

GOD WILL BE OUR REDEEMER

Ready for Jesus in the Latter Prophets

December 10, 2023

²¹ Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant;
I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.
²² I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist;
return to me, for I have redeemed you.

Isaiah 41

The (mostly) horrible history of the Latter Prophets

¹ *By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.*

² *There on the poplars we hung our harps,*

³ *for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"*

Psalm 137 (see also the summary in 2 Chronicles 36:15-16)

1. David's reign ended with the borders secure and supplies for a temple assembled in Jerusalem
2. The short history of the Latter Prophets is not pretty, but God must have included it for a reason

Framework for this troubling history:

1000 BC	David's rise
930	Rehoboam provokes the division of the kingdom and leads Judah into idolatry
925	Egypt makes Judah a vassal state and takes treasure from the temple
722	Northern Kingdom falls to Assyrians under Tiglath-Pileser
701	Hezekiah is delivered from the Assyrians under Sennacherib
605	Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian defeats Judah, first deportation includes Daniel
586	Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem
536	First returnees under Cyrus the Persian
516	Second Temple completed under Zerrubabel
483-473	Esther is queen in Persia
444	Walls of Jerusalem completed under Nehemiah
167	Maccabean revolt against Greek/Seleucid forces, the Hanukkah miracle

Transition: This history tells the story of my need for a redeemer (see 1 Corinthians 10:11)

God responds with the promise (and example!) of a Redeemer

²⁴ *“This is what the LORD says—
your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:
I am the LORD, who has made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who spread out the earth by myself,
²⁵ who foils the signs of false prophets
and makes fools of diviners,
who overthrows the learning of the wise
and turns it into nonsense,
²⁶ who carries out the words of his servants
and fulfills the predictions of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’
of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be built,’
and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’
²⁷ who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry,
and I will dry up your streams,’
²⁸ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd
and will accomplish all that I please;
he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,”
and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’”*
Isaiah 44

1. God has always introduced himself as “Redeemer” (Hebrew: *go’el*)

⁶ *“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. ⁸ And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’”*

Exodus 6:6 (see also the story of Ruth’s “redeemer” in Ruth 3-4)

2. God’s promise has always included the Holy Spirit

³ *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*
Isaiah 44

3. How God would do this was always a surprise!

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

² *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

Isaiah 9 (see also Ruth for the surprise of the “kinsman redeemer”)

How am I going to experience this promise and reality?

⁶⁸ *“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.
⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—
⁷² to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

Luke 1, Zechariah’s song after the birth of John

1. I start with the truth about God and myself

Q2: What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A: Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 1, Q/A 2

2. Keep my eyes and heart open to find this Redeemer

¹³ *Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.*

¹⁷ *He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”*

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ *“What things?” he asked.*

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

Luke 24

3. How does this redeeming work of Jesus change my life?

¹³ *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

¹⁷ *Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 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 forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

1 Peter 1 (see Titus 2:11-15 for another encouragement for the redeemed)

Resources for further study

The Bible Project's videos on Isaiah are a great place to start your study:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/isaiah/>

Sproul has a wonderful, easy to read, theology of redemption at

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/blueprint-redemption> and an article that connects redemption and incarnation at <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/humiliation-exaltation>

Surgeon's "Joy of Salvation" sermon on Isaiah 44 at <https://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/2450.htm>

Nick Batzig has a short discussion of why we need a redeemer (from the Ruth story) at

<https://www.beautifulchristianlife.com/blog/3-reasons-why-everyone-needs-a-kinsman-redeemer>

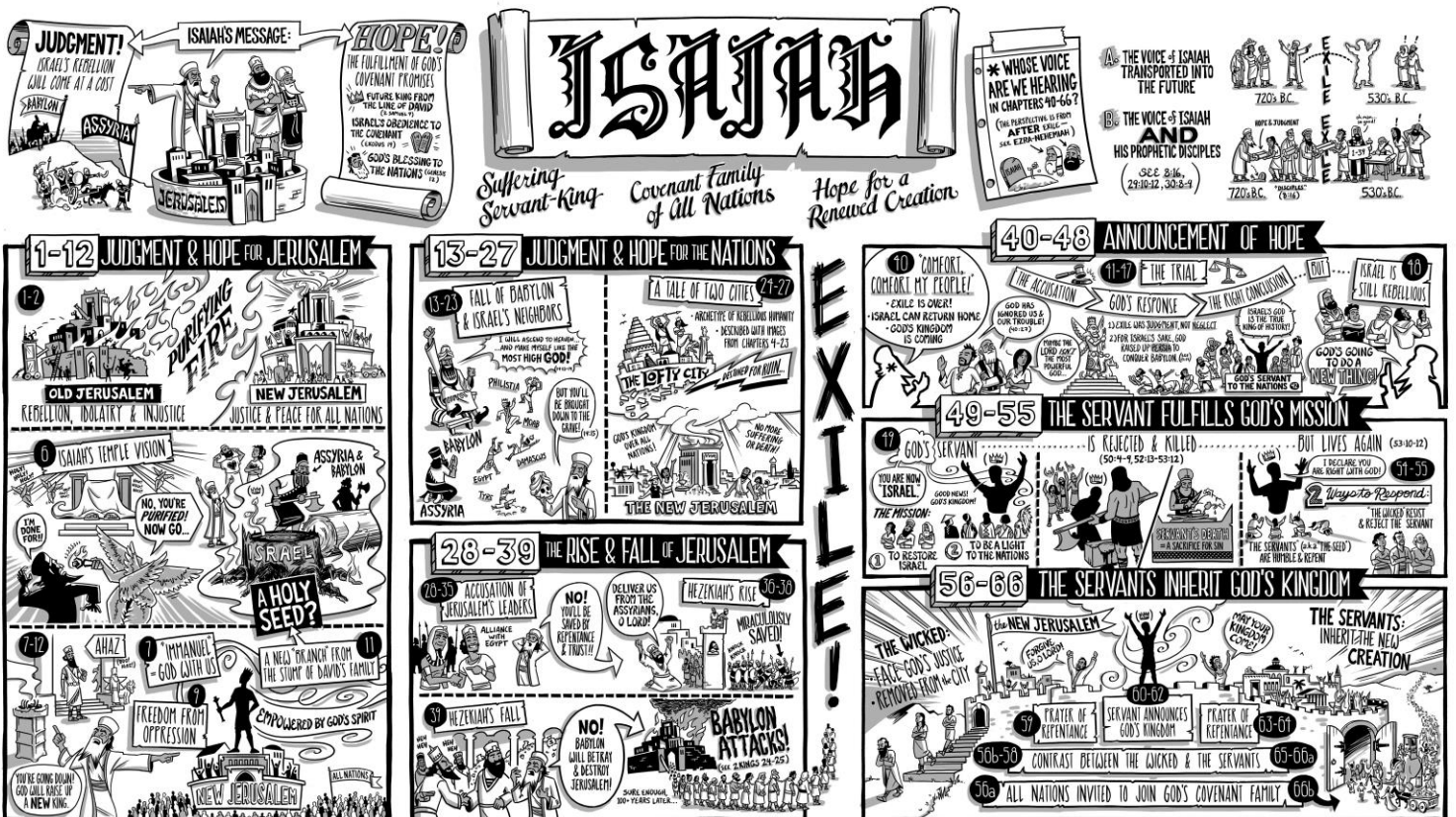
J.I. Packer's "What did the Cross Achieve?" is a great place to begin a study of the language of redemption at

http://www.the-highway.com/cross_Packer.html

B.B. Warfield has a good study of redemption at

https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/warfield/warfield_redeemer.html

This is the Times of Israel article from 2020 that I referenced in my sermon: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/by-the-rivers-of-babylon-why-a-2500-year-old-hebrew-poem-still-matters/>



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