah 45**

The affirmation in Isaiah 45 verse 1 regarding the anointing of Cyrus makes it clear that Yahweh was not only powerful but also the creator of the history of human life. In Exodus 3:14 Yahweh also introduces Himself as the creator therefore requiring the Jews to be faithful to Yahweh as their God. Yahweh who created the universe would create a new state for the Jews. He according to His plan would make the Jews who were in Babylonian exile out of exile by using Cyrus to fulfill His plan (2Chr. 36-22-23). This can happen because Cyrus, who has just defeated Crousus in Lidia, makes him even more powerful with his loot. Even Cyrus domain was 15 times larger than Babylon, then a dumping ground for Jews.

The state of the outcast of the Jews in Babylon also had implications for the demands of the Jewish faithfulness to Yahweh. For Yahweh will only deliver the Jews from exile when allegiance to Him has already occurred through right attitudes and behaviors. In addition to faithfulness, Isaiah 45 also asserts that Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus is evidence that Yahweh sanctified Cyrus and Yahweh was pleased with Cyrus so that for those who doubted Yahweh's decision against Cyrus; should see the situation of Cyrus anointing as a form of Yahweh's almightiness over mankind. Because realistically to free the Jews from Babylonian exile it did take a third party more powerful than Babylon that was Cyrus, even though Cyrus was not Jewish.

The prophesied anointing of Cyrus also further confirmed Cyrus who was king of Persia, had legitimacy from Yahweh and from the political side Cyrus benefited from the anointing. Cyrus policy of returning Jews from exile to Jerusalem also further reinforced that Cyrus acted wiser than Babylon who banished Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon. For the Jews, there was nothing happier than returning to the promised land promised by their ancestral Father. Cyrus not only allowed the Jews to return home to Jerusalem but also allowed the Jews to rebuild the Temple which was where the Jews believed, Yahweh was. The identities of the Jews, who had been destroyed before because the Temple was also destroyed, were given the freedom to rebuild their identity through the construction of Temple II.

Based on Cyrus side, this situation was also an advantage because Cyrus was able to control the Jerusalem area and give limited authority for the Jews to take care of their own area. The anointing of Cyrus was not only responded positively to by the Jews who were in exile. Cyrus anointing also resulted in doubt for some Jews who were angry that Yahweh used the gentile Cyrus to deliver them from exile. But it was reiterated that the ruling Yahweh was not restricted to the Jews alone, He was so open that he was able to use Cyrus to liberate the Jews.

Based on the historical reality related to the prophecy of the salvation of the Jews through the anointing of Cyrus by Yahweh found in Isaiah 45, the implications of Isaiah 45 are that Cyrus as a Persian received approval from God as the messiah for the Jews who were in Babylonian exile. Looking further, Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus had the implication that Yahweh was open and not exclusive to the Jews alone. Yahweh proved his openness through the anointing of Cyrus which means Yahweh was pleased with Cyrus. Based on the openness of Yahweh who is God to Christians, belief in God should also be manifested through actions in accordance with God's actions that do not limit themselves in using Cyrus. The story of The Anointing of Cyrus in Isaiah 45 has implications for the attitude of Christians in establishing open relationships with people of other religions as a form of passion for God who can also work through non-Christians.

### **Implications of the Concept of Monotheism in Isaiah 45 for Alternative Christian Attitudes towards Religious Plurality in Indonesia**

Based on the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 and the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia, the anointing of Cyrus is proof that God is not exclusive in the context of God's relationship with man. An exclusive attitude will only result in disrespect for religious diversity in Indonesia because the exclusive understanding is closed and inconsistent with the characteristics of Almighty God and creators who are open based on the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45. When adherents of a particular religion declare that someone else's religion is outdated/even ignorant, then exclusive claims like this will give rise to intolerance, further jeopardizing the possibility of peaceful coexistence of different religions and secular communities. Therefore, an exclusive attitude is not appropriate as the basis for the attitude of Christians in Indonesia.

Turning to the inclusive attitude contained in the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 through god's anointing to Cyrus which indicates that God is open to gentiles, this inclusive attitude deserves to be considered as an alternative to Christian attitude in Indonesia because this attitude opens up the possibility for relations between religious people. This inclusive attitude realizes that God also works on all human beings, but unfortunately this attitude has limitations because it includes missionary spirit in its cooperation, as outlined in theory. According to the author this fundamentally makes other religions demeaned and actually shows the decline of Christianity.

Furthermore, the pluralist attitude that states that God is an indescribable reality, then this attitude according to the author is not yet fully relevant for the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia because the pluralist attitude will concretely continue to be limited in response to an indescribable Reality. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, pluralist attitudes do not seem to have fully had a positive impact on caring for diversity. This attitude will only have an impact on indifference between religious people because they think that an indescribable God means to have the truth as well as in the teachings of other religious people so that they are reluctant to correct or renew the understanding of the religion of each religious believer. If this is the case, this attitude can actually lead to religious selfishness because there is already a basis for indifference and disrespect among religious people.

Turning to a transformative inclusive attitude, then according to the author this attitude corresponds to the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45. In contrast to the exclusive attitude that does not correspond to the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 because his religious superiority does not describe Yahweh's openness to Cyrus who was not Jewish. It is also different from an inclusive attitude that in its openness has limitations, namely the missionary spirit. Whereas based on the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45, Yahweh still allowed Cyrus with his Persia. The pluralist attitude also does not correspond to the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 because the pluralist attitude does not want concern for people of different religions.

The author argues that inclusive attitudes are transformative in accordance with the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 because it allows every religious person to maintain his or her identity -uniqueness- while continuing to strive to accept, acknowledge and learn until experiencing self-renewal from the presence of others. In accordance with the openness of Yahweh who was willing to use Cyrus to carry out the plan for the liberation of the Jews who were in Babylon. In Yahweh's plan of deliverance of the Jews through Cyrus, Yahweh did not make the Jews Persians like Cyrus who freed the Jews from exile but Yahweh still allowed the Jews with his Jews and Cyrus with his Persians. Differences in background were not a hindrance to Yahweh wearing Cyrus. Each with their identity and national background. It is precisely in this distinction that the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 become apparent. Interactions in encounters of different backgrounds were possible to bring the common good, both to the Jews and to Cyrus so that liberation for the Jews was carried out and the arrangement of Cyrus' domain was guaranteed.

Yahweh's acceptance of Cyrus was clearly apparent through His anointing of Cyrus as the Messiah for the Jews. This is a special symbol because Masyiah for the Jews is a title that describes the relationship between the king and Yahweh. Thus this symbol also intends to explain how Yahweh -as the God whom the Jews worship- relates to man. Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus showed the Jews that Yahweh was not limited in establishing relationships with anyone. This can be the basis for Christians in Indonesia in establishing relationships in the life of the nation and state considering that Christians who are Indonesian citizens must establish relations with people of other religions because they are fellow Indonesian citizens and the most basic fellow human beings created by God. With the depiction of Yahweh's attitude towards Koresh in a good relationship, this is also the basis for Christians to establish relations with other people so that it is relevant for the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia.

Yahweh, who did not make Cyrus a Jew in his anointing, is also a picture of how Christians in Indonesia established relations with people of different religions. This example of a transformative inclusive attitude from Yahweh illustrates that Christians do not have to be exclusive to people of different religions because Yahweh himself is open to differences. It is precisely in these differences that relations should be established to bring about transformation between religious people so that good is achieved between religious people like Yahweh which through interactions established with the anointing of Cyrus there was a liberation of the Jews from exile in Babylon.

## **CONCLUSION**

The reality of religious plurality in Indonesia cannot be separated from the fact that every religious person has their own religious guidelines. The religious guidelines are also found in Christians called the Bible. The realization that religious diversity is an opportunity that should be celebrated and cared for makes it necessary for Christians to determine attitudes in the face of the reality of religious

plurality. The selection of the right religious attitude is carried out in order to be able to carry out the obligations of religious people in establishing relations with those of different religions as Indonesian citizens.

After reading and researching Isaiah 45 which is one of the passages in the Bible that is the basis of this research, the author finds that Yahweh in His existence as the God who created and ruled had authority in determining the history of human life. This is evident in Yahweh's anointing of Cyrus who was a Persian. Yahweh's power gave Him the right to use anyone in order to carry out His plan of delivering the Jews from exile in Babylon. Through the anointing of Cyrus, it is illustrated how God's relationship with man is. He, God never limits himself to one particular tribe or a particular religion. He was open to relationships with anyone and Cyrus' anointing was proof that Yahweh was pleased with Cyrus in carrying out the Jewish liberation plan.

The story of The Anointing of Cyrus by Yahweh found in Isaiah 45 has implications for the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45, namely on the open relationship of God and man; respect and accept differences. Based on the implications of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45 it is evident that Yahweh was not exclusive in the context of the relationship between God and man. The implication of the concept of monotheism in Isaiah 45, which is part of the prophets' book, can be the basis for Christians in responding to the reality of religious plurality in Indonesia.

Indonesia with the reality of religious plurality and a religious society, it is important to respond to the reality of religious plurality wisely. Transformative inclusive attitude is one of the alternative attitudes for Indonesian Christians that can be used as a basis for Christian to establish relationships with other religious people. Eventually transformative inclusive of appreciating religious differences and accepting them because they stem from a passion for God's own attitude as stated in the text.

The author argues that it is important for Indonesian Christians to choose a transformative inclusive attitude so that relations between religious people are maintained. Christians who choose a transformative inclusive attitude will be able to live together with people of different religions equally both in the passion of faith and in their interactions.

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