**The Book of Isaiah V**

**God Saves a Remnant**

Last week: Comfort for God’s People

Isaiah 40:1-2 Comfort, Comfort my people… Her hard service has been completed. Her sin has been paid for. Now I come to save my remnant.

With the resurgence of Covid 19.

With the disastrous earthquake in Haiti.

With Afghanistan falling into Taliban hands.

v. 3-5 A straight way in the desert. Valleys raised, mountains flattened. God is clearing the way for us to come into the kingdom.

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

v. 6-8 Cry out! All people are like grass… but the word of the Lord endures forever.

v. 14 Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?

v. 15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket. Like dust.

Russia is a dustspeck.

China is a drop in the bucket.

v. 17 The US is a regarded as “worthless and less than nothing” compared to our God.

Do not rely on nations or politicians or governments to save you.

So… Whom and what are you trusting in for your strength? Don’t be like Ahaz who trusted in Assyria. Be like Hezekiah who trusted in God.

40:28-31. Do you not know? Have you not heard? Have you forgotten who God is?

Have you grown tired or weary lately? V. 31 Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

Isaiah 44-45, 49 God will save a remnant.

Isaiah 44:6-20 The foolishness of idols Idols vs. YHWH

How do we know God has power, and the idols do not?

Background:

God foretold the events prophesied in Isaiah many times.

Deut 28:15… Deut 28:49-52

But… Deut 30:1-6 v. 3 Restore. Here is that remnant who will return

Similarly, Isaiah 39:5-7 But Isaiah 10:20-21 a remnant will return

And Jeremiah 25:8-11 But 25:12-14 and 29:10-14

When God says it, that is exactly what will happen.

In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael as hostages

In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and killed Zedekiah.

But 70 years later in 536 BC Cyrus the Persian defeated Babylon, virtually without firing a shot, and sent Judah back to rebuild the temple.

Ezra 1:1-4 Cyrus sends a remnant to return. Remember that name.

70 years after the temple was destroyed, it was rebuilt under Haggai, Zerubbabel and Joshua.

The point for us: God will do the same for you and for those we meet.

When God proposes, he disposes.

This is the background to Isaiah 44-45.

Is 44:6-8 I am the alpha and the omega—the first and the last. I am the only God!

v. 7 Let the “gods” foretell what will come.

Anyone want to guess what will happen in Afghanistan the next few years?

What about the winner of the superbowl—and stake your entire reputation on it?

Jean Dixon…

v.8 Is there any God besides me? I am the only rock!

I know not one!!!

Is there any other rock? What about the economy? What about your good looks? What about your new romantic relationship?

This is our God. The ONLY God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

v. 9-20 A diatribe about the foolishness of idols. Much sarcasm. Elijah: maybe Baal is sleeping. Wake him up!

v. 15 some he uses to warm himself, and some he use to fashion a god and worship it.

Oh, but we are so much more sophisticated with our idols

v. 19 Think! Does any of this make sense? Half for a god, half for fuel.

v. 20 the idols are delusions. The world is delusional with its idols of wealth, fame, pleasure, military power, physical fitness,…

They think that they can make God!

Is 44:21-23

v. 21 They make idols. I made you! I will not forget you.

v. 22 I sweep away your sins. So return to me! Has anyone else done that?

v. 23 Shout for joy oh heavens and earth, mountains and forests. I have redeemed Israel.

How great is YHWH?

44:26-28 He is the one who is able to call Cyrus 120 years before he is born!!!

170 years before the prophecy is fulfilled. He will call Cyrus.

Cyrus will say to Judah: Reinhabit Jerusalem. Rebuild Judah. Restore the cities.

v. 28 Cyrus told Judah: Let the foundation of the temple be laid.

This is confirmed in the Cyrus Cylinder and in Ezra 1:1-4.

Remember how in Is 44:7-8 God said he is the one who can foretell what will happen. Can any other god do this?

Here is God’s message to you: v. 26 I will restore your life. V. 28 Let it be rebuilt.

He says to the BCOC “Let its foundations be laid!” Let it be rebuilt!

Isaiah 45:1-7 Who is Cyrus, symbolically/prophetically? He is a prefigure of the Messiah.

v. 1 He is God’s anointed (literally messiah) He is the one God uses to set his people free. Cyrus did not even believe in God, yet God used him.

v. 2 to level the mountains (so my people can come home)

This is what Jesus did.

Why would God do this? v. 3 “so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel who summons you by name.

v. 4 Why? For the sake of my servant Jacob. For us.

v. 6 so that “people may know that there is none besides me. I am the Lord and there is no other.”

v. 7 As for Cyrus and his career, “I do all these things.” Amazing.

Is 45:9-13

v. 9 Does the clay say to the potter, “What are you making?”

Q: Who is the potter? He is the one who will raise up Cyrus.

v. 13 I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free. Cyrus is the new Moses.

Isaiah 49:1-7 God will use Jesus to save a remnant.

v. 1 “Listen to me” (the only time in the OT) Rem: God on Mt of Transfiguration: Listen to him. a messianic passage

v. 1 The “islands” are the nations.

v. 1 Before I was born the Lord called me… v. 5 He who formed me in the womb.

v. 3 Israel has failed as servant, so Messiah is the personification of Israel.

The Father had this plan in mind from the beginning. Jesus is the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth (Rev 13:8)

What will Messiah do?

v. 5 ….to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself.

v. 6 to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept—the remnant.

v. Also a light to the Gentiles…. To the ends of the earth.

Q: What did Jesus do for you?

Q: Where did Jesus rescue you from?

v. 7 Jesus, the one despised and abhorred by the Jews.

Jesus, the servant of rulers

Isaiah 49:8-18 God is restoring a remnant of Israel.

v. 8 Jesus is restoring the remnant to the land—to the kingdom.

v. 9a You were a captive to sin. But Jesus said to you, Come out! Be free!

What did Jesus call you out from?

What did Jesus free you from?

v. 9b-13

v. 9b pasture on every barren hill

v. 10 no more spiritual hunger or thirst.

v. 10 compassion on them.

v. 10 lead them to springs of water.

v. 11 prepare a smooth road to the kingdom.

v. 12 all nations, North, South, East, West. Taft, Tehachapi, Shafter, Porterville

v. 13 comfort. We have come full circle.

So, you Christian, shout for joy!

v. 14 But, despite all that God did, Zion felt forsaken and forgotten.

v. 15-16 God’s loving compassion as a mother for her children. “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast, and not have compassion on her infant?”

Response: Impossible!!! Even if the mother would forget, I would not forget you, O Israel/church/Christian

v. 16 You are engraved in the palm of my hand. I never forget you!!!

I will take you back. Only return to me.

Isaiah 49:18-26 v. 18-20 Look! Your children gather around. This is our spiritual children—our spiritual fruit. Though you were a spiritual ruin and desolate. The land will be too small to contain you.

This passage is about evangelism. Can you envision God using you to bring many to Him?

v. 21 We were bereaved, barren, exiled and rejected and alone!!!!

v. 22 But God will lift up a banner and we will come.

v. 22-23 your children will be saved. You will have kings and queens as spiritual offspring/parents. Your evangelism will be wildly successful.

v. 23 Are they literally going to be licking the dust at your feet? ☺.

v. 26 Then all will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and Redeemer. When you bear bounteous fruit for God.

God says to the “idols” I am the only God. There is none beside me.

Who else can raise up nations and tear them down?

My purpose? To restore you. To free you from captivity.

I will flatten the mountains and raise the valleys.

Cyrus will do this.

Messiah Jesus will do this.

I will do this.

Will you not come back and be restored ?