

Glimpses of Glory God's Victory

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[0 : 00] We have spent two months in the book of Isaiah and covered about two-thirds of the chapters. Have you caught a glimpse of God's glory and grace yet?

We have passed through the junction of chapter 39 where Isaiah addresses God's people as they face the imminent threat of the Assyrian emperor, Aidan.

Thank you. And we passed this junction to where now Isaiah addresses God's people as refugees in exile from chapter 40 onward.

We have seen glimpses of God's glory and grace through God's holiness, present kingship, rules, judgment, rest, delivery, and arrival.

Please visit our webpage or our YouTube channel to revisit those sermons until you see them, until you see the glory of God, the God's glory and grace, especially if you recently joined us or watching us online.

[1 : 08] As Tim Chester very helpfully summarized for us in this book, we need to study Isaiah at least for the following seven reasons.

It enlarges our view of God, enriches our love for Christ, sharpen our understanding of salvation, illuminates our Bible reading, comforts our fear and sorrows, excites our vision for the church, and fuels our commitment to mission.

These are what you can and should look for as you read Isaiah. More than any other book in the Old Testament, Isaiah forms a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And only hearing a 20 to 30 minute sermon each Sunday will not be enough for you to see that and to appreciate this link.

So please pick up your Bible during the week and read Isaiah for yourself. You can buy this book by Tim Chester called Isaiah for You, or you can also use this study guide with guided questions for your reflection as you read.

[2 : 15] We can email this to you if you give us your detail using the link in our description in the live stream, or just fill in the form in the iPad outside on our Connect desk.

Today, I hope to show you God's glory and grace in his victory as we look into chapter 43 in more detail. So please turn your Bible to chapter 43 or open our St. Paul's app.

You'll find in chapter 43 themes that contain throughout chapter 40 to 48. The chapter can be divided into two sessions.

Both sessions start up with the new Exodus. The former session followed by God in child, and the later session, human in child. And that will be the structure of today.

The Exodus language appears in verse 1 to 7 and 14 to 21, starting both sessions saying, this is what the Lord says, and finishing with God mentioning the people he formed.

[3 : 27] They both refer to God as our Creator, Redeemer, and the Holy One. God led his people out of Egypt through the water and river into the promised land.

He wiped out their enemy and provided food and water for them. He will do it again about 70 years after their exile to Babylon.

It's around 200 years from when God's people initially heeded these promises of delivery. God redeemed his people from slavery in Egypt to form a new nation.

The same promise and operation will take place in the future. God will gather his people back to him through a new Exodus. God sent his people into exile as judgment against their sin, for they will not follow his way.

They do not obey his law. But the gathering is not just referring to the return of God from Babylon. God will gather his people from the east and west, north and south, from the end of the earth.

[4 : 43] The promise of a new Exodus, the delivery from God's judgment, is not just for God's people in Isaiah's time. God will show his mercy and grace and keep redeeming for his glory.

And most remarkably, he says, I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Since you are precious and honor in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.

God loves the people he created for his glory, whom he formed and made.

He will continue to give people a nation in exchange for them. God accomplished the new Exodus by doing an exchange, substituting one for the other.

In the book of John in the New Testament, it tells us that the person that God gave up in exchange for us and to give us new life is Jesus.

[5 : 54] John 3.16 says, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whomever believed in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise of a more significant, better Exodus from slavery and death. God promised in Isaiah 43.19 that, I am making a way in the wilderness and a stream in the wasteland.

Jesus, in John 14, referred to himself as the way, the truth, and the life. In both John 4.7, Jesus referred to himself as the living water that will quench all human thirst.

The writers of the New Testament see Jesus as a redeemer who set us free to lead us back to God. Last Sunday, when we looked into Isaiah 40, we highlighted how Mark's gospel began to announce the end of exile and how Jesus was referred to as the Passover lamb.

Based on Isaiah's proclamation of God's promise, writer in the New Testament could interpret what Jesus accomplished as the ultimate Exodus of liberation from sin and death.

[7 : 22] Throughout the New Testament, the work of Jesus is described using New Exodus language. At the Transfiguration in Luke chapter 9, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke about Jesus' departure, which in Greek means Exodus.

Luke's account of the Last Supper in chapter 22 referenced the Passover lamb, Passover because Jesus is a true Passover lamb whose blood redeemed us from sin and protect us from death.

Paul and Peter also wrote their letters with the Exodus model in mind. God's people were given a promise of hope that their exiles of judgment will come to an end.

This promise is also offered to us with the same intimacy as spoken in verse 2 to 5 in Isaiah 43. Maybe you feel like you're sinking or being overwhelmed by life or you're feeling the heat of all the troubles that are happening.

If the thought of God coming to you scares you more than bringing you joy, maybe there is something in your past that caused you to worry about whether God still loves you.

[9 : 01] God is telling you to forget the formal things. Do not dwell in the past. See, I am doing a new thing. Now it's springing up. Do you not perceive it.

The past is helpful for certain things, which I will talk about later. But God has repeatedly reminded his people to forget the formal things and not to dwell on the past because many of God's people often have eyes but are blind, have ears but are deaf, as stated in verse 8.

Human do not perceive the work of God in their life and the world because humans have a very small and limited view of God.

We do not see God as who he is. So God is taking a nation to court. We do not see... He put himself on trial, bringing accusation against the other gods and ideology of the world, ultimately challenging our perception of him.

All the nations gather together in the people's assembly, which of their gods foretold this and proclaim to us the former things. Let them bring in their weakness to prove they are right so that others may hear and say it is true.

[10 : 29] God lays out the evidence of his credentials in verse 10 to 13, and this is what he says. I am the creator. Before me, no God was formed, nor will there be one after me.

All other gods or ideologies are man-made. God goes into details in chapter 40 to 46 as to the foolishness and delusion of those who create idols of God's creation.

He goes on to say, I am the savior. Apart from me, there's no savior. God alone can save. I am not some foreign god among you. Even though God's people often mistake others to be their savior, but in reality, it was God who has saved them.

God is a revealer. I have revealed and proclaimed. God has spoken through his prophets, his son, and in his word. Only God can talk about the future.

Which of their gods foretold this and proclaim to us the former things? God alone is a true God because he can predict the future, and he can predict the future because he determines the future.

[11 : 49] God is a sovereign king. No one can deliver me, deliver out of my hand when I ask who can reserve it.

No God can undo the work of God throughout the history of mankind. God alone is the creator, savior, revealer, and king.

No one else can create, recreate, save, reveal, and reign. God is unique, and there's no other like him.

He's mighty to save and worthy of all of our following and praise. Is that how you see God? What kind of God are you presenting to the world?

When people look at your life, is God just like any other idol people use to fill in their life? Like some vending machine that you put in your good deeds in exchange for comfort and peace.

[12 : 59] These are essential questions because God has chosen us to be his servant and witness. God's people are living proof that God and God alone can save.

You are my witness and my servant whom I have chosen so that you might know and believe me and understand that I am he. You are my witness that I am God, yes, and from ancient days I am he.

What you tell or show people about your experience of God in your daily life, in your testimony you give, in how you treat your colleagues, classmates, neighbors, and friends are all the reviews that you provide for God before humanity.

Testifying to God before humanity is a role of Christian and God's church. No matter how long you have been a Christian, whether on a staff team or as a leader, Christians are chosen to be God's witness without exception.

God has done what no other God can do and what he has done no other God can undo. If God has trusted you to witness for him, why spend so much time thinking, am I good enough to do the job?

[14 : 21] God has chosen you and knows what he can do with you. It's a worry about whether you will do a good job, more of a concern about saving your faith and looking competent before people than helping others to catch glimpses of God's glory and grace.

If the creator, savior, revealer, and king has faith in you as his witness, your most appropriate response will only be putting your faith in him and asking him to help you to get the job done.

So many of us treat God and the role he gives us like the people in Isaiah's time, allowing other things to weary us and see everything as a burden but not bother to ask God for help.

Yet, you have not called on me, Jacob. You have not weary yourself for me, Israel. God's demand are not burdensome. He knows what we can handle at different stages of our life.

God says in verse 23, I have not burdened you with grain offering, nor weary you with demands for incense. But God states in verse 24 that the main issue is not on his side but what humanity is doing with our life.

[15 : 53] You have burdened me with your sins and weary me with your offenses. It's not God's demand that are burdensome but our action, our way of life, and our attitude regarding sins and towards God that need to be examined.

So, after putting himself on trial, God now put humanity on trial to address the accusation against him and put the record straight.

Refill the past for me. Let's argue the matters together. Stay the case for your innocence. As I say, the past is helpful to a certain point.

It's helpful as a reference point for us to see what God has done and reveal how we have treated God. And when humans do, what does humanity have to show for their innocence?

Very little. There's no case for human, humanity is in innocence. Your first father sinned, those I sent to teach you rebels against me.

[17 : 06] Since Adam rebels against God, the world is broken by sin and everything is falling apart. Looking through history, no one could support the case of innocence, not even Abraham, whom God credited as righteous.

And the final verdict on humanity is destruction as mentioned in verse 28. Destruction is what humanity deserves, but that's not the end of God's trial of humankind.

There's a crucial first before God calls us to reveal the past that we need to look at. God says in verse 25, I, even I, am the one who brought out your transgression for my own sake. And remember your sin no more. As I have explained earlier, before God examines our case of inevitable defeat, even before any evidence is presented, and with such an undeniable verdict, God already has a substitution to take our place.

Jesus steps into humanity and takes our place in the judgment. There will be a final day of judgment, but for God's people, the trial is over.

[18 : 23] It's done and dusted with the death and resurrection of Jesus, with the judgment falling on Jesus and him taking our place. God blocked out our transgression and remembers our sin no more.

In Romans 4, 25, it says, he was delivered over to death for our sins and was straight to life for our justification. The not guilty verdict has already been delivered.

The examination is over and we have passed with full marks because we got the grade that Jesus deserved. In verse 25 tell us that God blocks out our transgression for his own sake.

God sent Jesus for our sake to meet our need for a redeemer. But he also sent Jesus for his own sake that is to reveal his glory and grace.

God promised not to remember your sins no more and that's all the more reason why we should forget the former things and do not dwell on the past. So don't be better at remembering your sin than God is.

[19 : 39] Jesus gave the best witness of God's glory and grace of how much God loves you and me. God says in verse 10 you are my witness and my servant whom I have chosen so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.

The more you witness and serve God in your life and by your proclamation the more you will know and believe and understand that God is true and it's your heavenly father who treasure and loves you.

After the pastor and theologian Tim Keller passed away a few years ago many people wrote tribute about his impact on them. Trish Warren a New York Time columnist said Tim Keller showed her what a Christian leader should be.

witness Tim Keller in a public debate with a secular humanist in her early twenties. At one moment Keller's opponent struggled with the point he was making and was fair and clear.

Keller did not go in for the cue making his opponent look foolish instead he paused and asked is this what you mean? Restating and strengthening the argument more precisely before his countering.

[21 : 06] She says this in her tribute this generosity and understanding towards those with whom we disagree helped shape the way I now see the world.

It had more of an impact on me as a Christian than any argument could. Keller refused to easily refuse the easy route of debate insisting on finding the best argument of others even it means strengthening his opponent's case.

He was in pursuit for truth and kindness not point scoring. That night I saw what Christian leaders should be like. With his life Tim Keller testified to God's victory through Christ to the world.

We are not Tim Keller and many of us rarely engage in public debate. However we interact with many people daily having different conversations and discussions with others and most of time with ourselves.

At all those moments take comfort and hope in God's glory and grace to treat the past and God in the proper perspective.

[22 : 24] Remember the victory God has accomplished through Jesus' exodus for us all. And be God's witness that we belong to God's family in God's present and God's future.

May God bless you and keep you. Thank you.