

BETTER DAYS AHEAD

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD'S RESTORED PEOPLE SHALL PROSPER

BASED ON:

Isaiah 49:18–23, NIV

KEY VERSE:

Isaiah 49:23, NIV

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge: Primaries will identify comfort and direction as blessings provided by God.

Attitude: Primaries will recognize that they are blessed and that God will care for them, as they trust Him.

Action: Primaries will play an active game to demonstrate God's restorative power.

DEAR TEACHER

Your primaries will learn that God blesses His people. He brought the Jewish people back to their homeland. We can trust Him to care for us, too.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focus Activity	8.5" x 11" brown piece of cardstock, scissors, tape, white bookmarks (one per child), decorating materials, variety of pictures of plants
Review	Paper streamers, scissors
Worship Time	Flower

OPEN THE LESSON

Focus Activity

Before class: Cut a large flowerpot shape from a piece of cardstock. Near the top middle, cut a horizontal slit slightly larger than two inches. On the day of class, tape the images of plants on a board. When the primaries have arrived, direct their attention to the pictures of plants. Distribute the blank bookmarks and decorating materials. Tell them to design their own plants or flowers, using the images as guides. When they have completed their bookmarks, have the children feed their bookmark up through the slit in the back of the flowerpot.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute the student folders.)

Before reading, survey the children, "What kinds of things do you do in the summer?" Let the children share. Say, "Today's story is about a

girl who was bored. Let's read to find out how she conquered her summer boredom."

While reading, pause after the sentence, "She gave her a lined paper." Ask, "What do you think her sister's idea might be?" Let the children share. Continue reading.

After reading, ask the children, "What does Fannie mean by, 'I won't be bored for a while!'" Say, "Start to think of the good things that God has given to you. Today we are going to read about a whole nation of people that God blessed. Let's see what blessings God gave to them."

Bible Story

Better Days Ahead

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for primary students to read. The Scripture Scene® is provided as a visual aid. Be sure to study the information on this Bible passage in the white pages of the Teacher Guide.

Isaiah is God’s prophet. He spoke God’s words. He gave God’s people hope. He said, “You sinned. God let your country come to ruin. It was emptied. Nothing grew. No people lived there. But God is fixing it. Other countries are caring for you. They have been raising your children. Kings and queens are caring for them! Your country will be beautiful again. It will be like a bride. It will be full of good people. There will be so many children. There will not be room for everyone!”

You wonder, “How did this happen?”

God says, “I am the Lord. I am in control. I care for those who trust Me.”

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Review

Play a game of tag to help the primaries review this week’s lesson.

Before class: Cut paper streamers into five-inch strips.

During class: Designate an area large enough for the children to play. Give half of your students streamer strips. Have them represent God’s people in Babylon by tying the strip around their waist so that a few feet of it hangs off. Have the other children represent the grace that God showed His people by restoring their homeland. They should try to pull the streamers off by the section that is hanging. If weather permits, take your primaries outside. Play at least two rounds, giving all the children an opportunity to represent God’s people in Babylon and God’s restorative power. After the activity, remind the primaries that God provided comfort and direction to His people when He promised to restore them and free them from Babylon.

Memory Verse

“I will lift up my banner to the peoples” (from Isaiah 49:22, NIV).

Use American Sign Language to teach the Memory Verse. For “I,” have your primaries point to themselves. For “lift,” have your primaries put their hands, palm-size up at either hip and then lift them upward. For “my,” have them place one hand on the center of their chest. For “banner,” rest one arm horizontal in front of their belly and place the elbow of their other arm on the fingers of the horizontal arm. Then wave the hand of their

vertical arm as though it is a flag. For “to,” bring index fingers together, one moving down and the other moving upward. For “peoples,” turn each hand downward, creating a sign language “p” with each hand and cycle each hand alternatively, like pushing the pedals on a bike.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Be Smart

Better Days Ahead

Read the directions. Children should circle the sentences that describe what happened after God restored His people. They should place a line through the sentences that describe what happened before God restored His people. They should then write more words God said on the line provided.

Answers: Sentences 2, 4, 5 should be circled; sentences 1, 3, 6 should be crossed out; answers for item 7 will vary but should be something from the Bible Story that does not appear in items 1 through 6.

Good Attitude

I Am Blessed

Read the directions. Children should match the words to the correct images. **Answers:** food (burger and drink); family (boy and girl); friends (group of children); flowers (cluster of flowers); trees (tree); sunshine (sun); animals (horse); music (music notes). Read the sentence on the bottom and let the children share aloud other blessings in their lives.

Worship Time

Seat your primaries on the floor. Sing a song or watch a video about being thankful. Say, “Let’s offer up a prayer to God by sharing aloud something that we are especially thankful for. We are going to pass a flower. When you receive the flower, share what you’re thankful for and then pass the flower to the friend beside you.” Hold the flower and begin the thanksgiving prayer. Pass the flower to a child seated near you. If children need more engagement, you might choose to have them complete the fun banner craft in the *Teaching Success Kit*.

Craft Kingdom®

Craft Kingdom® provides directions to make a craft that reinforces the lesson. Play the *Sing-Along* CD as students work.

God's Restored People Shall Prosper

Bible Background • ISAIAH 49:18–26

Printed Text • ISAIAH 49:18–23 | Devotional Reading • PROVERBS 25:21–26

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will IDENTIFY relationships in which individuals or congregations have experienced God's restoration, FIND comfort in the plans God has for their lives, and PROCLAIM God's justice and mercy for His people.

In Focus

Jakiesha, an accountant, was going through a difficult time in her life. She was angry with God and the church. No one was doing things the way they should, so she thought. She became so angry she refused to pray anymore. She even made the decision to no longer attend church. Lastly, she gave Pastor Fred a piece of her mind.

Concerned, Jakiesha's Gran-gran, persuaded her to come over for dinner one evening. They talked about all God had provided in Jakiesha's life: her safe home, her scholarship to an HBCU, her first job. "What are you even mad about, baby?" Gran-gran asked.

Jakiesha felt ashamed now even mentioning it to her grandmother. "There's just a certain way I know things can be done. The church doesn't want to take the shortcuts I show them, even though—trust me—EVERYONE else saves themselves money that way."

"Baby," Gran-gran said, "I love you, but that sounds like some shady dealings in my book."

Jakiesha couldn't keep up her excuses to her grandmother. God changed her heart. She and her grandmother prayed for forgiveness.

After prayer, Jakiesha told her grandmother, "God has forgiven me and restored me in right relationship with Him. He is a God of justice and mercy and I am a recipient. I'm going to apologize to Pastor Fred and to the entire congregation."

After speaking with Pastor Fred, he told her, "We thank God for answering our prayers. Now that we know you have repented, Jakiesha, we do need an accountant again."

After experiencing difficult challenges, being restored back to God, are you a witness to God's indescribable faithfulness?

Keep in Mind

"And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

(Isaiah 49:23, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV **Isaiah 49:18** Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost

my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

22 Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

The People, Places, and Times

The Progeny Blessing. Having children as heirs to continue the covenant people of God has always been a major theme of God's story with humanity. Scholars call this aspect of God's promise to His people the "progeny blessing." When Abram first arrived in Canaan, God promised to give the land to his descendants, even though at the time, he was 75 years old and had no heir. Later, God again promises Abram an heir of his own flesh and blood, and as many descendants as stars in the sky (Genesis 15:4–5). By the time Abram is 99 years old, he has fathered a son who will indeed become a great nation, but God makes a further promise. Abram will be the father of many nations, and is renamed Abraham. Sarai is renamed Sarah, and named as the one who will mother the child of God's covenant with Abraham. Isaac fulfills this promise. Isaac and Rebekah struggle for many years to have children before God blesses them with twins. The elder son, Esau, fathers his own nation, and the younger son, Jacob, ends

up with four wives. For a time, the favored wife Rachel is concerned that she will not bear, and though she does give birth to two sons, she dies in bearing the second. This gives Jacob a total of 12 sons, who each have multiple children themselves. The nation of Israel blossoms from this point.

The rollercoaster drama of the difficulty of conceiving, bearing, and raising one (let alone many) children is a constant narrative thread from Genesis 12 through chapter 30. It continues to play a large role in later sacred stories of Samson's family, Hannah, Bathsheba, and others. Even in less drastic stories, children are always seen as a blessing from God. Throughout Scripture, Israel can judge if it is being blessed or not by how many children they are having.

In the pre-industrial age, more children meant more workers to help bring in food or trade to help the family survive. Children were their parents' only financial safety net in old age. In an economic system like this, losing

one's children was financially devastating, in addition to being heartbreaking. This is why it is a major theme in the prophecies of returning from exile that they will have many children.

Background

God's people were in captivity because they were obstinate and stubborn (Isaiah 48:4). He told Israel if they disobeyed, He would scatter them. Then He would restore them back (Deuteronomy 30:1–3). God placed His people in a place of affliction (Isaiah 48:10). Through Isaiah, God is speaking to His people with comfort and mercy (Isaiah 48:20; 49:13). He says, "All things begin and end with me" (Isaiah 48:12).

God declares to His people they should flee from the Chaldeans (Isaiah 48:20). This was similar to the charge given their ancestors who had fled from Egypt while depending on God to sustain them (Isaiah 48:21). God's people are given the promise to be released, restored, and prosperous once again. God's people are promised a temporary freedom from their earthly captivity and a permanent freedom through Jesus Christ from captivity of sin. Restoration will be given on the day of salvation. This is in reference to Christ's kingdom when God's people will be restored and prosper (Isaiah 48:8-9).

At-A-Glance

1. Promise of Restoration (Isaiah 49:18-20)
2. Questioning Restoration (v. 21)
3. Confirming Restoration and Prosperity (vv. 22-23)

In Depth

1. Promise of Restoration (Isaiah 49:18–20)

Look all around and see all the people gathering back to the Lord. They are the children of the people of captivity. Coming from many different places to meet in one place, they will make one body and join themselves to glorify God. These words spoken during the exile were intended to encourage God's people. He implies that the land of Judea was lying in waste during the Babylonian captivity. "Thy land of destruction" contrasts with what was to come.

The increase of people will be so great in number. This will come after many have been killed in wars and died in captivity in a faraway land. There will be a great increase as if these children had been given to a widowed mother.

The added people would be a blessing and strength as an ornament to God's people. The Lord wanted to assure them of His commitment to what He was saying. "As I live, saith the LORD" was a solemn promise between God and His people. The bride, wearing fancy jewelry, indicated these children will portray beauty and glorify the Lord.

Likewise, when the people of God were in a wasted, desolate, and unproductive state, there manifested the Savior of the world, the introduction of the Gospel, and the transformation of the Gentiles.

How do we see God fulfilling this kind of restoration throughout salvation history?

2. Questioning Restoration (v. 21)

This describes the great increase of the true people of God. The image given is of a mother who had been robbed of her children and made a widow. She had seen the devastation of ruin that was spread all around her. She felt alone. Then all of sudden the mother sees herself completely surrounded with more children than she lost. She is home and blessed by the happy

family that surrounds her. Then the mother asks, “Who hath begotten me these?” She wants to know where they had been. God’s restoration would be beyond what we could hope for.

Why does God choose the image of children to illustrate the overflowing blessing of restoration He has in store?

3. Confirming Restoration and Prosperity (vv. 22–23)

God will call His people to Himself, like a general calling the troops together. He will set the standard for His people. Those that God has adopted as His own and those that claim Him for their Father will be in His arms. Those He adopts will be given great care, devotion, and loving-kindness, as a nurse would care for babies. The daughters will be carried as a sick and weak person might be carried. Nonbelievers will give to the increase, protection, and maintenance of these children. Even those in high positions such as kings and queens will have a heartfelt love and caring concern toward God’s people.

How does God use non-Christians to aid His Church today?

Search the Scriptures

1. What shall cause the desolate places to become too small (Isaiah 49:19)?
2. Who can ask for another place to dwell (v. 20)?
3. When kings and queens become nursing fathers and mothers to God’s people, what shall they know (v. 23)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. God restores and prospers His people. Should His people do anything to help secure their prosperity?
2. When God grants restoration, what is our responsibility? How do we show our gratitude? How do we maintain our blessings?

Liberating Lesson

Today, there are many people who need to be restored to God because of sin. Who can restore us? Jesus will lift us up when we feel neglected, abandoned, and bereaved. God restored Israel; He will also restore us. He will give us freedom when we’re enslaved by our own choices and disobedience. Jesus is waiting to restore us so that we can have a relationship with God. We must repent, pray, and wait on the restoration of the Lord! We must depend on God’s promises to bring the Gentiles and His people together into one people of God through Jesus Christ.

Application for Activation

This week think of how you can overcome discouragement from the enemy who creeps into your peace. Ask God to restore you to Himself when you have allowed the enemy to take your joy. Remember that Jesus Christ has come to redeem you and wants you to have the right relationship with Him and others. He’s coming back!

Think of what you can do to restore a broken friendship with a family member or a friend who you consider to be your enemy. Ask yourself, “Am I the enemy?” What should you do to become a better Christian?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Blenkinsopp, J. *Isaiah 40-55*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.
Kissane, E. *The Book Of Isaiah*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1960
Knight, G. *Servant Theology*. Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1984.
Roberts, J. and Machinist, P. *First Isaiah*. Baltimore, MD: Fortress Press, 2016.

Say It Correctly

Nebuchadnezzar. neh-buh-kad-NEZZ-zer.
Zedekiah. zeh-deh-KIE-uh.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Puts Down and Lifts Up
(Psalm 75)

TUESDAY

God Protects a Restored, Holy People
(Leviticus 26:3–13)

WEDNESDAY

Blessings upon God's People
(Luke 6:20–26)

THURSDAY

God Has Turned Mourning into Dancing
(Psalm 30)

FRIDAY

God Gives Good Gifts
(James 1:13–18)

SATURDAY

Blessings for Obedience
(Deuteronomy 28:9–14)

SUNDAY

Wait for the Lord
(Isaiah 49:18–23)

Notes

FREEDOM

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD OFFERS DELIVERANCE

BASED ON:

Isaiah 51:1–8, NIV

KEY VERSE:

Isaiah 51:1, NIV

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge: Primaries will explain that blessings are a way that God expresses His faithfulness to us.

Attitude: Primaries will feel hopeful that God can turn the barren circumstances in their lives into beautiful ones.

Action: Primaries will turn a dry cup of soil into a garden of hope.

DEAR TEACHER

Your primaries will learn that God rescues those who trust in Him. He can take hopeless circumstances and grow them into something lovely.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focus Activity	Clean laundry items that are both old (with holes or stains) and new, 3 laundry baskets
Review	Spray bottle with water, foam cups (1 per child), soil (1 cup per child), large seeds, such as: pumpkin, sunflower, bean, apple (1 per child), markers, pencil
Worship Time	Marker, 11 sheets of white paper, cardstock cut into bookmarks (one per child)

OPEN THE LESSON

Focus Activity

Before class: Gather clean clothing items that look old and new. Set up the activity area with three baskets: one with all the clothing, one labeled “old,” and one labeled “new.”

During class: Direct students’ attention to the activity area. Tell them they will work together to sort the laundry items into two piles, old and new. Talk about what other things in life wear out. Ask, “What lasts longest? What lasts forever?”

knows what a bully is?” Let the children share. Say, “Today we are going to read a story about how one girl was rescued from bullies.” While reading, pause after the sentence, “The principal and I have a plan.” Ask, “What do you think their plan is?” Let the children share ideas. Continue reading. After reading, ask the children, “How did God help rescue Tara from the bullies? Say, “Now we’re going to learn how God rescues those who trust Him. He rescues us!”

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute the student folders.)

Before reading, survey the children, “Who

Bible Story

Freedom

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for primary students to read. The Scripture Scene® is provided as a visual aid. Be sure to study the

information on this Bible passage in the white pages of the Teacher Guide.

God says, “Listen! Do you try to please Me? Do you try to do what’s right? So did Abraham and Sarah. Remember them? They began as a tiny family. They had no children. Then Abraham trusted Me. He obeyed Me. I blessed him. I grew his family into millions! I will bless you, too.

“Your home is in ruins. Your city is dry and empty. But I will turn it into a garden. It will be so lovely, you will sing!

“One day the earth will wear out. It will fall apart like old clothes. Don’t be afraid. Your enemies will fall, too. I will always come to your rescue.”

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Review

Before class: Obtain several foam cups. Poke three holes in the bottom of each cup with a pencil. On one side of each cup, write the words, “Garden of Hope.” Create signs for each station used in the activity: Name Station, Soil Station, Seed Station, Water Station.

During class: Ask, “What does a plant need to grow?” (Suggest: sunlight, soil, water.) Say, “Today we are going to take a dry, barren place and turn it into a garden, just like God promised He would do for people who put their trust in Him.” Line up your primaries. Have each walk beside the table, stopping at each station to get a task done. At the first station, have them write their name with a marker on the side of their cup. At the second station, fill the cup halfway up with soil. At the third station, have them poke their finger in the soil to create a 1-inch hole and drop a seed inside. At the fourth station, have them smooth the top of the soil, and spray it with water. Remind the primaries that God’s promise to restore His people and their land was a forever promise. If time allows, you may have the children complete the fun craft making watering containers in the *Teaching Success Kit*.

Memory Verse

“My salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail” (from Isaiah 51:6, NIV).

Before class: Write each word of the Memory

Verse in large letters on individual sheets of paper. Crumple up each page.

During class: Say, “Today we are learning that God can take terrible circumstances like injustice and old, worn-out people and things and He can renew them. So today you get to renew something worn out...our Bible verse.” Toss the crumpled papers in the air. Encourage your primaries to pick up a crumpled paper, open it and try to figure out the order of the verse. Once they think they have it right, have them say it aloud together. If the order isn’t correct, help them fix it. If there’s time, have them rewrite it on a bookmark to take home.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Be Smart

God’s Future for Us

Read the directions with the primaries. Work with the class to complete the first exercise item. Then have the children complete the remaining exercise items. **Answers:** 1. family, 2. millions, 3. lovely, 4. wear, 5. fall, 6. rescue; 7. A heavenly one.

Good Attitude

Growing Family Tree

Read the directions. Look at the family tree on the left. Explain how Abraham and Sarah are the oldest in the family, so they are first. The grandparents go first. Point out the connecting line to Isaac, their son. Ask, “How is Rebekah related?” Ask, “Who are Isaac and Rebekah’s sons?” Explain that Abraham and Sarah’s family tree branches out more and more as their grandchildren have children. Then give your primaries time to fill in and color their family tree. They might like to add people they love as if they are family.

Worship Time

Sing songs about God’s love. Say a prayer of thanks for God’s care for us. Thank Him for being able to turn terrible situations into something good. Thank Him for the promise of heaven.

Craft Kingdom®

Craft Kingdom® provides directions to make a craft that reinforces the lesson. Play the *Sing-Along CD* as students work.

God Offers Deliverance

Bible Background • ISAIAH 51

Printed Text • ISAIAH 51:1–8 | Devotional Reading • 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1–4

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXAMINE Isaiah's example of God's rich faithfulness in Israel's spiritual history, TRUST God even when others speak disparagingly about our faith, and SHARE the goodness and deliverance of God with others.

In Focus

Kaylynn had been incarcerated for a crime he did not commit. He believed the day would come when God would clear his name and he would be delivered from his bondage. He held close to the words found in Isaiah, "The Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be put to shame, He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me!" (Isaiah 50:7–9).

He trusted God. He had gotten into some situations in the past, being accused falsely and misjudged, and God delivered him every time.

But, this time, the setup led to his imprisonment. His friends and associates felt sorry for him. But they didn't believe Kaylynn would get out of this one easily and they told him to plead guilty and he would get a lesser charge. Kaylynn stood his ground and said, "How can I confess to what I have not done? God has never failed me and neither will He this time."

Kaylynn was given the maximum sentence of 20 years without a chance of parole.

That was two years ago. Today he was preparing to leave prison. All charges had been dropped. He was exonerated. As he was singing and praising God, Paul and Silas's jail experience came to mind. After their release they told the brethren all about it. Kaylynn could hardly wait to meet up with his former friends and associates to share with them how God delivered him out of prison.

When we are in a jam and things don't look good, do we still keep the faith? Do we still believe and hope in God to deliver us?

Keep in Mind

"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."
(Isaiah 51:1, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV **Isaiah 51:1** Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the

people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

The People, Places, and Times

Abraham and Sarah. Abraham did not always follow God's plan as God had intended. On occasion, he and Sarah both seemed to have an urge to give God a helping hand. At other times, the two acted out of cowardice, not out of faith in the God who called them.

From the time of his call, Abraham had no knowledge of where he would be going. He stepped out on the word of God. He never stopped believing in God's purpose, even when it seemed that everything was working against him.

Eden. The name Eden is derived either from the Hebrew root word meaning "to be fruitful, plentiful" or from a Sumerian word meaning "steppe, flatland." After creating the entire universe, God consecrated the particular garden called Eden as a place of paradise and

worship. He placed His newly created human beings to care for it, and communed with them there. There was still work to do to care for Eden, but no weeds or thorns to make the work especially hard. Many prophecies of the end times pull on images of Eden to indicate that God will heal the world so completely as to restore the paradise we knew before the Fall.

Background

Even though the Israelites are worried that foreign countries will conquer them, God reassures His people He is willing, able, and capable of providing for their release from their captives. In Isaiah 50, the one who is responsible for delivering this message of hope shows he has been commissioned by God and he is ready to carry out his mission, God's message, out to the fullest (Isaiah 50:4-5).

Jesus also fulfilled this prophecy when He was commissioned by God and carried out His duties in securing salvation for mankind to the fullest. Some Jews rejected Jesus as Christ on their own accord. We make a choice to accept what God offers. In Isaiah's message, the people of God are encouraged to trust in Him, while sinners are discouraged not to trust in themselves (Isaiah 50:11).

At-A-Glance

1. The Offer of Deliverance (Isaiah 51:1-3)
2. The Way to Deliverance (vv. 4-6)
3. An Everlasting Deliverance (vv. 7-8)

In Depth

1. The Offer of Deliverance (Isaiah 51:1-3)

This conversation is to those who follow after righteousness, seriously yearning to practically obey God's law. They are told, "Listen to Me!" God is making them an offer of deliverance. God's people are seeking Him because they want His favor brought back to them.

They are told to look back to Abraham and Sarah. You are Sarah's daughters, if you strive for righteousness. To encourage the captives in Babylon, God calls them to remember when and how He called Abraham by His Word He blessed and increased him. They, too, were very small in number, but the Lord has promised to increase them also (Isaiah 49:19).

The Lord shall comfort Zion: God will restore it from despair. He will make them happy—giving them hearts that are glad. Their gladness will lead to their satisfaction making them thankful to God. They will sing from their hearts songs of joy and thanksgiving unto their God.

What role models of righteousness do you identify in your life?

2. The Way to Deliverance (vv. 4-6)

God is speaking to a specific group, His people. This isn't for everyone. This is for the people of God. The ones who have the law of God within them. In addition to knowing what is right, God's people do what is right. God wants His people to listen and be attentive. He wants His people to adhere to what He is saying and take notes on their hearts.

God's righteousness is near; He will soon come to their rescue. Those that He has made promises to will see the fulfillment of those promises. God's arms will judge the people, because He has the power to judge all. He has the ability to draw them together, and He has the ability to scatter them. They should put their trust in Him.

Heaven and earth are going to pass away (Matthew 24:35). The description here is the heavens will disappear like a vapor, or smoke, into thin air. The earth will fall off like an old piece of clothing no one wants to wear. Just as the earth and the heavens will no longer exist, this will be true of people. In contrast, the way to deliverance, salvation and righteousness will remain.

How do you remind yourself to chase after eternal things, rather than passing earthly things?

3. An Everlasting Deliverance (vv. 7-8)

Isaiah is requesting the attention of the righteous, God's people, the keepers of the Law. God's people are told to not fear the rebuke and criticism of men. We have the assurance of God's promises. Others might say anything to attempt to destroy our faith in God, but God has given His promise. He will not turn back on His Word. God is faithful.

People will become food for the insects and animals when they die. As time goes on, those same people won't be around to express disapproval. In contrast, the salvation and righteous of God will always be. Salvation

and righteousness will continue to exist, from generation to generation, forever.

What would you be able to do for God if you weren't afraid of others' scorn?

Search the Scriptures

1. Is God offering deliverance to all (Isaiah 51:1)?
2. Who shall comfort the people of Zion (v. 3)?
3. Who are they that know righteousness (v. 6)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. God shows He is willing and able to deliver us from our captivity, which is sin. But He does not force us to accept His offer. Should He or should He not? Why?

2. God tells His people, "hearken unto me" three times. When something is told to us repeatedly should we consider it? Should we pay more attention to what's being said or should we find the person to be a nuisance trying to force us to accept what they are saying?

Liberating Lesson

In spite of what we see, we must remember God is faithful and He will deliver us, just as He did the remnant of Israel. He encourages us to listen to Him and to look back at what He did for Abraham and Sarah. Abraham believed God and became a great nation, we too must believe God and trust Him. God comforts and consoles us as we fear Him. If we are faithful, God will deliver us. We must be willing to tell others that God's Word will last forever. We should encourage others to trust Jesus for deliverance and salvation.

Application for Activation

This week, pray and trust God daily to deliver you from any situation that will cause you not to demonstrate your faith in God. Do not let anyone discourage you from believing

that God can deliver you from those that speak negatively. You can ask God to speak to your heart so the Holy Spirit will remind you that God is faithful and He will deliver you.

Ask God to help you encourage others because Jesus loves you and wants everyone to be saved. Tell others that those who reject the Lord will be judged by God, not man.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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Say It Correctly

Hearken. HAR-ken.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Will Vindicate His Servant
(Isaiah 50:4–9)

TUESDAY

Remember God's Mighty Deeds
(Isaiah 51:9–16)

WEDNESDAY

God Defends Israel's Cause
(Isaiah 51:17–23)

THURSDAY

God Rescues Us from Peril
(2 Corinthians 1:7–14)

FRIDAY

Jesus Rescues Us from Wrath
(1 Thessalonians 1:6–10)

SATURDAY

Deliverance Belongs to the Lord
(Psalm 3)

SUNDAY

God's Deliverance Is Coming
(Isaiah 51:1–8)

Notes
