

Redemption

Redemption From Exile



SESSION 5

- SESSION 1** **Redemption From Enslavement**
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When Israel ends up in exile, God communicates through Israel's prophets to promise redemption, declaring that he will reclaim his estranged children from the oppressive power of Babylon. He will redeem them and bring them home.

What does redemption look like for the Israelites sent into Babylonian exile?

Literary Design

Isaiah 43:1 uses the Hebrew verb *ga'al* to describe God redeeming Israel from exile. As we noted in Session 1, the verbal action of *ga'al* focuses on repossessing people back into their original families. 16

Notice that the passage begins and ends by saying that God has “created” and “formed” the Israelites (Isa. 43:1, 7). In verse 6, God describes them as his “sons” and “daughters”—the Israelites belong to God’s family. And in the center of the poem, God describes his parental delight in them: “You are precious in my eyes ... and I love you”

God’s delivering act of redemption involves returning human beings that he formed and created not just back to their land but also back to himself.

Historical Context

In Isaiah 43:1-3, God says that he gives Egypt as a “ransom” (Hebrew: *kopher*) when he “redeems” (*ga’al*) Israel from Babylon. This could refer back to the Egyptians who died when they resisted God’s command to free the Israelites at the exodus (Exod. 12:29-32, 14:26-29). Or it could point forward to Egypt’s defeat at the hands of Cyrus the Persian in the 6th century B.C.E. Either way, Egypt’s historic downfall symbolically represents God’s unstoppable power to oppose and ultimately end all oppressors (see Isa. 2:12-22).

Hyperlink Summary

Weaving strong exodus connections into his poetry, Isaiah helps his readers envision God’s plan to rescue Israel from Babylonian exile. Echoing the exodus from Egypt, Israel will once more pass through waters without being harmed and navigate wild deserts without being thirsty (Isa. 43:1-7, 48:20-21; see Exod. 14:1-31, 15:22-25, 17:1-7). The same God who once split the Red Sea—which Isaiah pictures as a raging sea dragon—will also make a way for his people out of life-threatening Babylonian exile (Isa. 51:9-11).

Read Scripture

Isaiah 43:1-7

Israel’s Only Savior

⁴³ 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.

² 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.
³ For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush and Seba in your stead.
⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my sight,
and because I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—
⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

Isaiah 44:21-23

²¹ "Remember these things, Jacob,
for you, Israel, are my servant.
I have made you, you are my servant;
Israel, I will not forget you.
²² I have swept away your offenses like a cloud,
your sins like the morning mist.
Return to me,
for I have redeemed you."
²³ Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this;
shout aloud, you earth beneath.
Burst into song, you mountains,
you forests and all your trees,
for the Lord has redeemed Jacob,
he displays his glory in Israel.

Isaiah 51:9-11

⁹ Awake, awake, arm of the Lord,
clothe yourself with strength!

Awake, as in days gone by,
as in generations of old.

Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces,
who pierced that monster through?

¹⁰ Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made a road in the depths of the sea
so that the redeemed might cross over?

¹¹ Those the Lord has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.

Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Summary of Isaiah 43:1-7

In this beautiful oracle of comfort, God speaks directly to His people Israel (addressed as Jacob) during a time of judgment and exile. He reassures them with tender, personal words:

- **Do not fear** — because **God has redeemed** (bought back and set free) them.
- God has **called them by name** and declared, **“You are mine.”**
- He promises His **presence and protection** through every danger: waters and rivers will not overwhelm them; fire and flames will not harm them.
- God identifies Himself as **the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.**
- Israel is **precious, honored, and deeply loved** in God’s sight — so valuable that He is willing to give other nations in exchange for their deliverance.
- God vows to **gather** His scattered people (sons and daughters) from every direction of the earth and restore them, because they were created and formed for **His glory.**

Key Themes

- **Redemption and Belonging:** God’s people belong to Him personally — not because of their perfection, but because of His gracious act of redemption.
- **God’s Presence in Trials:** The “waters” and “fire” symbolize overwhelming trials and suffering. God does not promise to remove every hardship, but He promises to be **with** His people and protect them through it.
- **God’s Unshakable Love:** The passage is filled with intimate language of love, value, and ownership (“you are mine,” “I love you,” “precious in my sight”).
- **Restoration and Glory:** God will regather His people from exile for His own glory.

This section (part of “Second Isaiah”) shifts from earlier messages of judgment to powerful words of hope and salvation. It reminds God’s people that their identity, security, and future rest entirely in Him.

These verses are often cherished for personal encouragement today — they speak powerfully to anyone facing fear, hardship, or a sense of being scattered or lost.

Summary of Isaiah 44:21-23

God calls on His people (addressed as Jacob/Israel) to **remember** the foolishness of idolatry (from the previous verses) and to remember who they truly are: **God’s servant**, formed and chosen by Him. He assures them, “**I will not forget you.**”

Then comes the heart of the message: God has completely **forgiven** and **blotted out** their sins — sweeping them away like a passing cloud or morning mist. He invites them to **return** to Him because **He has redeemed** (bought back and set free) them.

The passage ends with a joyful outburst of praise: All of creation — heavens, earth, mountains, and forests — is called to **sing and shout** because the Lord has redeemed Jacob/Israel and displayed His glory through them.

Key Themes

- **Remembering vs. Forgetting:** Israel must remember God’s truth and their identity; God promises He will never forget them.
- **Complete Forgiveness:** Sin is not just covered — it is swept away entirely.
- **Redemption:** God Himself has paid the price to rescue and restore His people.
- **Joyful Praise:** Redemption leads to celebration that echoes throughout all creation.

This short section serves as a beautiful turning point after God mocks the absurdity of idols. It offers hope, forgiveness, and restoration to a people in exile because of their sin — emphasizing that God’s grace and redeeming love are greater than their failures.

These verses beautifully complement the earlier passage you asked about (Isaiah 43:1-7), continuing the strong theme of God’s personal care, redemption, and unwavering commitment to His people.

Summary of Isaiah 51:9-11

In this passionate prayer, God’s people (or the prophet speaking on their behalf) urgently cry out to the “**arm of the Lord**” — a poetic way of calling on God’s mighty power — to **wake up** and act with the same strength He showed in the past.

They recall two great acts of deliverance:

- God **defeated Rahab** (a symbolic name for Egypt, pictured as a chaotic sea monster or dragon) and **pierced the monster**.
- God **dried up the sea** (the Red Sea) and made a path through the deep waters so the redeemed Israelites could escape Egypt safely.

Because God displayed such power before, the people express confident hope: The **ransomed (rescued) of the Lord** will one day **return** from exile to Zion (Jerusalem). They will come **singing with joy**, wearing **everlasting joy** like a crown. All sorrow and sighing will disappear forever.

Key Themes

- **Remembrance of God’s past power:** The Exodus from Egypt (defeating Pharaoh/Egypt and parting the Red Sea) is used as a foundation for faith in the present crisis (Babylonian exile).
- **Urgent appeal to God:** The repeated “Awake, awake!” is not because God is literally sleeping, but a bold, faith-filled plea for Him to show His strength again.
- **Hope of future redemption:** What God did at the Red Sea, He will do again — bringing His people home with triumphant joy and the complete removal of suffering.

This short, powerful section fits into Isaiah 51’s theme of comfort for those in exile. It encourages God’s people not to fear their oppressors but to trust in the same God who conquered the sea and its “dragon.” The imagery of joy replacing sorrow echoes earlier promises in Isaiah (such as 35:10) and points forward to ultimate redemption.

These verses beautifully continue the themes of redemption and restoration you’ve been reading about in Isaiah 43–44.