

THREE THINGS NECESSARY FOR OUR SALVATION

42 ¹⁸Hear, you deaf! Look, you blind, and see! ¹⁹Who other than my servant is blind? And who is as deaf as the messenger I send? Who is as blind as the one who is in fellowship [with me]? And who is as blind as Jehovah's servant? ²⁰You have seen many things, but you have not paid attention. His ears are open, but he does not hear. ²¹(It pleased Jehovah, for the sake of his righteousness, to make his law great and glorious.) ²²But this is a people who have been robbed and plundered—all of them are trapped in caves or hidden away in prisons. They have become a prey, and there is none to rescue them. They have become a spoil, and there is no one to demand, Give them back! ²³Who among you will pay attention to this? Who will listen and give heed for the time to come? ²⁴Who handed Jacob over to be a spoil, and who gave Israel over to the robbers? Was it not Jehovah?—the one against whom we have sinned, the one in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient to his law. ²⁵Therefore, he poured out upon him his burning anger and the violence of battle. It enveloped him in flames, [but] still he did not comprehend; it burned him, but he [still] did not take it to heart.

43 But now, this is what Jehovah says—the one who created you, O Jacob, the one who formed you, O Israel. Do not be afraid, because I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are mine. ²When 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—³because I am Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I have given Egypt as your ransom; [I have given] Ethiopia and Seba in your place. ⁴Because you are precious and honored in my sight, and [because] I love you, therefore I will provide [other] men in your place and [other] peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶I will say to the north, Give them up! And to the south, Do not hold them back! Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth!— ⁷everyone who is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory; [everyone] whom I have formed, [everyone] whom I have made.

⁸Bring out the people who are blind, [even though they] have eyes; and [the people who are] deaf, [even though they] have ears. ⁹Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled. Which [of their idols] can make such a declaration? Or [who among them] can show us former events [they foretold that have come to pass]? Let them produce their witnesses to prove they were right. And let [the witnesses] hear [the claim] and testify, It is true. ¹⁰You are my witnesses, declares Jehovah, [you are] my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know [the truth] and believe me, [so that you may] understand that I am [the one]. There was no god formed before me, neither shall there be any [god] after me. ¹¹I, I am Jehovah; and there is no Savior besides me. ¹²I have proclaimed and I have saved and I have revealed—and there was no foreign god among you [who could do so]. Therefore, you are my witnesses, declares Jehovah, [that] I am God. ¹³Indeed, since the beginning [of time] I am [the one who is God]; and there is no one who can deliver [anything] out of my hand. I will act, and who can hinder it?

¹⁴This is what Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says, For your sake I will send to Babylon and I will throw them out like fugitives. All the Chaldeans will flee

in the [very] ships in which they took pride. ¹⁵I am Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. ¹⁶This is what Jehovah says—he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, ¹⁷he who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and the mighty man (they [all] lie down together, they shall never rise [again]; they have been extinguished, snuffed out like a wick), ¹⁸Do not recall the former things; and do not ponder upon the things of the past. ¹⁹Look! I am going to do something new. Now it springs up—will you not experience it? I will make a roadway in the wilderness, and cause rivers [to flow] in the desert. ²⁰The wild beasts will glorify me, the jackals and the owls, because I will provide waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert; so that my people, my chosen ones, may drink—²¹the people whom I have formed for myself, so that they may proclaim my praise.

²²But you have not called upon me, O Jacob; [on the contrary,] you have grown tired of me, O Israel. ²³You have not brought me sheep [from your flocks] for burnt offerings; nor have you honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you [by requiring excessive] grain offerings, nor wearied you with [excessive demands for] incense. ²⁴You have not bought me any fragrant calamus with your money, nor have you filled me with the fat of your sacrifices. On the contrary, you have burdened me with your sins; you have made me weary with your iniquities. ²⁵I, I am the one who blots out your transgressions for my own sake; and I will not remember your sins. ²⁶Review the past with me, let us argue the matter together. State your case, so that you may be justified. ²⁷Your first forefather sinned, and your teachers have transgressed against me. ²⁸Therefore, I made the princes of the sanctuary profane; I consigned Jacob to the [covenantal] curse, and made Israel an object of scorn. (Isa. 42:18-43:28)

Introduction

In a cemetery not far from New York City there is a headstone engraved with a single word: FORGIVEN. There is no date of birth, no date of death, no epitaph; there is only a name and the single word, FORGIVEN. (*Our Daily Bread*, 5/8/93) But that is the greatest word that can be applied to any man, woman, or child: FORGIVEN.

Forgiveness, ...Don't leave life without it!

We all have many needs in our lives—physical needs and emotional needs; but the greatest need that you and I have is the spiritual need for divine forgiveness, redemption, salvation.

As we study this present passage of Scripture, the LORD makes known to us, Three Things Necessary for Our Salvation. These three great essentials for salvation are presented here in Old Testament terms; we will need to understand their New Testament counterparts and then be sure to avail ourselves of them.

I. We Must Rely upon Christ's Sacrifice (Isa. 42:18-43:7)

The LORD summons the deaf to hear and the blind to look so that they may see (vs. 18.) The command seems to indicate that there is here a willful spiritual deafness

and blindness; the command, therefore, is to pay attention and become spiritually alert.

The question is now raised, *“Who is as blind as the one who is in fellowship [with me]”* (i.e.; in covenant with God.) Stated another way, the question is, “Who is as blind as my servant?” The questions posed in verse 19 serve to indicate the incomparable blindness and deafness of the LORD’s servant.

But to whom is the LORD referring? Who is the LORD’s servant in this passage? It is God’s own people, Israel, note Isaiah 41:8, *“you, Israel, my servant, Jacob—[the one] whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham my friend.”* The point is that the nation of Israel, uniquely called to be the LORD’s servant, was spiritually blind to its responsibility and obligation to serve the LORD. In New Testament terms, and universal terms, this truth is expressed in such a passage as Romans 3:23, *“all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Verse 21 declares that it pleased the LORD *“to make his law great and glorious.”* That is to say, the LORD determined to honor His law and abide by it; and He determined to do so for the sake of His righteousness. The LORD is righteous and He cannot deny Himself, He cannot allow His law and His covenant to be broken with impunity. What this means for His covenant-breaking people—those who are willfully blind and deaf to God’s moral demands—is now revealed in verse 22, *“this is a people who have been robbed and plundered—all of them are trapped in caves or hidden away in prisons. They have become a prey, and there is none to rescue them. They have become a spoil, and there is no one to demand, Give them back!”* As the consequence of their disobedience, the LORD in His righteousness has brought the curse of the covenant to bear against His people—the punishment taking the form of foreign invasion. As verses 24b-25a makes clear, it is the LORD Himself who has subjected His people to this plight—the LORD *“against whom we have sinned, the one in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient to his law. ²⁵Therefore he poured out upon him* [i.e.; the nation of Israel portrayed as a collective individual] *his burning anger and the violence of battle.”* Again, in New Testament terms, and universal terms, this truth is expressed in such passages as Romans 1:18, *“the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.”*

Now, in striking contrast to what has just been described—the righteous judgment of the LORD being enacted against His sinful people—there comes this word from the LORD: *“But now, this is what Jehovah says—the one who created you, O Jacob, the one who formed you, O Israel. Do not be afraid, because I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are mine”* (Isa. 43:1.) The LORD reminds His people of what He did for them in the days of the Assyrian invasion: *“I am Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I have given Egypt as your ransom; [I have given] Ethiopia and Seba in your place.”* The LORD gave Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba to the conquering Assyrians instead of giving Israel (i.e.; Judah)

to them. Note: The name “Israel” as it is used here is not a reference to the ten northern tribes who were carried away into exile by the invading Assyrian armies; rather, the name is now being applied to the two remaining southern tribes of Judah—they alone are left and they alone now constitute the nation of “Israel.”

To appreciate the significance of this act of God we must bear in mind two important facts. First, the conquering Assyrian armies were the instrument of God’s righteous judgment: *“O Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my indignation!”* (Isa. 10:5.) This instrument of divine judgment was sent against the sinful nation of Israel/Judah: *“I will send him against a godless nation. I will commission him against a people who incite my wrath, to seize the spoil and snatch the prey, and to trample them down like mud in the streets”* (10:6.) Secondly, in His mercy to Israel/Judah, the LORD caused His judgment to fall upon Egypt and the other nations instead of upon Israel/Judah; note Isaiah 20:3-4, *“And Jehovah said, ... ‘so shall the king of Assyria lead away naked and barefoot the Egyptian captives and the Ethiopian exiles’”* and Isaiah 37:33-35,

Therefore, this is what Jehovah says about the king of Assyria, He will not enter this city [i.e.; Jerusalem], nor will he shoot an arrow at it. He will not come against it with a shield, nor will he build a siege ramp against it. ³⁴By the same way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city, declares Jehovah, ³⁵because I will defend this city in order to save it, for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake. (Isa. 37:33-35)

At work here is the principle of substitutionary atonement: God causing His righteous judgment to fall upon a substitute instead of upon His people. The ultimate Substitute, the One to whom all the Old Testament types and sacrifices point, is the Son of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ: *“Christ also died for sins once for all, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones, so that he might bring us to God.”* (1 Pet. 3:18.) Note, too, 2 Corinthians 5:21, *“Him [Christ] who knew no sin he [God the Father] made to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”*

In order to be saved, you must rely upon Christ’s sacrifice. In the words of the hymn writer, Horatius Bonar,

Not what my hands have done can save my guilty soul;
Not what my toiling flesh has borne can make my spirit whole ...
Your work alone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin;
Your blood alone, O Lamb of God, can give me peace within.

II. We Must Trust in God’s Power (Isa. 43:8-21)

This word of prophecy was addressed to Israel as they would find themselves in a state of bondage—held captive by the greatest empire on earth in its day, the

empire of Babylon. Nevertheless, the message the LORD proclaims on behalf of His people is this: *“Bring out the people who are blind, [even though they] have eyes; and [the people who are] deaf, [even though they] have ears”* (vs.8.) The LORD issues the command that His people be set free, and He shall bring them back to the Promised Land of Canaan, the place of His earthly sanctuary.

The LORD is able to fulfill His word because He is the Almighty God, as He testifies in verses 11-13,

I, I am Jehovah; and there is no Savior besides me. ¹²I have proclaimed and I have saved and I have revealed—and there was no foreign god among you [who could do so]. Therefore, you are my witnesses, declares Jehovah, [that] I am God. ¹³Indeed, since the beginning [of time] I am [the one who is God]; and there is no one who can deliver anything out of my hand. I will act, and who can hinder it? (Isa. 43:11-13)

The LORD emphatically testifies that He is the living God, and the only Savior (vs. 11.) He testifies that in the past He has spoken and fulfilled His word by saving His people (vs. 12.) No doubt He is referring primarily to the Exodus out of Egypt, but also to the many other Old Testament era deliverances accomplished by God for His people. He testifies that He is God from the beginning of the creation (vs. 13.) He always has been God, and because He is the true and living God, there is no one who can take His people out of His hand.

The LORD declares that He will do yet another mighty and irresistible work of salvation: *“I will act, and who can hinder it?”* He now declares that for the sake of His people, and for their redemption, He will cause the mighty Babylonians to be conquered and will thus set His people free: *“This is what Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says, ‘For your sake I will send to Babylon and I will throw them out like fugitives. All the Chaldeans will flee in the [very] ships in which they took pride’”* (vs. 14.)

To encourage His people, the LORD reminds them of the miraculous way He delivered their forefathers from the mighty empire of Egypt—referring especially to the Exodus through the parted waters of the Red Sea (vs. 16-17.) Then, in verses 18-19a, the LORD exhorts His people to “forget” the mighty deeds He has done in the past, because He is about to do even greater things. He is referring to their future deliverance from Babylon and their return to the land of Canaan, which He now describes as a second “wilderness journey,” with the LORD faithfully and miraculously providing for His people in their need (vs. 19b-21.) As the ultimate work of redemption, the LORD refers us to the cross of Calvary,

He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he

made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Col. 2:13-15)

In order to be saved, you must rely upon the power of God. In ourselves we do not have the power to overcome our sinful nature and the devil; as the Lord Jesus testifies, *"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin"* (Jn. 8:34.) Later in the book of prophecy, Isaiah will confess, *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. All of us shrivel up like a leaf; and, like the wind, our iniquities sweep us away"* (Isa. 64:6.)

Rather than rely upon ourselves, we need to rely upon the saving power of Christ. By the power of God we need to be made a new creation in Christ and receive new spiritual life *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* (2 Cor. 5:17.) Likewise, we must rely upon Christ to live that new life; Jesus informs us, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"* (Jn. 15:5.) May the words of the hymn writer, W.T. Sleeper, be our prayer:

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Your freedom, gladness, and light,
Jesus, I come to You;
Out of my sickness into Your health,
out of my want and into Your wealth.
Out of my sin and into Yourself,
Jesus, I come to You.

III. We Must Call upon the LORD for Salvation (Isa. 43:22-28)

The LORD has proclaimed to Israel all that He will do for them; then, in verse 22, He declares, *"But you have not called upon me, O Jacob."* The people of Israel have not called upon the LORD to save them; they have not asked Him to be their Savior and to apply His work of salvation to them personally. Rather than call upon the LORD in order to obtain His salvation, Israel had done just the opposite! Their history is now reviewed by the LORD in verses 23-28.

"You have not brought me sheep [from your flocks] for burnt offerings; nor have you honored me with your sacrifices" (vs. 23a.) When they were still living in the land of Canaan, Israel did not worship and serve the LORD in love and devotion. Apparently, over the course of the years the abundance of superficial worship (of which the LORD spoke in Isaiah 1:11,15) was replaced by a total neglect of all divine worship—the periods of revival were exceptions to the general trend towards apostasy. *"On the contrary, you have burdened me with your sins; you have made me weary with your iniquities"* (vs.24b.) Finally, as verse 28 indicates,

in consequence of their sins, Israel would be removed from the Promised Land of Canaan and sent into exile by the hand of the Babylonians.

If Israel is to receive the benefits of the LORD's power and redemption, they must humbly call upon the LORD. Which very thing the LORD in His grace and covenantal faithfulness will move them to do:

*This is what Jehovah says: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place; ¹¹for I know the plans I have for you, declares Jehovah, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then **you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.** ¹³**You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.** ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares Jehovah, and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you, declares Jehovah, and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile. (Jer. 29:10-14)*

In order to be saved, you must call upon the LORD: *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Rom. 10:13.) As the hymn writer, J. Wilbur Chapman, expresses it,

Jesus! I do now receive him,
more than all in him I find,
He has granted me forgiveness,
I am his, and he is mine.

Conclusion

We all have many needs in our lives—physical needs and emotional needs. But the greatest need that you and I have is spiritual—the need for divine forgiveness, the need for redemption, the need for salvation.

The only One who can meet that need is the LORD Himself: *"I, I am the one who blots out your transgressions"* (Isa. 43:25.)

In this passage the LORD makes clear the three things that are essential for our salvation: 1) We must rely upon Christ's sacrifice; 2) We must rely upon God's power; and 3) We must personally call upon the LORD for salvation.

When it comes time for you to die, will your tombstone truthfully bear the inscription, FORGIVEN, REDEEMED, SAVED? It will, if you are relying upon Christ's sacrifice, if you are relying upon God's saving power, if you have called upon the LORD to save you.

FORGIVENESS, REDEMPTION, SALVATION—come to Christ for it, and don't leave
life without it!