

SET FREE BY GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION: THE HOPE OF BEING DELIVERED FROM GOD'S JUDGMENT AND WRATH

ISAIAH 48:01–22

Introduction

One of the blackest marks against human society is that of slavery. Forcing people to work under duress or without freedom is a terrible evil. Holding people in captivity, bondage and chains is inhumane and deserves the severest punishment of the law. People are held in slavery for the purpose of cheap labour, prostitution, warfare and for the pleasure and will of the powerful and the rich.

But there is wonderful news for the enslaved of this earth. God has a plan to redeem all who are held in bondage, if they will just trust and follow Him. This is the wonderful message of the present Scripture: *Set Free by God's Plan of Redemption: The Hope of Being Delivered from God's Judgment and Wrath*, Isaiah 48:1–22.

- I. God's indictment: His people are hypocritical and stubborn (vv. 1-8).
- II. God's patience: He delays His wrath and will deliver His people (vv. 9-11).
- III. God's plan: He works and controls all events so He can redeem His people (vv. 12-22).

I. *Isaiah 48:01–08 God's Indictment: His People are Hypocritical and Stubborn*

God issued a serious indictment against His people: they were hypocritical and stubborn. Note the word *hear or listen*. The people had closed their ears to God's Word and warnings, refusing to turn from their sins and idolatry back to the LORD. Although they professed to know the LORD, they were not living righteous lives, not obeying God's holy commandments. Instead they were living deceitfully, becoming more and more hard-hearted in their resistance to God. Note the Scripture and outline:

1. The Israelites were sharply rebuked for their hypocrisy (vv. 1-2). Isaiah addressed them as the house of Jacob. Remember, Jacob was the ancient ancestor and father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every Jew considered Jacob and his sons to be the ancient people of God and considered himself to be a descendant of one of the tribes. As a descendant of Jacob and his sons, every Jew was thought to be a member of God's people, a person who had been especially chosen by God. The Jews made four special claims about themselves. Note how these claims are applicable to so many who profess the LORD and who claim to belong to the "right" religion.

First, a Jew claimed that he was "of Israel and Judah." By Israel is meant the right race, the people chosen by God to be His true witnesses on earth and to be especially blessed by Him. By *Judah* is meant the royal tribe of Israel and the tribe

through which the Messiah was to come. Apparently a Jew born in the tribe of Judah considered himself especially blessed by God. Applying this to society through the ages, think how many consider themselves to be of a superior class of people, both socially and racially. Think of the problems within societies all over the world due to social and racial prejudice.

Second, a Jew took oaths in the LORD's Name. In other words, he may have sworn that he would take a particular action based on his belief in the LORD. Or perhaps he took an oath or made a promise declaring that God would verify the truthfulness of his word or promise. By using or referring to the Name of the LORD in making promises, the Jew was implying that he believed in the LORD and that he worshipped the LORD.

Third, a Jew claimed to highly esteem the city of Jerusalem. It was the capital of the nation and the location of the temple; thus Jerusalem was the Holy City in the minds of all Israelites. Furthermore, all Israelites identified with the Holy City and claimed to be citizens of Jerusalem.

Fourth, a Jew claimed to trust and rely upon God as he walked through life day by day. Professing to believe in the LORD, a Jew readily claimed to lean and depend on God to guide him and to meet his needs.

Although Jews made these claims, they were hypocritical, untruthful. Most Jews were not living righteously. They were not obeying the LORD, not keeping His holy commandments. Thus their disobedience and hypocrisy proved their disbelief, that they did not accept God as the LORD of the universe. If they had truly believed Him, that He was the Saviour and LORD, they would have obeyed Him. But their disobedience discredited their profession. Within the depths of their hearts the Jews did not sincerely believe or accept God as LORD and Saviour. Their rejection of His commandments was irrefutable proof of their insincerity.

This indictment of hypocrisy was levelled against the Jews of Isaiah's day and those of succeeding generations, including the Jews who would be taken captive by Babylon in the future. Isaiah foresaw that the Jews in captivity would become comfortable and complacent in their captive state, that most of them would not return to the promised land when given the opportunity. Over the 70 years of their exile, the Jews would become settled, building houses and developing farms and businesses. In addition, when they had the opportunity to return to Jerusalem, the vast majority of Jews would choose not to go. Why? Because most would have been born and reared in Babylon. Consequently, few would have the faith or willingness to give up their homes, comfortable lifestyles and the pleasures they had come to know in Babylon.

God's indictment against these worldly Jews was sharp. Their professions were false, hypocritical. They were not living righteous lives, obeying God's commandments, nor following Him. Stated simply, their words, actions and behaviour did not back up their claims.

Mat 15:7-9 *You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."*

Mat 23:13 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter; nor will you let those enter who are trying to." (see vv. 14-33).*

Mat 23:28 *"In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."*

Mat 24:48-51 *"But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' And he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Luke 6:42 *"How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

Luke 12:1 *"Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."*

Luke 12:56-57 *"Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?"*

Rom 16:17-18 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.*

1 Tim 4:1-2 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

Titus 1:15-16 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

2. The LORD sharply rebuked the Israelites for their stubbornness (vv. 3-8). Despite all He had done for them down through the centuries, the Jews had continued to be an obstinate people and a stiff-necked people. In times past the LORD had foretold a number of phenomenal events pertaining to the Jews that lay out in the future. And He had acted to fulfil these events, bringing blessing after blessing upon them. Some of the significant events that God had foretold and brought about were...

- Abraham's call and the promises given him
- the wonderful deliverance of the Jews' forefathers from Egyptian bondage
- the establishment of Israel as a nation when the law was given at Mount Sinai
- the conquest of Canaan, the promised land
- the wonderful deliverance of Israel from Assyrian oppression

Note God's purpose for predicting these events and working to bring them about: so His people could not claim that their idols had delivered or helped them (v. 5). Note also God's charge to the Jews: they must hear, see and confess the LORD as the only true God (v. 6). In every case it was He alone who had predicted the future and then redeemed His people. Therefore they had to listen to the prophecies, and when the events occurred, they had to recognize the prophecy and confess the LORD as the only true God. However, the Israelites shut their eyes to the prophecies given and to their fulfilment, exposing their stubborn hearts. Yet the LORD declared that He would now reveal new things to Isaiah's generation, events that had formerly been hidden from them (vv. 6-8). These events had been deliberately hidden to prevent the people from claiming they knew about them beforehand. These new prophecies predicted by Isaiah included such future matters as...

- the raising up of Cyrus (v. 14)
- the fall of Babylon and Israel's restoration (vv. 20-21)
- the coming suffering and atoning death of the Messiah (Isa 52:13-53:12)
- the New Age of Salvation (65:1-16)
- the Messianic Age and the creation of new heavens and earth, an eternal universe (65:17-25)

The LORD revealed these events to the Jews and to all succeeding generations of people for one purpose and one purpose only: to prove that He alone is the LORD of the universe, the only living and true God. He alone is to be worshipped and not the idols or false gods worshipped by the majority of the human race. Sadly, as the Jews in the past closed their ears to the prophecies of God, so most people down through the ages have hardened their hearts toward the LORD and His prophetic Word. When God's prophecies are so clearly spelled out in Holy Scripture, why do so many people continue to shut their ears to the LORD and His Word? God answers this question Himself, and His answer exposes a tragic fact. People who refuse to see the fulfilment of God's prophecies are blind, deliberately blind. Moreover they doom themselves, whether Jews or Gentiles. People reject God and His prophetic Word because they are traitors, rebels from birth. They deliberately choose to be stubborn, hard-hearted and stiff-necked toward the LORD. They reject the LORD despite the fact that His prophetic Word demands belief and righteousness.

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

Acts 28:27 *For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*

Rom 2:5-9 *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Eph 4:17-19 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts." Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

1 Tim 4:1-2 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

2 Tim 4:3-4 *For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

Heb 3:12-13 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*

2 Chr 24:19 *Although the LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them, they would not listen.*

Psa 32:9 *Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.*

Psa 32:10 *Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.*

Psa 95:8-11 *"Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways. So I declared an oath in my anger; 'They shall not enter my rest.'"*

Prov 2:14 *Who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil.*

Prov 29:1 *A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.*

Isa 46:12 *Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness.*

Isa 48:4 *For I knew how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze..... “There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”*

Jer 6:10 *To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.*

Jer 32:33 *They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.*

Jer 44:16 *“We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD!”*

Eze 12:2 *“Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see, but do not see and they have ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.”*

Zec 7:11 *“But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears.”*

Mal 2:2 *“If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honour my name,” says the LORD Almighty, “I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honour me.”*

II. Isaiah 48:09–11 God's Patience:

He Delays His Wrath and Will Deliver His People

God revealed a wonderful fact to His people: despite their hypocrisy and stubbornness, He was patient and not willing that any of them should perish. With a heart full of love for His people, He suffered a long time with their insincere, obstinate behaviour. He delayed His wrath, longing for them to repent and turn back to Him. All who repented would be delivered from the bondage and oppression of their enemies. Although the people deserved to be condemned due to their despicable behaviour, the LORD would have mercy on them. He would not cut His people off, not immediately. Four reasons are given explaining why God delayed His wrath:

1. God is patient, showing mercy so that people will praise His Name (v. 9). When a person honestly looks at how much sin has infected the world and considers how merciful God has been by delaying His wrath, the person is stirred to praise God for His mercy. However, death is the just reward for sin and rebellion against God. But out of a heart of mercy, the LORD has delayed His wrath. It will not be delayed forever, for the day of final judgment is coming when every person will give an account for his or her behaviour. But for now God's mercy provides a way of eternal salvation for all who will believe. Because of His mercy, His Name is to be praised.

2. God is patient, showing mercy in order to refine His people in the furnace of affliction (v. 10). Just as silver is refined — made more pure and more valuable — in a furnace of fire, so God's people are refined through the hardships and suffering they endure. It is through these trials that the LORD makes His people stronger, both in character and in faith. When a true believer suffers, he draws closer to the LORD through prayer and worship. Suffering arouses a person to call upon the LORD for provision, help, guidance, protection or deliverance. And when the LORD answers the true believer's prayer, the believer draws even closer to the LORD through more prayer, worship and thanksgiving. Hence, the LORD's patience and mercy are continuously refining His people, making them stronger believers than ever before.
3. The LORD is patient, showing mercy in order to honour His Name and keep His Name from being defamed (v. 11a). The words "for my sake" are emphasized, being mentioned twice in this brief verse. God is absolutely determined to protect the integrity of His Name and His Word. This thought should be reassuring to believers, for if God had executed His wrath upon the human race in Isaiah's day, His promise of redemption — that some would be saved — would not have been fulfilled. Neither would many of the prophecies that were given long ago. Therefore God delayed His wrath in order to honour His Word, to fulfil all the predictions and promises He had given to His people. By keeping and fulfilling His Word, He honours His Name. Hence, no person can legitimately defame God's Name by accusing Him of lying to people. The earth is still standing so that God can honour His Name by keeping the promises He has given to the world, in particular to true believers.
4. God is patient, showing mercy to protect His glory (v. 11b). As the LORD God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth, the LORD is by His very nature the most magnificent being who has ever existed or ever will exist. The very essence of His being is light, a light so brilliant and magnificent that it shines forth with the blazing holiness of God's righteousness. God's glory is so radiant and powerful, so full of splendour, that in the New Jerusalem there will be no need for sunlight. The magnificence of God's glory and being shines so intensely that it will provide the light needed in the capital city of the new heavens and earth. God's majesty and righteousness are so potent that they would consume any sinner or imperfect being who stood in His presence. Because of God's glory and majesty, He is to be praised and honoured by true believers. When God is patient and merciful to His people, they are to exalt and worship His Holy Name. It is this glory — the glory of praise and honour — that the LORD will never share with another person or being.

Thought 1. God is patient with the human race, delaying the day of His coming wrath against the ungodly and unrighteous of the earth. Although death is the just reward for sin, God has not yet executed His justice and judgment upon the world. The LORD is

long-suffering, yearning for individuals and nations to repent, to turn back to Him and away from their sinful behaviour. In addition, He is merciful, willing to forgive any who will truly repent. Listen to God's Holy Word:

Luke 1:50 *His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.*

Rom 9:22 *What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath — prepared for destruction?*

Eph 2:4-8 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Titus 3:5-7 *Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

1 Pet 3:20 *Who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.*

2 Pet 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Psa 103:17 *But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.*

Isa 48:9 *For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely.*

Lam 3:22-23 *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

Eze 20:17 *Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the wilderness.*

Joel 2:13 *Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

III. *Isaiah 48:12–22 God's Plan: He Controls All Events So He Can Redeem His People*

God revealed His plan to redeem His people. He declared that He would work through human events, controlling them in order to save and free His people. As seen throughout these verses, the LORD Himself is the Redeemer (v. 17), the LORD God of the universe who liberated His people from captivity and rescued them from their enemies. He is the Redeemer who led His people back to the promised land from the land of their captivity. What follows is an excellent study on redemption, showing exactly how God saves and rescues His people:

1. God Himself is the surety of redemption, the assurance that His people will be rescued from their captivity (vv. 12-13). Two facts about the LORD guarantee redemption. First, the LORD's person — who He is — assures the believer that God will redeem him, deliver him from all the bondages and enslaving powers of this earth. "I am He" means that the LORD alone is God. He is the "First and the Last," signifying that God is sovereign and eternal, spanning all of time. In the beginning of the universe He was there; and when this present universe ends, He will still exist as the eternal, sovereign LORD over all. Because He is the living and true God, His people can be confident about their redemption. The LORD will save them from the enslavements of this life and from the enemies who hold them captive, such as the Babylonians.

Second, God's power that created the universe assures redemption for the genuine believer (v. 13). It was God's hand that laid the foundation of the earth on which people live. And it was His right hand that stretched out the heavens, filling the vast expanse with billions of stars and planets. When God spoke the Word to call all things into being, they appeared (40:21-22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 51:13; Psa 102:25). Since God has this infinite and matchless power, His people can rest assured that He has the power to redeem them. The LORD will deliver His people from their captivity and will walk with them through whatever hardships they endure.

2. God's plan was the promise of redemption, the promise that He would deliver His people from their captivity (vv. 14-16). Note that the LORD summoned everyone to assemble together to hear what He had to say, for the message of redemption was of critical importance. If a person failed to hear and respond to the message, he would remain in captivity. He would never be set free and would be doomed to remain in Babylon (a symbol of the world with all its immorality, lawlessness, corruption and idolatry). In giving the promise of redemption, the LORD made four statements that must be understood by the listener or reader:

=> It was His knowledge — not an idol — that had foretold the coming redemption of God's people (v. 14).

- => God's power alone would raise up an agent (Cyrus) to execute justice and judgment against Babylon (v. 14b). And it would be the LORD who stirred Cyrus, the king of Persia, to release God's people, allowing them to return to the promised land of Judah.
- => God's Word guaranteed this prophecy (v. 15). He had spoken, and once He had spoken the event would come about. Cyrus would succeed in destroying Babylon because the LORD Himself would bless the mission of the Persian king.
- => God's promise must be heeded by all the hearers and readers of this prophecy (v. 16). The LORD had never spoken in secret but, rather, openly and clearly. He was the One who had predicted the destruction of Babylon and the liberation of His people from captivity. Note the claim of Isaiah: it was the Sovereign LORD who had sent him to proclaim this prophecy. Moreover, the prophecy was being conveyed through him by the LORD's Spirit.
3. God gave yet another assurance that His people would be delivered from Babylonian captivity. Note that He attested to the believers' redemption because of who He, the LORD, was. First, He was their *Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel* (v. 17). To be *holy* means to be set apart, distinct, different. In light of the LORD's perfection in being, purity and righteousness, He would always do the right thing. He would fulfil all His promises and deliver His people from their Babylonian captivity.
- Second, He is the LORD their God (v. 17). And because He is their God, He would teach and lead them, showing them the road of righteousness, the road they should follow throughout life. They could rest assured of His presence and guidance.
4. God's plan of redemption included the most wonderful blessings in life (vv. 18-19). Note the appeal of the LORD, the longing of His heart for His people to obey His commandments. If they obeyed Him, they would receive the blessings. But the opposite is also clearly implied: if they disobeyed, they would not receive the blessings of redemption. Four blessings in particular are mentioned:
- a. Being redeemed and obeying God bring peace to the human soul (v. 18). Notice the comforting comparison of peace to a deep river that flows steadily, strongly, consistently. God's peace is not shallow but, instead, reaches to the depth of the human soul, giving perfect assurance of God's presence and guidance. Neither is God's peace like a flash flood that only occurs every so often. God's peace is a continuous flow of assurance, fulfilment, satisfaction and well-being.
 - b. Being redeemed and obeying God will bring righteousness to a person (v. 18b). Note that the righteousness will faithfully roll on and on like waves of the sea. A person who obeys God becomes more and more conformed to the image of the LORD. He bears more of the fruit of the LORD: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, control (Gal 5:22-23). The obedient believer becomes more moral and just in his dealings with others, treating others as he himself wants to be

treated (Luke 6:31). He becomes more compassionate and merciful, more caring and benevolent, reaching out to help those who are in need. Simply stated, the genuine, obedient believer becomes an ambassador for the Redeemer. He seeks to rescue people from the bondages of this world. Righteousness that is consistent and true is one of the great blessings of redemption.

- c. Being redeemed and obeying God would bring population growth to Israel (v. 19). Numerous children were promised to the Israelites if they would follow the LORD, obeying and keeping His holy commandments (10:22; Gen 13:16; 22:17; 32:12; Jer 33:22). Likewise, when believers of any generation are truly obedient to the LORD, they will lead more and more people to the LORD, ever increasing the population of God's kingdom.
- d. Being redeemed and obeying God assure the believer of an eternal name, a name that will never be cut off nor removed from God's presence (v. 19b). As Christ said, "He that endures to the end shall be saved" (Mat 10:22). The genuine believer will receive the wonderful gift of eternal life.
- e. God proclaimed the great imperative of redemption, an imperative that is still in effect even today. He clearly said that the message of redemption was to be carried to the "end of the earth" (v. 20). What was the imperative of redemption? Go forth from Babylon! Flee the Chaldeans, the Babylonians! Remember that Babylon and its people symbolize the world of unbelievers who live corrupt, wicked lives, who place their trust in false religion and the world of the occult. Because of their unrighteous lifestyles and their rebellion against God, the Babylonians were doomed to face the hand of God's eternal judgment. Thus the message of redemption was to be shouted out, proclaimed to the whole world. The LORD had redeemed His servant Jacob, the nation Israel, and rescued it from Babylonian captivity. Furthermore, the LORD would meet His people's every need while guiding them to the promised land. He would meet their needs just as He had in the wilderness wanderings when He led Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo 17:1-7; Num 20:11). Just as the LORD did not fail His people then, so He would not fail them now. He would fulfil His promise and deliver them. And He will fulfil the promise of redemption in the life of any person who truly trusts Him.

On the other hand, the LORD issued a strong warning: there is no peace for the wicked (v. 22). There is a shout of joy from those who are redeemed. But there will be only restlessness, distress and anguish of soul for the wicked of the earth. They will never have *peace with God* but will, rather, be alienated from Him. And they will never have the *peace of God* that fills the human heart with a sense of well-being, purpose and fulfilment. The *peace of God* gives the believer perfect assurance...

- that his past sins and failures have been taken care of by Christ
- that his present welfare is being looked after by God Himself
- that his future will be taken care of by the presence and guidance of the LORD

The believer knows that he has eternal life, never again to be alienated or separated from the LORD. He knows that his salvation is due to the redemption found in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Luke 1:68 *"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them."*

Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Rom 3:24 *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Eph 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Col 1:14 *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Titus 2:13-14 *While we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 9:12-14 *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Rev 5:9 *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

Isa 43:1-2 *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 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." ■*