

# God's Commitment Unchanged, Even in Exile

Isaiah 43:1-21

*Halifax: 22 August 2010*

## **Introduction**

Dear congregation,

- you who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are reconciled to God through Him,
  - I am so thankful for the way our gracious LORD is so eager to comfort you.
  
- We see this in Isaiah's prophecies...
  - Ever since we came to chapter 39 where the LORD declared the coming exile,
    - He has been ministering words of comfort for those who love Him, declaring to them His unchanging love and purpose concerning them even though they must also go into exile with the rebellious nation of which they are a part.
  
  - These words of consolation began in chapter 40 and they continue on as we move in to chapter 43 this week.
    - And these words are recorded not only for those who lived in Isaiah's day, but they are recorded for us also.
      - As God's people, you need these words, just as Isaiah's disciples needed them in his days.

You live in difficult times, very similar to the days that Isaiah lived in.

- You live in a time when you can see the church in the west slipping into exile (as it were)—
  - taken captive by a world that hates God...
  - falling under the dominion of godless men.
  
- The church, which is supposed to be making disciples of the nations and bringing them all under His dominion,
  - is rather being swallowed up by the world.
  - We have turned from the LORD and He is chastening us.
    - If you love the LORD and yearn to see His kingdom advance, it is easy to become discouraged when you see what is happening!
  
- Our nation clearly has very little room for God's word.
  - And the church, rather than taking every thought captive for Jesus Christ, is increasingly embracing the world's thinking...
    - You can see that **egalitarianism**,
      - the view that there is no God-ordained authority,
        - is increasingly taking over the minds of our society...

- Even churches have overthrown the God-given authority of the husband and father over his wife and children.
  - Instead of calling men to take their place as the head of their home and to lay down their life for their families,
    - we see the church preaching that that male headship no longer applies.
  - We even find women being ordained to the office of elder and pastor...
    - This is clearly forbidden in scripture...
  - Egalitarianism is really an attack on the very notion of God's authority—and on the authority of the Father in the trinity that is to be beautifully lived out by us.
- Then there is **materialism**, taking our minds captive...
  - So that there is discontentment with what God has given us in this world that leads us to covet and burden future generations with our extravagance.
    - Instead of serving others and laying up for the next generation, we are borrowing from them without their permission!
    - We are more concerned about our automobiles and houses than we are about our souls.
      - Even though we are rich, we all claim that we are too poor to tithe and to help others—many church members give less than 1%.
- And there is **pluralism**, that is taking over the minds of our nation—
  - the notion that one religion or philosophy is just as good as another...
    - We have those who are baptised in the name of Jesus joining with those who worship false gods and saying that it is good to do so!
    - Instead of standing for the faith that was once delivered to the saints, we allow it to be watered down—
      - We conclude that God is not a judge...
        - that the cross is not necessary...
        - that there is only a general moralism defined by the mingling of all the different religions and opinions of men.
- And there is **naturalism**, the notion that we do not owe our being to God, but to random forces of nature acting apart from God.
  - Even those who are members of the church of Jesus Christ have swallowed the view that what we have is not from God...
    - That we need not answer to Him as our creator, lawgiver, and judge,
      - but that we grow up into our morality as we evolve.
- And more and more there is an embracing of **sensualism...**

- The idea that we are to be guided by our feelings and by what seems right to us rather than by God's law.
  - If I don't like the restraint of God's rules of chastity, then it is okay for me live in a sexual relationship outside of holy matrimony.
  - And if I don't like to observe the Sabbath, I can dismiss it at will.
  - It is all based on what seems right to me instead of on what God has spoken.
- And there is **humanism...**
  - the notion that man can solve his own problems and does not need God's help.
  - There are very few preachers who preach of man's sinful nature from birth and of His need to be born again by the Spirit of God and pardoned by means of the cross.
    - Sermons are designed to build up men's self-esteem rather than to drive them out of themselves to look to Christ.
    - Eric and Sarah Poulin got all kinds of wishy washy answers when they asked churches in our city
      - "What is man's greatest problem, sin, or a lack of self-esteem?"

If you love the Lord, you are distressed as you see the church and nation being brought more and more into captivity to the world.

- You see Christians turning away from the truth and...
  - You wonder what has become of the promise of God that the knowledge of the LORD will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!
  - You wonder what has become of the promise that Christ will reign until He has brought all His enemies under His feet!
  - You wonder what has happened to the promise that Christ will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.
- It is unsettling!
  - And that is why your gracious Lord comes to you with His Word to comfort you.
  - It is for times like these that we have this long section in Isaiah designed to comfort those who love the Lord.
    - It is written for you who care,
      - you who want to serve King Jesus rather than those who are in rebellion against Him.
      - you who want His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Isaiah 43 and 44 are both about redemption...

- Redemption has to do with deliverance from bondage...

- In Isaiah 43:1-21 which is our text today, the focus is on deliverance from exile.
- In Isaiah 43:22 through the end of 44, our text for next week, the focus is on deliverance from sin and guilt.
- We need both kinds of deliverance.
  - As in Isaiah's day, the church has sinned against God.
    - Instead of looking to Him, we have looked to the world for our blessing...
    - And so in response to us,
      - He is giving us over the world's oppressive dominion.
      - He is raising up leaders who do not lead us in His ways, and bringing us under bondage to them.
  - But the great comfort that is ministered to us in this passage is that even though He turns us over to this bondage for a time,
    - His commitment to us and purpose concerning us remains the same.
      - That is what we shall see in our text today.
      - Take a look and see...
        - See how He comforts you even as the church slides into exile.
        - We shall look at five ways that He assures us of His unwavering commitment.

**I. First, see how He assures you of the secure relationship you have with Him if you are among His elect.**

A. First, He is presented as "the LORD who created you, O Jacob"

1. This is not referring to creation out of the dust of the ground.
  - It refers rather to our creation out of sin and spiritual death to be His people!
    - We are a new creation in Jesus Christ...
      - In Ephesians 2:10, those who are delivered from their trespasses and sins by the grace of God are said to be:
        - "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works!"
  - What an encouragement this is when you see the church in our land slipping into exile!
    - If you are among those who have been made alive in Christ, the LORD Himself has created you.
2. This is a work that only God can do.
  - In yourself, you are Jacob who is no better than Esau.
    - It is not your striving that causes you to differ, but the grace of God working in you.

- And if God has done so great a work as to create you in Christ, He will not cut you off even though ten thousand may fall at your right hand.
  - Are you mindful of this change?
    - Have you been given a new heart?
    - Are you a new creation in Jesus Christ?
    - Have old things passed away and all things become new?
    - Are you born of God's Spirit with a heart that trusts in His promises and yearns to obey His commandments?
- B. Second, the security of your relationship with God is seen in that He is presented as "He who formed you, O Israel."
1. After Jacob became Israel, Israel had to be formed—shaped into that which was pleasing to God.
    - The LORD gave them His laws and brought them into His land to serve Him in His ordinances as His own people.
    - If you are in Christ, He is at work in you to renew you in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, forming you into His very own image.
  2. Though the church as a whole be delivered into exile, the God who is forming you will continue His work in you until it is finished,
    - He who began a good work in you will complete it,
      - so it is for you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.
      - Though the church move into exile, it is for you to move into greater conformity to Jesus Christ by His gracious working.
    - What? Are you failing?
      - Then repent and look to Christ!
      - He will give you His Holy Spirit if you ask Him.
- C. Third, your security in your relationship with the Lord is seen in that He is presented to you as the one who says: "I have redeemed you."
1. Do you remember what redemption is?
    - Redemption refers to help that comes for those who are in bondage and need to be rescued.
    - When a person was a slave with no resources to buy themselves out of slavery,
      - a kinsman redeemer could come along and shoulder the responsibility for you.

- He could rescue either by purchase or, if you were taken captive by an enemy, by conquest.
  - The main idea in redemption is that you, being helpless, are rescued by one who has the resources to deliver you.

2. What an encouragement that God Himself becomes our redeemer—in both ways!

- By conquest, as He frees us from the dominion of Satan and death...
- By purchase, as He pays the penalty for our sin in the person of His Son so that we are set free from the curse to serve God without guilt, free of condemnation!
- Even though we may be dragged into exile with a sinful and rebellious church, that has broken away from Christ,
  - We will continue as God's servants even in exile through Christ our redeemer.
  - What I mean is, even though godless laws will be passed and enforced by those in authority over us,
    - we will not embrace these godless ways or be brought into bondage by them.
      - Like Daniel, we will serve the king of Babylon, but we will rather die than forsake the law of our God.
      - Because we are freed by the LORD to be His people, we will sooner die than rebel against our God.
- That means that when you are asked to sin by your boss, to lie or to cheat,
  - you will not obey him because you belong to the Lord.
  - you will not obey no matter what consequences may follow.
- That means that even if the authorities oppress you for worshipping the true God and demand allegiance to themselves or their gods,
  - you will refuse to bow down to their idols...
  - You have been set free from such follow and you will stand for the LORD with joy.
- So examine yourself.
  - Are you living in the joy of God's redemption?
  - Are you free from bondage to men to serve the LORD your God?

D. Fourth, the security of your relationship with God in exile is seen in that He is presented as the one who says, "I have called you by name."

1. This is a reference to adoption!

- We name our children because they are our children!
    - God names us because we are His children!
  - That means that all the while you may be in exile, you remain a child of the king.
    - And it means that He is looking out for you and working in you to prepare you to live in His household...
    - It means that He is preparing an inheritance for you as a joint-heir with Jesus Christ...
      - What difference does it make if you must live in a prison cell when you have a place reserved for you in God's house?
2. That you are God's adopted child also means that you are no longer on probation.
- A servant, like Adam, is on probation—
    - He is subject to being cast out of the master's house if he does not live up to his calling...
    - But as Jesus tells us, "the son remains in the house forever!"
      - He is not like the servant who is only there for a time!
  - All the while that you may be in exile, you can call upon your father with confidence knowing that He is tender toward you as His child.
    - He will never leave you or forsake you because you are His child.
    - He will take vengeance on all who do you wrong.
      - Leave it to Him, resting in your Father's care.
- E. Fifth, the security of your relationship with God, even when you are in exile, is seen in that the LORD is presented as the one who says to you, "You are mine."
1. Here you see that the LORD not only gives us an inheritance, but that He also claims us as *His* inheritance!
- And I tell you that nobody is able to take His inheritance away from Him.
    - If you are in captivity and you are His, it is only that He may accomplish His purpose in you... to refine you and you to draw you nearer to Himself.
      - There is no danger that the LORD will lose what is His!
2. If you are trusting in Jesus Christ who purchased you,
- You are among those who belong to the Father and whom He gives to His Son...
  - And Jesus says that He will lose none who are given to Him by the Father but will raise them up on the last day!
    - In John 10:27-29, He says:

- John 10:27-29: My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.
- You may be in exile under an oppressive ungodly authority,
  - but you do not belong to that authority...
  - you belong to your dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
  - Your identity is in Him.

TRANS> So you see that there is no reason for you to be afraid even though the LORD has begun to pour out His anger on a disobedient Church...

- Even though, as it says at the end of chapter 42,
  - "He has poured out on His people the fury of His anger and has set them on fire all around..."
  - You can take heart that your relationship with your Lord is still intact and secure.
    - You are created in Christ, transformed by Him, redeemed by His grace, called by name, and His very own possession.
    - This is the LORD's great comfort to you even in exile!
- In verse 2, the LORD goes on to assure you with a second comfort...

## **II. He assures you that He will bring you through the affliction unharmed**

A. The words of verse 2 show clearly that you will indeed go through the affliction with others—

- You will not be sheltered so as not to experience the exile...
  - But the promise is that you will come out on the other side of the affliction unharmed!
- It says:
  - Isa 43:2: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.
  - Water and fire are used to refer to every sort of affliction,
    - but even though the affliction will be real, it will not harm you.

B. You may think of this something like the afflictions that God sent upon Egypt in the plagues.

1. You will remember that many of them did not fall upon Israel at all.
  - We are told that the LORD deliberately made a distinction between Israel and Egypt when He sent them.



- His purpose was not to destroy Israel through the plagues, but rather to destroy Egypt so that Israel might come forth, freed from them at last.
  - You remember, for example, in the last plague—the death of the first-born...
    - how the LORD called the Israelites to kill a lamb in the place of their first-born and put the blood on their doorways...
    - And you remember that when the angel of death came around in judgement, he passed over all the firstborn of Israel.
      - This was God's electing love that made a distinction.
2. But now in Isaiah, the LORD is bringing judgement upon His people, upon the visible church, the nation of Israel, because of their obstinence and rebellion.
- And so now the distinction that was made between Israel and Egypt is made between elect Israel and reprobate Israel!
  - Among the nation, there were true sons and there were false sons.
    - And the false sons would readily give themselves to Babylon and her gods once they were conquered...
      - but true sons would not be given over to them.
    - The promise of God to preserve His people is not to the false sons—they will be happy enough in their rebellion.
      - They do not care about their relationship with God because they are dead in their sins.
        - The ones God comforts are the ones who do care—who have renewed hearts because God had chosen them and made them to be His people.
  - The idea in verse 3-4 is that just as He gave Egypt and the surrounding areas that were part of the Egyptian dynasty over to destruction in order that He might bring out His people,
    - so now He will give up the reprobate in Israel in order to deliver His elect people.
  - This is also what happened when Jesus came, as Paul tells us in Romans 9:6 that not all Israel are of Israel.
    - It is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God, but the children of the promise that are counted as the seed.
      - In Rom 11:7 Paul explains that:
        - Rom 11:7-8: Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: "God has

given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day."

- So verses 3-4, while addressed to all Israel, the comfort is only received by the elect and in the end only pertains to them:
    - Isa 43:3-4: For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.
3. What comfort there is in these words for those yearn for God's salvation.
- a. In times of affliction, we may be tempted, as Job was by His wife, to curse God.
    - We often question His love for us in times of affliction...
      - But it is in these very times of stretching that the LORD is pleased to pour out in our hearts an even greater assurance of His love than we have known...
      - He makes it clear to us, as he does in verse 3 & 4, that we are precious in His sight and that He has loves us...
  - b. We know this in a far greater way now...
    - now that Jesus has come.
    - God has demonstrated His love to us in giving His Son to die for us.
      - It is not just Egypt or lambs that have been sacrificed instead of us—
        - It is the Son of God Himself!
    - So when affliction comes and you start to question God's love for you,
      - ask Him to give you are clear view of the cross!
      - ask Him to pour out in your heart an even greater assurance of His love than you have ever known!
      - You can actually have a greater assurance through the fire and the water than you had apart from it.

TRANS> That is the ground of your personal assurance...

- But in times such as these when we see many departing from the LORD, what hope do we have that the gospel well really have much impact among the nations?
- If it is not having much impact even within the church, what hope do we have for the world?
- Well, this is the third comfort that the Lord brings to you who know Him in this passage...

### **III. He assures you that He will carry out His purpose for the salvation of the world.**

A. God will gather His elect from all over the world so that all of the families of the earth will be blessed, just as He promised to Abraham...

- The promise of the Spirit will come upon the Gentiles...
  - Jesus will indeed reign until He has brought all His enemies under His feet.
- 1. You see in verse 5-6 that God promises to call forth His sons and daughters from the ends of the earth!
  - Isa 43:5-7: Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth—Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."
- 2. These words reach beyond the restoration from Babylon...
  - They speak of the ingathering of God's elect—of the true seed of Abraham—from the four corners of the earth—from every direction!
  - God has created these for His own glory, and He will gather them all.
    - As our Lord said:
      - Joh 10:16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
      - Amen!

B. We cannot determine what God will do by reading the daily news...

1. We can only know by listening to His promise.
  - Even as His people were headed off to exile, He still brought before them His promise to bless all nations through them.
    - Judging from the circumstances, it certainly did not look like the kingdom of God would spread to the nations when Israel was taken to Babylon...
      - But God's promise did not change in the least.
    - Likewise, judging from the circumstances in our day, it does not look like all things will be brought under the feet of Jesus Christ!
      - But God's promise has not change in the least.
2. My brothers and sisters,
  - Do not lose confidence in the gospel just because times are hard...
    - Keep sowing those seeds, knowing that the Lord will bring forth life in His appointed time.

- His promise and purpose is sure.

TRANS> So now we have seen three ways that He comforts you in times of the church's captivity...

- He reminds you of His relationship with you...
- He reminds you that His punishment of the church will not harm you...
- He reminds you that His purpose to save the nations still stands...

#### **IV. Fourthly, He assures you that the future is with Him.**

- The LORD demonstrates this by calling for a day in court in order to prove that the future is with Him, not with idols.

A. As we saw in chapter 41, He summons the nations to come together and justify their worship of idols.

1. The nations have been serving their idols, and many in Israel have also gone after these idols...

- And so the LORD calls these blind and deaf witnesses,
  - who like their idols have eyes and ears so that they should be able to see and hear...but who cannot see and hear...
- In verse 8 He says:
  - Isa 43:8-9: Bring out the blind people who have eyes, And the deaf who have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, And let the people be assembled.
- This is terribly sarcastic!
  - Imagine, calling witnesses who are blind and deaf!
  - But this is the only kind of witnesses that idols have!
    - They are people who have become like their idols...
    - As it says in Psalm 115,
      - "They who make them shall become like them."
      - They have mouths, but they do not speak...
      - Eyes they have, but they do not see;
      - They have ears, but they do not hear.

TRANS> What suitable witnesses they are for these gods!

2. Now He calls these idol worshippers to bring forth their evidence!

a. When have their gods ever told what they were going to do and then done it?

- When did they prophecy that they were going to deliver slaves from a mighty nation that held them in bondage?

- When did they ever declare that they were going to bring judgement upon mighty nations by an inferior nation and give the inferior nation their land?
  - When did they ever announce that they were going raise up Assyria or Babylon and declare what would these nations would do to all the surrounding nations?
- b. The LORD tells them to either bring forth their witnesses to justify the worship of their idols or accept the truth!
- verse 9 goes on to say:
    - Isa 43:9: “Who among them can declare this, And show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; Or let them hear and say, "It is truth."
  - That is what we must do when men come forth with their crazy God-denying views...
    - We must show them how absurd and how inconsistent they are.
    - The Lord will show them that there is no justification for their silly notions...
      - They cannot give a solid reason for what they have been doing.
      - So let them hear what the LORD says and admit that it is truth.
- B. But you see in the passage that the LORD also calls forth His worshippers to take the stand as His witnesses
- Indeed, He calls you forth to be His witnesses!
1. He reminds you that it is given to you to know Him, the true and living God!
- a. What an encouragement!
- In verse 10, He says to you who know Him...
    - "You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He."
- b. What a blessing!
- The living God has revealed Himself to you.
  - He has chosen you to be His servant—to know Him and believe Him.
    - to understand that He is the true and living God!
    - to experience His salvation for yourself as a vessel of His mercy—a vessel that He pours His mercy upon for all to see!
  - He has opened your blind eyes to see His glory!
    - He has revealed Himself to you in Jesus Christ so that you have seen and may testify that this is the true God and eternal life.
    - So that you may be a witness of His infinite mercy and grace.

2. There are two things that He makes crystal clear to you when you come to know Him in a saving way...
  - a. First, that He is the only true God and Saviour...
    - 1) You see how strongly He asserts this in the remainder of verse 10 and in verse 11:
      - Isa 43:10-11: Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.
      - There are many who will admit that Jehovah is God, but it is much more difficult to get them to admit that He is **the only true God**.
      - They want to have Him as one of many, but when we come to truly know Him, we see clearly that He alone is God...
        - There is no other to compare with Him.
          - Much of this comes about because He has opened your eyes to see your need of pardon for your sins...
          - And He has shown you what the true remedy is, even the shedding of the blood of the Son of God in your place.
        - Once you see what He requires—and what He has provided...
          - Once you have really grasped it...
            - There is no way for you to admit the possibility of any other way of salvation!
          - What are you going to bring to God if the blood of His Son was shed for your sin?
            - What possible remedy could be put beside this remedy?
            - Do you have some work of man? some great deed? some great sacrifice to compare with this?
        - Every other religion immediately becomes woefully inadequate!
          - The true God is given His proper place in your estimation!
          - This is why true Christians have always been so stubborn about insisting that Christ is the only way and why they utterly refuse to worship other gods.
          - This is why they are solid witnesses that there is only one true God.
    - 2) In v. 12, the LORD explains what He has done...that no idol has done...
      - Isa 43:12: I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed...

- a) Those three words—declared, saved, and proclaimed—are what He is asking the idols to do...
  - He first declared what needed to be done and what He would do.
  - Then He did it—He saved—He carried out the plan...
  - And then He proclaimed what He had done, explaining it for the benefit of His people so that they might believe...
  
- b) Take God's deliverance from Egypt as an example...
  - First He **declared** that He would send His people there and then deliver to serve in bondage and then that He would deliver them with a mighty hand after 400 years...
    - He told Abraham, Isaac and Jacob this long before He did it.
    - He told Moses just before He did it and Moses told Israel.
    - He told Pharaoh what He was going to do.
  
  - Second, He carried out His plan and actually **saved** His people, bringing judgement upon Egypt and Egypt's gods,
    - Showing that He alone was LORD and could do whatever He had purposed to do.
  
  - Third, He **proclaimed** what He had done, declaring His purpose for saving Israel, and calling them into His service before the nations.

TRANS> He declared, He saved, and He proclaimed, and no one could deny it.

- He did this again and again, showing that He is the LORD, the One true and living God.
  
- c) So it is with our salvation in Christ....
  - First, He declared our need—He showed that He was holy and that a sacrifice must be brought forth to atone for our sin, and He declared that He would send His Son to be that sacrifice...
    - He declared it through prophecy and through the whole ceremonial system of priests and sacrifices at the altar in Jerusalem.
  
  - Then He carried out what He had promised and actually sent Jesus in the flesh to save us—and He did—He went to the cross and He bore our sins.
  
  - Then, He proclaimed what He had done for our salvation to the nations...

- And all those who believe are convinced that there is no other possible way of salvation once they have seen what He did!
- He alone is Saviour—there is no other!

3) And in all of this, the LORD did not rely on another God.

- As verse 12 goes on to say, “there was no foreign god among you...”
  - The LORD did not obtain the help of other gods—salvation is of Him and of Him alone.
  - He alone is God, there is no other.
  - He alone is Saviour.

TRANS> That is the first thing that the witnesses who have obtained His salvation testify.

- And then secondly,
  - b. Secondly they testify that no one can keep Him from doing what He has purposed.
    - His purposes are from the foundation of the world.
      - Let Satan summon all his forces and he will not be able to stop the work that the LORD has purposed to do.
      - As the LORD says in verse 13:
        - Isa 43:13: Indeed before the day was [that is, before there was a day], I am He; And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?"
    - Here then is complete security for those who trust in the LORD...
      - He has no rivals who can pose a threat to Him.
        - Yes, in the history of man, there is a struggle for the souls of men as we are called to go out and proclaim the gospel and labour in prayer for the salvation of souls...
          - but as far as the LORD’s purposes, He will do all that He has purposed and no one will be able to stop Him.
    - It is for you, my dear brothers and sisters, to safely trust in Him.
      - You are His witnesses, and you know the power of His salvation...
      - You know that there is no other god besides Him.
      - Truly the future belongs to Him!
        - It is in His power to do all that He has spoken—and He will!
        - Is the church going into exile?
          - The LORD’s purpose is not overthrown!
          - It is as sure as ever and you have no reason to despair.



TRANS> What comfort He gives us! We have seen four things so far...

- He assures you of the secure relationship you have with Him...
- He assures you that His chastisement of the church will not destroy you...
- He assures you that He will carry out His purpose of salvation for the nations...
- He assures you that the future is with Him...

And now fifthly,

## **V. He assures you that He will deliver you from exile... from bondage in Babylon!**

A. The LORD declares that as the Redeemer of His people,

1. He will “send to Babylon (v. 14) and bring them all down as fugitives.”
  - In other words, He is going to bring the captors into captivity.
  - It is difficult to know what he means when he refers to them as the Chaldeans (Chaldean is just another name for Babylonians) who rejoice in their ships...
    - They did have a fleet that they gloried in, and some have suggested that perhaps they thought they could escape if ever they needed to as they had a river running through their city...
      - a river that the Persians diverted when they conquered the city...
      - but whatever the case may be,
        - the point is that the ones who held Israel captive will themselves become fugitives.
        - The LORD will turn the tables on them.
2. He affirms again who He is, to give them assurance that He is quite able to do this...
  - In verse 15, He says,
    - Isa 43:15: “I am the LORD, your holy one, the Creator of Israel, your king.”
  - a. This encouragement was very much needed.
    - It may not seem like it to us, but here they were under this power nation with its 75 foot thick walls that were 300 feet high!
      - How would these captors be overthrown?
      - Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible.
  - b. But perhaps we can understand if we apply it to the church’s exile today...
    - We are increasingly brought under a world power that does not acknowledge God.
      - And as I mentioned in the introduction, we see many in the church who are given over the world—to egalitarianism, materialism,

pluralism, naturalism, sensualism, and humanism... and I forgot to mention spiritualism and feminism.

- As God's people, we see many baptised persons who are brought into captivity,
  - and even if we have been preserved, we feel the weight of the struggle when we remember that we are called to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ!
    - How could we possibly expect to see the powers that be brought into subjection to Jesus Christ?
    - It seems entirely impossible!
      - But it is not impossible with the LORD.
        - What seems impossible to us is possible with Him.
      - Jesus Christ will reign at His right hand until He has brought all His enemies under His feet...
        - Then He will conquer the last enemy—death...
        - And then He will deliver the kingdom up to the Father.

TRANS> We need all the encouragement we can get if we are to believe that world will be brought under Jesus Christ.

3. The Lord goes on to declare that He will bring His people back to Himself that they may declare His praise...
  - They will be delivered from Babylon to serve Him again...
    - And in declaring this, He explains that this deliverance will be so great that the deliverance out of Egypt will be overshadowed!
  - Is this not what He says in verses 16-21?
    - The passage begins with these words:
      - Isa 43:16-17: Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters, Who brings forth the chariot and horse, The army and the power (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):
    - That is a reference to what the LORD did in Egypt when He brought Israel through the Red Sea and destroyed the horses and chariots of the Egyptians...
      - But then He speaks of this as something that will be forgotten compared with the deliverance from Babylon that He will accomplish...
        - Look at verse 18 and following:
          - 18-21 "Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you

not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert. The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.

- The LORD will bring them through the wilderness from Babylon back to their homeland,
  - and He will provide for them a path and with water in the wilderness so that they can make the journey...
  - In other words, He is going to make the way for their deliverance!
    - He is going to do what would seem to them impossible!

B. But how was the deliverance from Babylon greater than the deliverance from Egypt?

1. The deliverance from Egypt involved mighty signs and wonders as God brought the ten plagues and then parted the Red Sea...
  - He brought Israel out without the use of human means—it was all of His mighty power alone...
    - and then He fed them in the wilderness and provided drink for them and then drove out the Canaanites from the land of promise.
  - How does this compare with the deliverance from Babylon?
    - He foretold of the coming of Cyrus which was no small thing, and He raised up Cyrus and gave Him strength,
      - but Israel was realised by the decree of Cyrus and was brought into the land by his permission.
      - There were no special miracles brought about—just ordinary means.
        - Certainly He worked things out for them, but there were no marches around the walls of Jericho or water from the rock.
        - How it is that the LORD speaks of deliverance from Babylon as a deliverance that would overshadow the deliverance from Egypt?
2. We must realise that when Isaiah and the other prophets speak of the deliverance in Babylon they have a lot more in view than what happened under Ezra and Nehemiah when Jerusalem was rather pitifully rebuilt.
  - The city remained under oppression by various world rulers right up until the time of Christ...
    - But in speaking about the return from exile in Babylon,
      - the prophets refer to the restoration that the Messiah brings!

- In other words, they are looking at the return from exile as inclusive of the coming of Jesus Christ the Redeemer and the outpouring of His Spirit.
  - This is why they speak of the return from Babylon in such lofty terms!
    - As a new covenant that is not like the covenant made with Israel when God brought them out of Egypt!
    - As something much greater that would bring new life to them and the complete forgiveness of sin!
  - Just as Egyptian deliverance was not complete until they were safely established in the promised land,
    - so Babylonian deliverance was not complete until the Messiah has completed His work and fully established His kingdom of righteousness in the earth!
      - until all things are brought under His feet and His people are a praise in the earth in the very fullest sense!
3. My dear brothers and sisters, this is our hope!
- The world is Babylon!
    - But Babylon will be brought down by our Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom of righteousness will prevail!
    - There will be *mish-pawt* in all the earth!
  - Do not be discouraged.
    - Do not think this is impossible...
    - Jesus told us to pray that God's kingdom would come and that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven,
      - and He told us that He would reign until all His enemies are brought under His feet!
        - So lift up your eyes to the Lord and seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!
        - The One true God is our redeemer, and He will bring it to pass.
    - It is for you to reign with Him now...
      - whether you be as a martyr who remains faithful to Him under oppression and overcomes the world by remaining faithful even unto death...
      - or whether you are given authority in the earth to lead others in righteousness after the example of your master, giving your life for those under your care...
      - It is for you to come know and believe that He will prevail and that you will be completely delivered from exile at last.