

Isaiah Ch42v18-Ch43v1 - God's Promised Saviour

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[0 : 00] Isaiah 42, verse 18 to 43, verse 1.

Isaiah 42, verse 18 to 43, verse 1. And Chris is going to read. Thanks, Chris.

Isaiah 42, verse 18. Hear you deaf, look you blind and see. Who is blind but my servant and deaf like the messenger I send?

Who is blind like the one in covenant with me, blind like the servant of the Lord? You have seen many things, but you pay no attention. Your ears are open, but you do not listen.

It pleased the Lord for the sake of his righteousness, to make his law great and glorious. But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons.

[1 : 32] They have become plunder with no one to rescue them. They have been made loot with no one to say, send them back. Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come?

Who handed Jacob over to become loot and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways.

They did not obey his law. So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand.

It consumed them, but they did not take it to heart. But now, this is what the Lord says. He who created you, Jacob.

He who formed you, Israel. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. You are mine. Thanks so much, Chris.

[2 : 43] Well, let's ask the Lord for his help to us all as we look at his word together. Let's pray. Father, we pray that we will hear your voice clearly.

That you would speak to our hearts afresh. And you would help us to see clearly the wonder of our redeeming God.

Father, do marvelous things in our lives for our good and for your glory.

Amen. Well, over the last couple of Sundays, we've been looking at Isaiah 42, which prepares us for Christmas, the Christmas season.

It's been telling us about God's promise, verse 1, about his servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom I delight.

[4 : 01] God's promise to send a chosen servant. And this chosen servant, verse 13, would be like a champion, like a warrior who will triumph over his enemies.

A servant warrior who will come to renew and restore our lives in this broken world. And this last section that we've just had read to us tells us why we need a savior.

Why we need the servant to come and be our champion warrior. So we're going to look at the last section together. And there's three things, three big ideas that we want to think about as we look at this.

Where we are, how we got here, and how to get out. Okay, where we are, how we got here, and how to get out.

So, where are we? Well, look at verse 22. He says, Pits and prisons.

[5 : 22] Plundered and looted. That's where we are. But you say, hang on a minute. I live in a very nice home, and I have all that I need.

I don't think I've been plundered. What do you mean by being in pits and prisons? Well, let me explain. Remember, Isaiah is a prophet. And he's writing about 750 years before the birth of Christ. And he's also writing about 200 years before the exile of God's people into Babylon. In other words, Isaiah is writing about events way in the future for him.

So look at verse 9. He says, See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare. Before they spring into being, I announce them to you.

So Isaiah is foretelling what is going to happen into the future. Now, if we look back to chapter 39, we will see what has been foretold.

[6 : 39] Chapter 39, verse 5. Here's things he's foretelling that are going to happen. 39, verse 5.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, he was the king of Judah, Hear the word of the Lord Almighty. The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon.

Nothing will be left, says the Lord. You see, plundered and looted. Then verse 7. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, who will be born to you, will be taken away and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

So plundered and looted, made captives, pits and prisons. And all that God had said, go back to 42, through Isaiah, came to pass.

About 200 years later, after writing these words, in 587, the Babylonians swarmed in and attacked Judah, God's people.

[8 : 07] And they were plundered and looted and the people were taken into captivity. They were exiled. And what was worse, look at the second part of verse 22.

They became plundered with no one to rescue them. They had been made loot with no one to say, send them back again.

No one to rescue them from exile. No one to deliver them. They were hopeless and broken.

Geographically, they were displaced.

They were taken off to another land, another location. Politically, they were ruined. Their kings had been taken over. And economically, they were poor. they had become slaves.

Now, this physical reality for God's people, this exile of being in pits and prisons and looted and plundered, is also a picture of the entire human race.

[9 : 16] Because the New Testament writers pick up on this whole theme and remind us and tell us that if we are not Christians, we are exiled from God.

We may be settled in our homes. We can have great jobs. We can be enjoying life. But deep down, the home that we live in, our physical homes, is a reflection of our being exiled from our true home. We can be immersed in our communities. We can be immersed in our clubs. But inside of us, our hearts are restless.

We're always on the move, roaming and searching, looking for something better and greater. And no matter where we go or what we seem to do, we feel this sense of being displaced.

It's like we feel we're a refugee, that we're stuck and we can't get out. We know there must be something better and greater, but we can't seem to get it.

[10 : 26] And what the Bible tells us is, we're actually all in exile. We're away from our true home, our true Father God. We're separated from God and excluded from his presence.

We were created for intimacy, to know him, to enjoy him. But that is now all lost. So it's not just the people way back in Isaiah's time who've been plundered and sent into exile.

That physical exile is a picture of our spiritual exile, separated from God and all that is good.

And the problem is, as it says at the end of verse 22, there's no one to rescue, no one to come and say, bring them back again into their true home.

So where are we? Well, we're in exile. Second, how did we actually get here?

[11 : 37] How did we get to be in a place of exile? Well, in this section of Isaiah, it seems to be two things that tell us why people end in exile.

The first is we're deaf and blind. Look at verse 18. Hear, you deaf, look, you blind, and see.

Who is blind but my servant and deaf like the messenger I send? God had clearly spoken but they remained deaf to his word.

He had clearly acted but they were blind to his ways. You see, about 20 years earlier, their brothers in the north, so there was Israel in the north, Judah in the south, those in the north faced the might of the Assyrians.

That was the power then. And God told them that if they kept rejecting God, they would be exiled. Another nation would come and destroy them.

[12 : 44] But they paid no attention. And just as God said in 722, the Assyrians did come into the north and take Israel off into exile.

Now Isaiah is speaking to his people in the south, in Judah, and he's making it crystal clear. He said, what God said to his brothers, to your brothers, that came true.

They were taken off into exile and they didn't learn the lesson. They remained unchanged. Verse 20, you have seen many things.

You've seen what had happened to your brothers in the north, but you paid no attention. Your ears are open. you heard their cries, but you do not listen.

Now again, the writers of Scripture apply this kind of deaf and blind language to ourselves. We are deaf or can be deaf to God's word.

[13:53] We can be blind to God's ways. You'll know that our daughter here, I did ask Rebecca for her permission to speak about this, that she was born deaf, but she has a cochlear implant that gives her access to hearing.

Now when she was very young and I was trying to get her attention, I would shout at her and call her and Rebecca don't do that. And if she didn't want to listen, she would just simply take off her cochlear implant and then mouth to me, I can't hear you.

And then I'd turn around and say, but Rebecca watch my lips, don't do that, you can see. And then she'd close her eyes and mouth and say, I can't see you.

Now that is what we have done, isn't it? Isn't that a picture of the world? That we have been blind to God's ways. We have been deaf to all that God has said.

And look how God responds to all of this death and blindness as we refuse to listen. He says we are handed over.

[15:12] God takes decisive action. Verse 24. Who handed Jacob over to become loot and Israel to the plunderers?

Yes, there was Assyria. Yes, there were the Babylonians, nations who were going and doing about their own business. But there was more to it than that. Look at the rest of verse 24.

Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways. They did not obey his law.

You see, the nations did come in and take people off into exile, but working through all those acts was the Lord. He was taking them into exile.

Not just physically, but it was a reminder that spiritually they have drifted far from him. Now, haven't we heard this kind of story before?

[16:15] Isn't this what happened at the very beginning of the world with the first man and first woman? God again had spoken his word. He had showed them how to live, but they were deaf to God, blind to his ways, and as a result they were shut out of the garden, exiled from God's presence and blessing, living in a world that is cursed, a life of being enslaved to living their own way and fearing death.

God had handed Adam and Eve over to exile. And so that pattern has continued. What happened in the garden, what happened with Judah has been the same for every living person on this planet.

Here's how the Apostle Paul puts it in Romans 1. He says the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth.

They know the truth but they want to keep it down. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him.

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator who is forever praised.

[17:49] Amen. You see, we have all blocked our ears to God's words. We have all closed our eyes to God's ways.

And that is the reason why we end up in exile separated from our true home. You see, exile isn't just kind of something that has happened.

it is God's decisive action. Look at the end of verse 24 again. For they would not follow his ways, they did not obey his law, so he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war.

it enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand. It consumed them, but they didn't take it to heart. You see, this isn't God just having a bad day.

He's not a grumpy old man on Stephen's day who's losing his temper with all the kids who are having great fun. God's fear in just response to a world that continues to push him out.

[19:01] God will not go on letting us ruin our own lives and destroying the world we're in. He will take action and what happened then is a picture of what is going to happen in the future.

The Lord Jesus will come again and he will judge. It wasn't an easy message for Isaiah to communicate and it's not an easy message for us to communicate or to even hear.

But sometimes we must face up to the reality of how God sees the world and how he sees it from his perspective and not our own.

So where are we? Well if we're unbelievers we're in exile. How did we get here? By being deaf to God's word and blind to God's ways.

So how do we get out? How do we get out of the mess that we're in? How do we if we are Christians help others get out of the mess that we are in?

[20 : 18] Well as we look at the last verse chapter 43 verse 1 it's a wonderful summary of all that God has done for us to how we get out.

First there is God's gracious intervention. Chapter 43 verse 1. But now look at all that's taken place but now something new is going to happen.

Something different. This is what the Lord says. He who created you Jacob. He who formed you. God is going to speak into the situation.

You may have no one to rescue you from your exile. No one is going to send you back home. But I am coming and I will bring you back to your land.

And that's what God would do if we were to read on in Isaiah. We would see that God would raise up Cyrus from another nation and he would bring them back to their own land again.

[21 : 30] But again these are all pictures and all helping us to see of what God is going to do in the future. He is going to come. and rescue his people.

He will intervene through his son the Lord Jesus Christ. Have a look with me please to Luke chapter 4.

Luke chapter 4. chapter 4. Here Jesus takes the words of Isaiah.

Not from Isaiah 42 but from Isaiah 60 but it's speaking of similar themes. Luke chapter 4 verse 17. Jesus is in the synagogue and he stood up to read verse 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

[22 : 41] Unrolling it he found the place where it is written the spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind to set the oppressed free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Then he rolled up the scroll gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Let's go back to Isaiah 42. You see Jesus is saying all that Isaiah was speaking about I am the fulfilment of all of that.

You're looking for physical restoration to bring you back to the land but I'm here to do something bigger and greater. I have come to restore you from your exile from God your father to bring you back into right relationship.

[23 : 59] That's why chapter 42 verse 7 the servant verse 7 will open eyes that are blind to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

You see Jesus comes to announce good news that he will enable us to see his ways and to hear his words to set people free from their exile to bring them back to their new home their true home but now God is intervening and he doesn't wait for the nation to turn to God God intervenes before they have a chance to reach out to him and it's the same for us in the middle of our stubbornness and refusal to hear and listen God graciously intervenes in our life to save and to rescue so first there is God's gracious intervention through his son second there's God's loving redemption again look at chapter 43 first one we'll read it all but now this is what the

Lord says he who created you he who formed you do not fear for I have redeemed you God is going to come and rescue his people to redeem them from exile in fact God is going to bring about another exodus because remember when God's people were in Egypt this was another time it seems their entire life their history was in slavery in one way or another way back at the beginning they were in Egypt slaves in captivity and God said he would come and redeem them and the way in which they were redeemed from their slavery in Egypt was to walk through the Red Sea do you remember the waters were piled up on either side so that God's people could walk out of slavery to the promised land and then as they got through the pursuing

Egyptians the water came in on top of them and they were drowned! Now God is saying to them I'm going to bring an exodus to you I'm going to bring you out of exile in a way that you could never

imagine look at verse 2 when you pass through the waters I will be with you when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you you see Isaiah is looking way back to the exodus that had happened and now he's pointing them forward to the future and saying a time is coming it's all future tense isn't it I will be with you when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you God is going to do something great in leading his people out not just of a political or economical situation but of something spiritual to restore and to renew

I'm going to bring you out of exile to your new home an eternal home why would God do that well look at verse four here's the reason since you are precious and honored in my sight and because I love you God loved his people and God loves us he's heard what we have said he's seen what we have done and yet he still loves us he intervenes into our life to redeem us so that he can say verse two do not fear for I have redeemed you it's as if it's already taken place it's not I will redeem you but I have redeemed you

[28 : 27] I've already done it before you have a chance to respond I've come and made it all possible because I love you I have redeemed you so God graciously intervenes to bring a redemption and then third God's joyful adoption of those who he redeems look at the end of verse one of chapter 43 I have summoned you by name and you are mine it's a picture of adoption and of welcoming back those who had been separated from him I remember when I was in school being summonsed by the head master I don't know if you've ever had that experience in the middle of one of the classes the head master came in and just called out grant in the office that was an experience of fear

I took my time walking over to delay the inevitable well here's the good news God is not like that he sees us as child refugees separated excluded lost he summons us he calls us to himself because we are homeless living in fear living in exile and he calls us by name and with a fatherly embrace says you are mine forever you see God is the true servant the true champion warrior who has come to rescue people like us from exile to bring us to our true home back into relationship with the father to receive from him all the blessings of life he intervenes he redeems and he adopts turn with me as we close to

Isaiah 65 verse 17 just to give a glimpse of the true home that we are all waiting for and longing for Isaiah 65 verse 17 see I will create new heavens and a new earth the former things will not be remembered nor will they come to mind but be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy I will rejoice over Jerusalem I will take delight in my people the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days or an old man who does not live out his years the one who dies at a hundred will be sought a mere child!

the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed! It's beautiful poetic language to explain their life will go on forever and forever and all things will be restored!

Verse 25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together the lion will eat straw like the ox and dust will be the serpent's food they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain says the Lord.

[32 : 31] Here is our loving redeemer who comes to bring us back from exile through a greater exodus to know that wonderful joyful adoption of our true home to come.

Let's pray. Our Father God we thank you for your wonderful intervention through your son the Lord Jesus.

Thank you that you have come to redeem us to set us free to bring us home and into relationship with you so that we may enjoy you and know you and live with hope for the new creation to come.

Father would you help us as we leave and as we separate as we go to friends and family and into our community that we would be those who bring a message of hope of God's intervention and redemption a father who will embrace and welcome all who will turn to him.

father would you please work in us and through us we pray in Jesus name amen we're going to sing together all people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice out