

Don't Dwell on the Past; I Bring New Things**Isaiah 43:14-21 (18-19)****Facilitator: Alfreda Chandler****I. Historical Background**

Isaiah was known for his powerful messages of judgment and hope, as he spoke on the behalf of God to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He delivered a message of comfort and reassurance to the people of Israel in this chapter. He reminds them of God's unwavering love and protection, even during their trials and tribulations. This chapter foreshadows the coming deliverance of the Israelites from captivity, as well as the promise of a new and glorious future. Throughout the passage, Isaiah uses imagery and themes from other biblical books, such the Exodus (Ex.14:15-31) and the creation account (Gen.1:1-2:3). These references serve to reinforce the idea that God is the sovereign ruler of all creation and that He will always be faithful to His people.

II. Biblical Context

Verse 1 focus on the relationship between God and the people of Israel. God emphasizes that He is the Creator and the One who formed them. This highlights the personal connection God has with His people, knowing them by name and claiming them as His own. Also, he gives them reassurance not to fear which reflects His protection and redemption of His chosen ones. It signifies that despite any challenges or fears they may face; God is with them and has a unique, and personal relationship with each one of them. Verse 2 conveys the promise of God's presence and protection during times trials and tribulations. This affirms the idea of His faithfulness and His ability to deliver His people from harm. Verse 3 shows that God affirms His identity as the Holy One of Israel and He is their Savior. He is showing His love and commitment to His people by emphasizing their value in His sight. Isaiah 43:1-7

conveys a message of God's intimate relationship with His people; His unwavering presence during trials; His sacrificial love and protection. It emphasizes the significance of trusting in God's promises. Even in the face of adversity, knowing that God is always faithful to His word and will fulfill His covenant with His love and faithfulness to His chosen ones. This passage serves as a powerful reminder of His sovereignty, love and faithfulness throughout Israel history and the broader biblical narrative. When we read 43:8-13 we see that it highlights the importance of not just physical sight and hearing but having spiritual discernment and understanding in recognizing God's hand at work in our lives. We also see the uniqueness and sovereignty; He is the one true god.

Isaiah 43:14-21 also are passages about God's faithfulness; His power to deliver and His intention to do a new thing. It speaks of a future redemption for Israel from both Babylonia and more profound spiritual redemption. These passages encourage believers to move beyond dwelling on past hardships and victories and embrace the new opportunities and blessings that God will provide.

III. Lesson: "Don't Dwell on the Past; I Bring New Things!"

1. vv.14-15.

In verse 14, God introduces Himself as the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. He as the Redeemer saves His people from peril and delivers them from their enemies. Even though God have allowed the people to be taken into captivity by the Babylonians because of their disobediences, God is declaring that He will bring the mighty Babylonians down. Isaiah prophesied this before the Babylonians conquered Judah and sent the nation into exile for 70 years. At the time of the prophecy, Babylon was an up-and-coming world power or a superpower. Verse 15 reinforces God identity as the Lord your

Redeemer; the Holy One of Israel; your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King: In just a few verses, look at the glorious titles of God. This passage was intended to comfort Israel during captivity. God is asserting His authority over His people by not being a distant deity but rather a personal God who is intimately involved in the lives of His chosen people. God powerfully put forth images of His own strength and power.

2. vv.16-17.

God references the miraculous event of the parting of the Red Sea during the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in these verses. He is showcasing His power over nature and his ability to overcome any obstacle in their path by reminding them of His supernatural intervention. The imagery of chariots and horses being extinguished like a wick emphasizes the insignificance of human strength in the face of Gods' might. Just as God overwhelmed the Egyptian armies that enslaved Israel, He will also judge the Babylonians.

This teaches us that we can always justify trusting God right now by remembering the great things He has done. It also teaches us that we never want to oppose the Lord or His people.

3. vv.18-19. It is a fascinating switch between verses 16-17 and verse 18. 16-17, Israel was told to look to the past by remembering the great things God did for them at the Red Sea, then verse 18 tells them not to remember the former things.

These verses challenge the Israelites to let go of past grievances or victories and focus on the new work that God is about to do. It speaks to the idea of God's continuous work in the lives of His people, bringing about new beginnings and opportunities for growth. This is a message of hope and renewal, which is a recurring theme throughout the Bible, illustrating God's faithfulness to His promises and His ability to bring forth new blessings in unexpected

ways. As Isaiah speaks prophetically of the captivity, God wanted to put their eyes on the new work that He would do. So, he began with a command to not remember the former things. If they were stuck in the failure and sin or discouragement of the past, they would never go toward the new things God have for them. Staying stuck in the past can keep us from the **new thing** God wants to do. If Israel stayed stuck in discouragement and seduction of Babylon, they would never look for the new thing for being release from exile. We need to distinguish between living in the past (which is unhealthy) and learning from it (which is life-giving). We live in the past when we make past events romantic and perhaps perfect, when they probably weren't. They can become a mental prison for us and will crush our hope. The best thing we can do with the past is to learn from it. We can learn about strengths and weaknesses that affect us. God call to forget the former things is not to erase memories or experiences, but rather to release the negative hold that may have on us. It is an invitation to trust in His plan and His ability to transform our lives. When we let go of the past, we open ourselves up to receive the "**new beginning**". 2 Co.5:17; Php.3:13-14 echo the message of leaving behind the old and embracing the new which God is doing in our lives. These passages serve as a reminder of His continuous work of transformation and restoration in those who believe in Him. Can we like the Israelites, heed the call to release the burdens of the past and step into newness that God has in store for us, even if they do not align with our expectation or plans?

4. vv.20-21.

God highlights His provision for His people in these final verses. Just as He provided water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert for the Israelites during their time of need, God promised to meet the needs of His chosen people. The image of even the wild animals honoring God demonstrates the universal recognition of His power

and provision. God's provision is not just for the sustenance of His people but also for them to declare His praise and bring glory to His name. God's sovereignty, power, provision, and faithfulness to His people are showcased in Isaiah 43:14-21. It is to serve as a reminder that God is the ultimate Redeemer and Creator who is actively involved in the lives of His chosen ones. The passage encourages believers to trust in God's ability to bring about new beginnings, overcome obstacles and provide for their needs. It underscores the importance of remembering God's past faithfulness while looking forward to the new things that He is about to do.

IV. Conclusion

In our modern world, filled with uncertainty and challenges, the message of verse 18-19 remains relevant today. It offers hope and encouragement to those facing difficult circumstances to remind them that God is always at work to bring about new things and restoration. God is always moving, and it may not be done in a way is familiar to us. Just as the Israelites were called to let go of the former things and embrace the future, we are called to release our grip on what was and step into the new things God is doing in our lives today.

Rev.22:5: And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"