



WEEK 2 STUDY GUIDE

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SEPTEMBER 19-23, 2022



Monday, September 19, 2022

Read: Isaiah 43:1-13

Scripture Verse: *“But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” Isaiah 43:1*

Today's Thought:

Isaiah is writing these words to the people of Israel who find themselves in captivity in Babylon due to their disobedience to Yahweh, the living God. They had been there nearly 70 years before the prophet revealed the hope of their redemption. God's message to them; “I am the God who has brought you into existence through my covenant with your forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have formed you into a nation as my chosen people and named you Israel.” Isaiah opens the chapter this way to remind the people of who their God is and who they are as His created children. Because of whom they are, Isaiah assures them they need not be afraid. Although Israel finds itself under God's judgment, Isaiah reminds them that they have been in bondage before and that the same God that redeemed their ancestors from slavery in Egypt will do it again.

Isaiah's words of a new "Exodus" reflect the first Exodus of God's people from Egypt to a new promised land. A second exodus from Babylon would bring the people back to their homeland with a restored hope in a God proclaiming a special relationship with His covenant people. Because of God's past work in creating, redeeming, and caring for His people, there was no reason for fear because of His continued protection. A protection due to nothing the nation did, but because of God's unconditional love for His chosen people. All fear is gone.

The God who offers hope to His chosen people Israel offers that same hope of redemption to you and me. God offers to redeem us regardless of where this life holds us in exile or bondage to sin. Our rescue is made possible by God paying our sin debt through the blood of His Son poured out on the cross. All hope for redemption is found in Christ and located in His Word. From the beginning it has been God's intention to restore not only a shattered land but a shattered people to a rejoicing people and back to Himself. The Bible is not just for information as L.O. Richards writes, "We come to Scripture to meet God. If we truly want to know God,

you and I must look into the Word of God and listen to Him share what is in His heart. We must look beyond the darkness of our todays to catch a vision of the bright sunshine of God's promised tomorrow." And in the promised sunshine of God's tomorrow, we find our hope!

- Where do you find yourself in bondage or exile?
- What is our hope for rescue from that bondage?
- Why does the first exodus of God's people offer hope to Israel? Us?
- How does hope of Israel's redemption encourage us?
- In whom, do you find your hope?

Further Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Read: Isaiah 43:1-13

Scripture Verse: *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” Isaiah 43:2*

Today’s Thought:

This week’s theme is hope, yet the people of Israel who are in exile in another foreign land have become disheartened and wonder if God can do all He says he will or ever establish his kingship on earth. In other words, the people of Israel were saying, “we know you may be the Creator of heaven and earth, know all your creation by name, you even hold judges and ruler of earth accountable for their actions but are you really concerned with us?” Have you ever felt that way? You know the truth about God and what His Word promises but does God have time for me or care about what I’m going through? The good news is that God has time for us and cares about what we’re going through daily.

As the people of Israel are starting their pity party, Isaiah affirms that God knows their situation (He sent them there) and is concerned about them. How does God do it? He does it by turning the people’s focus from their exile to focusing on His nature. Isaiah reminds them that God is everlasting. He’s the God who made a covenant with their forefathers, and oh, by the way, is the Creator of heaven and earth. In reminding them of who God is, Isaiah reminds them of their past to funnel in hope for their present and future. Just like the Israelites, when we lose focus of God and His plan for us, we find our eyes focusing on things (idols) in this world that distract and bring consequences (exile from God).

When we lose hope and become discouraged, it’s because we have taken our eyes off God. And what is God doing during our times of physical or spiritual exile? He is tirelessly putting His plan of salvation together for all His people. He is the hope of our restoration. And that restoration for Israel and the Church is found only in His nature. God is there to renew our strength through restoration, but it’s always contingent on our willingness to submit ourselves to Him in all our ways. God was able to restore the hope of His chosen people by refocusing their attention on His nature from their circumstances allowing Him to restore their hope.

He does the same for us today. Let's keep our eyes on Him only!

- Why were the people of Israel becoming discouraged and losing hope?
- Why do we sometimes become discouraged in our lives?
- How can being reminded of our past bring hope for our present and future?
- How does God restore hope in us?
- Where is your focus? Is it on your circumstances or on the One who can help you overcome those circumstances?

Further Reading: Isaiah 44:22-23; 48:20

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Read: Isaiah 43:1-13

Scripture Verse: *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine...." Isaiah 43:1b;*

"For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..." Isaiah 43:3a

Today's Thought:

Throughout this section of Isaiah, God commands His chosen people "to fear not" seven times. When God removes the element of fear, we can have hope just like Israel. The people of Israel faced several challenges as their exile ended, including a long journey home and the task of rebuilding their city. They could overcome their fear because they had renewed hope and confidence that God was with them and would give them success. In whatever we face, our hope comes from knowing that God is with us and working on our behalf.

What I love about this section of Isaiah is how he predicts years before who, what, and how God would accomplish His will for His people Israel. God will employ the help of a pagan king in Persia named Cyrus, the nation of Israel, and the coming Messiah to accomplish His plan. And His plan would have ramifications for not only that generation but many generations to come and will affect the entire world. Isaiah speaks of Cyrus in chapter 41:1-7, the nation of Israel in chapter 43:1-44:27, and of the Messiah in chapter 42:1-25. When you get the time, they are worth the read. It reminds us that God sometimes uses people we least expect to accomplish His will in this world and our lives.

As we continue to study this account by Isaiah, we see how God restored hope in His people Israel by displaying His work on their behalf. Isaiah tells us of how God calls a pagan named Cyrus "God's servant" and used the Persian King to overthrow Babylon, help Israel move back across several foreign territories to the holy land, and pay for rebuilding Jerusalem. Although Cyrus may have thought he was accomplishing his plans, he was actually doing it for God's pleasure. We cannot forget that God can use non-believing world leaders for the good of His people and further His work. If there was a doubt in our minds that God is at work in this world through people, this historic prophecy should remove it all.

In chapters 43-44, the theme of Israel God's Servant continues with an emphasis on God as their Redeemer. The word "redeem" or "Redeemer" is the Hebrew word for "kinsman redeemer." A kinsman redeemer was a close relative who could free family members and property from bondage by paying their debts. And as we see God's hand at work as Redeemer, we can sense His love for His people and His desire to encourage them to trust Him for the future. It would be years later that God would reveal through the history of Israel and bring the "Redeemer" into the world. Through His "Redeemer," God would accomplish His great plan of salvation for all peoples, tribes, and nations. Like Israel, God chose Him, upheld him, and enabled Him to fulfill His mission, and because of His death and resurrection, there will be a glorious kingdom, and He will bring justice to the nations. We know him as Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

God chose Israel and redeemed them. He chose you and me and provided for our redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is our kinsman redeemer. Through God's forgiveness and restoration, His people can forget the past, be His witnesses in the present, and claim His promises for the future! Fear not; the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go! Because God has formed, chosen, and redeemed us, we can live this life without fear.

- What do you fear the most in life? Why?
- How does it make you feel to know that God removes all elements of fear for those who are His?
- Does it surprise you that God sometimes uses "nonbelievers" to accomplish His will? Have you seen examples in your life?
- What does it mean to be a "kinsman redeemer?"
- What does it mean to have Christ as our "kinsman redeemer?"
- Why are we able to live in this world without fear?

Further Reading: Isaiah 42:1-25

Thursday, September 22, 2022

Read: I Chronicles 28:20

Scripture Verse: *“David also said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and brave. Get to work. Don’t be afraid. Don’t lose hope. The Lord God is my God. He is with you. He won’t fail you. He won’t desert you until all of the work for serving in the Lord’s temple is finished.” I Chronicles 28:20*

Today’s Thought:

Ever had a huge dream to do something massive? Maybe something in your home, career, or on your bucket list? We all have goals. But when those goals are small enough that we can accomplish them on our own, they probably aren’t dreams. When I think of a dream, it must be something big enough that I could never pull it off alone. Dreams aren’t big enough if we can accomplish them without the help or direction of God. How are you dreaming? Are you dreaming God-sized dreams?

In I Chronicles 28:20, we read about King David’s dream. David’s vision was to build a temple for God. Yet God had told David that he would not be the one who would build His temple, but it would be one who would follow him. In I Chronicles, David has summoned a large assembly of people. He was now very old and nearing death, and he wanted to do everything in his power to be sure the transfer of Kingly power was smooth as he placed authority over Israel in the hands of his son Solomon. David poured out his heart to the people, announcing that God was barring him from building the temple because he was a warrior and had shed blood. However, God has chosen Solomon, his son, to build the house of the Lord.

As David commissioned his son for the task ahead, he charged Solomon to follow the commands of God if he wanted security and success for his people, himself, and the future. It would now be up to Solomon to respond to this charge with an open heart, strength and determination, and a humble heart of dependence on God. David handed Solomon the plans for the temple, which God had inspired in him with the full assurance that God would be with him and the people to help them complete the work. With his exercise of humility, David praised God and acknowledged that He alone deserves all the glory and honor for what is about to be accomplished. Solomon was recognized and anointed king the next day, with great fanfare, and he would later emerge as one of Israel’s most glorious kings!

As with David and the people of Israel, if we want to experience God's blessing in our lives, we must be obedient to His commands. After all, God is the One who gives us everything we have, just as He was the One who had provided Israel with the promised land. As long as Israel obeyed God's Word, they possessed and enjoyed the land. The charge that David had passed down to Solomon is the same one passed on to us, "be strong and of good courage." We are to live lives devoted to God with a sincere heart because a divided heart brings fear and a loss of hope. His troubles began when Solomon began to take his eyes off the Lord. It is the same for us. We must keep our eyes on the Lord, for He is the One who guides our path. He promises that when we do, He will remove all fear, restore our hope, and be with us. When the Lord is with us, we will not fail!

- What is your greatest dream?
- What was David's big vision and why did God not allow him to accomplish it?
- What part did God allow for David to have in the building of the temple?
- What might have been on David's mind as he passed his dream on to Solomon for completion?
- What godly dreams and aspirations are you passing on to your descendants?
- What is our part in receiving the promises of God in our text today?

Further Reading: I Chronicles 28:1-21

Friday, September 23, 2022

Read: Hebrews 6:13-20

Scripture Verse: *"Our hope is certain. It is something for the soul to hold on to. It is strong and secure. It goes all the way into the Most Holy Room behind the curtain."* Hebrews 6:19

Today's Thought:

"While attending college, I visited a psychiatric institution with a group of students to observe various types of mental illness. The experience proved to be very disturbing. I remember one man who was called "No Hope Carter." His was a tragic case. A victim of venereal disease, he was going through the final stages when the brain is affected. Before he began to lose his mind, this man was told by the doctors that there was no known cure for him. He begged for one ray of light in his darkness but had been told that the disease would run its inevitable course and end in death. Gradually his brain deteriorated, and he became more and more despondent. When I saw him in his small, barred room about two weeks before he died, he was pacing up and down in mental agony. His eyes stared blankly, and his face was drawn and ashen. Over and over, he muttered these two forlorn and fateful words: "No hope! No hope!" He said nothing else." —Our Daily Bread

I am sure we have all faced a time or two when things looked so bad that we lost all hope for anything good to happen. Maybe you feel that way right now as you look at your life or what's happening in our world. Like the man in our story today, life's circumstances can leave us staring with blank eyes and the words, "no hope, no hope." Life at times can seem hopeless, that's for sure. But the writer of Hebrews seeks to bring light to our darkness and hope to our hopelessness. The Hebrew author balances a warning of falling away and losing hope in the faith (5:11-6:8) with words of encouragement in today's reading 6:13-20.

Our encouragement comes from placing our trust in God's promises. God had made promises and swore an oath to Himself to fulfill those promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our spiritual patriarchs. We have the written record of the fulfillment of the promises God made to them, which is the basis for our hope today. God's promises sealed with his oath can be banked on because God cannot lie about them. The confidence of our hope rests on the character of God. He will sustain those who place their trust in Him and will bless them. Our hope is sure when we put our faith in God. He has demonstrated that He is faithful

by ministering to our spiritual and physical needs. And only by a lifestyle of obedience and through faith and perseverance can we be sure that we will receive the eternal blessings for which we hope. And it is guaranteed by Jesus' death and resurrection, which makes available the promised benefits for which we hope.

- When was a time in your life that you lost all hope?
- What do we have at our disposal that solidifies our hope in God's promises?
- What is the basis for our hope?
- How does God demonstrate His faithfulness which results in our hope?
- What is the guarantee that God will do what He says?

Further Reading: Genesis 22:17; Luke 1:55; Hebrews 11:12

NOTES



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