

“The Joy of a Memorial Day of Forgiveness”

Isaiah 44:1-28

Context: The Servant theme in Isaiah now develops along lines describing the Messiah’s redemptive work of forgiveness. Sins necessitating His work of forgiveness include the imputation of Adam’s original sin and its expression as idolatry, false prophecy, and spiritual neglect. The actualization of Isaiah’s prophecy that Cyrus, as a servant of God, will restore the Remnant’s inhabitation of Jerusalem serves as proof that God will also restore Jacob from his transgressions. Neither the circumstance of enslavement nor the prospect of the difficult return to Jerusalem upon release should dispirit the people’s remembrance of the Lord’s forgiveness and redemption.

Life Principle: Forgive yourself for that for which God has forgiven you and you will be liberated to experience true joy (cp. Isaiah 44:22-23).

1. Joy of His election – Isaiah 44:1-5

God’s election is based upon His greatness and not upon any virtue resident in those chosen, that is, the Remnant. He owns them from the time He formed them and He will sustain them through eternity. The elect are redeemed by the Lord from the bondage of their sin that they might serve as witnesses to His glory to the idolatrous nations. The elect are not to fear the impending judgments surrounding them, for God empowers them to serve Him as witnesses by His Spirit. The prophet then uses the concept of “rock” as a symbol of the perpetuity the Lord’s Divine capacity to help them achieve His eternal purpose.

2. Joy of His redemption – Isaiah 44:6-28

Isaiah reveals that God’s glory reflecting from His servants stands in stark contrast to the unhappy and frustrated existence of those seeking deliverance from their empty self-made gods. The elect were exhorted to avoid trembling and being stupefied by the blind and speechless gods that symbolize the worldview and power of their Babylonian captors. Instead, the Remnant is to find joy in recollecting that they are the Omnipotent God’s own creation, that God is always mindful of them, that He has completely erased each of their sins, and that He has paid over and above for the price of their liberation. To find that joy, they only need to again turn toward Him, that is, repent. When they turn, they will experience the outworking of His word and purpose in the life He has planned for them.

Study questions:

- Isaiah 43:10 declares that the Remnant is the Lord’s witness. As a **Bible study method**, look up the term “witness” in the *TWOT* (#1576g) and *TDNT* (v. 4, p. 484). What does the term ‘witness’ have to do with us being “formed in God’s image” (cf. Isaiah 43:1; Genesis 2:7; Colossians 3:10)?
- Isaiah 44:3-5 uses a string of metaphorical concepts. Can you identify “My Spirit” in verse 3? What is the “blessing” given to the “descendants?” Are these physical or spiritual descendants of Israel? How are they like grass or poplars (verse 4)? To whom are the descendants/offspring surrendered in verse 5 and why are Jacob and Israel of secondary prominence (cf. Romans 11:1-36)?
- Isaiah 44:6 reiterates the truth of Isaiah 41:4 that is ‘God is the sovereign architect of human history.’ These verses identify Him with the same descriptor used for Jesus Christ, “the first and last” (Revelation 1:17; 2:8). This concurs with our belief in Jesus as fully God (see footnote 5 ‘**On Jesus Christ**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). In what sense are God the Father and Jesus “the first and the last” in these four verses?

Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Isaiah 44:22-23. Have you been able to forgive yourself for the sins that God, the only One Who has the right to hold them against you, has forgiven you? If so, rejoice along with all creation. If not, repent and be blessed (cf. Isaiah 44:22).