

Help Is on the Way

What's It All About?

Morgan stood before the judge. She trembled as she held her younger brothers' hands. She glanced at Thomas and Michael and whispered, "Shh. This is important." They stopped squirming as she looked at the judge. Morgan thought, Today we become Johnsons. No more foster care. No more wondering how long before we move again or get separated.

Judge Wilhite looked directly at Morgan as she spoke. "Morgan, you are the oldest. I believe you are old enough to make this decision. Do you want to be

adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson today?"

Morgan surprised herself when tears filled her eyes and she whispered, "Yes." Morgan took a deep breath and began again, "Yes. That's what I want for my brothers and me. We love the Johnson family, and they love us."

"Then it's settled. You are now Morgan, Thomas, and Michael Johnson. You have your forever family!" Judge Wilhite announced.

Later that evening...

Morgan said, "Mama, I love you. When we first moved here, I was afraid. I figured you'd decide that adding three more kids to your family was too much. Besides, we were kind of a mess. I know Tommy and Mike had lots of angry energy. I didn't trust anybody. When Dad started remodeling our new bedrooms, I knew you were different. You introduced us as 'our kids,' just like the others. You chose us. You made us feel loved for the first time in a long time."

Morgan snuggled close to Mama. "It feels good to know we have a forever home with you. Like you said, 'God brought us together.' Right?"

"Absolutely," Mama agreed.

In what ways did Morgan and her brothers receive help? Restoration means to make something like new. How did the kids and the Johnson family experience God's restoration?



Learning From God

Isaiah announced that God promises to restore His people. In this Scripture, Isaiah spoke to the people living in his day. The Scripture is also "prophetic." Today, all believers are God's people. These verses read like Jesus is talking to us. God's people could expect everything to change. Where they experienced destruction, God would revive them. Where they felt alone, God would bring many people and restore families. Where they were oppressed, God would bring freedom. Their oppressors would serve them. God promises restoration. Isaiah 49:18–23, NIV—Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children

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gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride.

[V. 18—An amazing change is happening. The Lord says, "Watch. Pay attention."]

19 "Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away.

[V. 19—The desolate, wasted destruction disappears.]

20 The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.' **21** Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these—where have they come from?'" **22** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips.

[V. 22—God welcomes all people.]

23 Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

[V. 23—Kings and queens now know He is the Lord. No one who believes in Him will be ashamed.]

What I Have Learned

Christ brings hope in restoration. What are five results of God's restoration according to Isaiah 49:18–23?

2. _____ 3.

Keep In Mind

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips'" (Isaiah 49:22, NIV).

Choosing What's Best

4.

5. _____

Look at the first letter of each phrase. Draw lines to match the phrases with letters (on the left) that spell RESTORE. What does God do for you?

| R | Telling me I am His |
|---|----------------------------------|
| E | Replacing my fears with His calm |
| S | Encouraging me |
| Т | Equipping me in His Word |
| 0 | Saving me from my sin |
| R | Overcoming my problems |
| E | Rebuilding relationships |

Read the statements aloud. Do you believe them? Put a star next to the way you want God to restore you right now.

Doing My Part

This week, tell one person how much God wants to love and take care of them. Pray for that person to understand how God shows justice and mercy for all His people. With whom will you share this good news this week? Print that person's name here:



Teaching Freedom

What's It All About?

"Who has heard of the Sahara Desert?" asked Mr. Conner, the science teacher.

Blake's hand shot up along with her classmates. Mr. Conner projected images of the Sahara on the wall and explained.

"The Sahara, a word that comes from the Arabic word for 'desert,' is the largest hot desert in the world. It covers 3,600,000 square miles across most of the northern continent of Africa. Long ago, much of the land was green and fertile. Over time the land has changed. Only

2.5 million people try to live in the desert. They survive by clustering near the few areas of water. Their nomadic life is hard. The desert continues to increase as land erodes and vegetation dies out. In 2007, 11 nations bordering the Sahara decided to do something about the land. They created the Great Green Wall project. Its supporters agree to plant trees on the edge of the Sahara and all the way across Africa, from coast to coast." "That's cool," said Blake, just as the bell rang. "I hope it works."

As usual, Blake met her friend Mica on the bus. Blake told Mica about the Great Green Wall.

"Sometimes I wish I lived in a desert. It couldn't be much worse than living in a noisy house filled with arguing," Mica said. "Just think. Peace and quiet. My home is like a wasteland already—an angry one."

Blake thought for a minute as she worked up her courage to respond. What if Mica thinks I'm weird? "Mica, we learn about God's promises at my church. My parents help me understand the Bible, too. God promises to help me all the time. God wants to help you, too. May I pray with you about your situation at home?"

Mica said, "Sure. Who knows? The Great Green Wall is restoring Africa. With your help, the 'Great God Wall' will help me. Will you teach me God's promises?"

What promises from God can Blake share with Mica? A desert is a desolate wasteland. In what ways might Mica's home situation seem like a desert?



Learning From God

Isaiah gave this prophecy about a century before the people of Israel experienced it. God announced that His people, the Israelites, were called for a purpose. He assured them that His justice would be a light to the people. He promised that people who cherished His law in their hearts had no reason to fear insults from others. God will deliver His people. Isaiah wanted people to listen. Three times, verses begin with "hearken," or pay attention, listen, or hear.

Isaiah 51:1–8, NIV—"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn;

[V. 1—God speaks to all people who seek Him.]

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2 look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many.
3 The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

[V. 3—God gives comfort, joy, gladness, and a reason to be thankful.]

4 "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.

[V. 4—God's judgment is a light for people.]

5 My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. **6** Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. **7** "Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have taken my instruction to heart: Do not fear the reproach of mere mortals or be terrified by their insults.

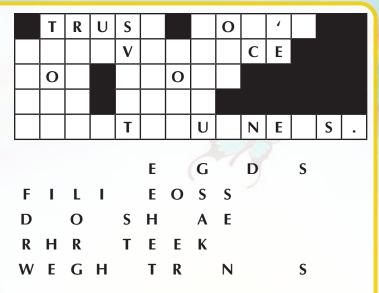
[V. 7—Put the law in your heart, not just your mind.] 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations."

[V. 8—God's salvation lasts forever.]

What I Have Learned

Summarize today's lesson.

Hint: Two important words are "righteousness" and "salvation."



Keep In Mind

"'Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn'" (Isaiah 51:1, NIV).

Choosing What's Best

Read these promises. If you had a friend like Mica, what would you say? Place these words in the correct blanks: guide, strength, afraid, way.

1. Isaiah 30:21 – God will show you the

- 2. Isaiah 40:31 God will give you
- 3. Isaiah 41:13 God will help you when you are
- 4. Isaiah 58:11 God will

_ you.

Doing My Part

Your challenge this week is to choose one of the verses you read today, write it on an index card, and commit it to memory. Then, meditate on that verse and keep it in your heart.