

# SET FREE BY GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION: THE HOPE OF BEING DELIVERED FROM GOD'S JUDGMENT AND WRATH ISAIAH 48:12–22

## ***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).

## ***Isaiah 48:12–22 God Controls All Events to 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, fulfillment, 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 2:11-14** *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 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** *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.*

**1 Pet 1:19** *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** *But now, this is what the LORD says he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "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." ■*