

Part II, Lesson 21

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

Salvation
For
God's People

Isaiah
51:1-16

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex
Curriculum*

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Salvation for God's People

Isaiah 51:1-16

In today's lesson, we read Isaiah's account of God's promise of salvation to the people of Israel. Read Isaiah 51:1-8. Three times we hear God saying, "Listen to me." Actually the last time He says, "Hear me..." Good students will want to know to whom God is speaking.

We come to the conclusion that He is addressing His people...the people of Israel. He calls them those "who pursue righteousness." He calls them those "who seek the Lord." He calls them "my people" and "my nation." He calls them those "who know what is right" and "you people who have my law in your hearts."

God, speaking through the prophet, tells the exiles in Babylon that they should not lose hope. God knows them and is going to bless them. They are not alone and God has not deserted them.

He tells them that they should look back to the rock. Little is known about what kind of work the Hebrew slaves did in Babylon, but it is quite possible that some, if not many, of them were assigned to work in building the great buildings, gardens and other structures in that booming city. We know that Nebuchadnezzar built beautiful gardens (the Hanging Gardens) which were considered one of the original seven wonders of the world. This was probably done with slave labor. When God tells the Hebrews to look to the rock from which they were cut and to the quarry from which they were carved, it might have been a reference to work they were doing daily in cutting and hauling building blocks for Babylonian structures.

He makes it clear, though, that He is talking about Abraham and Sarah who were the father and mother of the nation of Israel. Israel was the name given by God to Jacob, Abraham's grandson. God said, when I called Abraham he was only one guy. He and Sarah didn't have any children. It is interesting that Abraham was originally from the land of Ur, which was where the Hebrews were when God was speaking at this time. Ur had become a part of Babylonia.

God said that just like He had made Abraham the father of many, many people, He would bless them also. What had been ruins and deserted cities, He would make living, growing places again. He said the silence there would turn into happy singing. The people would sing songs of thanksgiving to God.

God said, "Hear me, my people, hear me, my nation...my justice will become a light to the nations." This would have been interesting news to the Israelites. In their minds, God was their God. As with many of the nations of that day, each had their own god. But the God of Israel was saying that His salvation was going to be available to all nations. Even the far off islands would "wait in hope" for God's salvation.

What seems to be permanent, though, the heavens and the earth, will someday vanish. The heavens will blow away like a puff of smoke. The earth will wear out like old clothes and those who live here will die. But even when all that happens, God's people can be joyfully sure of God's forever salvation.

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The third statement is addressed to those “who know what is right.” We can assume that God is referring to what they learned in childhood. The boys attended religious school and learned the Torah (first five books of the Bible) by the time they were twelve. We don't know about the kind of teaching the girls had, but God implies here that they were taught enough to know God's law and understand what was right and wrong.

God knew that they were persecuted for their beliefs. We don't know exactly who their persecutors were, but we can assume that it was the Babylonians. God told them that they shouldn't be intimidated or discouraged by their tormentors. Their insults would die with them, and their death was coming. The tormentors' end would be like an old shirt that is eaten up by moths or worms.

The final words of verse eight remind us of the end of the sixth verse. God's fairness will never fail and His salvation will never end. It is a permanent thing. It, like God's love, will never go away.

Now, we have the first of several “wake-up calls.” The prophet shouts “Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength...” This plea is spoken to “the arm of the Lord.” We can picture a strong muscled arm, raised as a threat to the enemy. Read Isaiah 51:9-16.

He speaks to the one who conquered “Rahab.” This is a reference to Egypt, sometimes called by that name, or it can refer to God's power over the conquered “serpent” or “dragon” or “Leviathan.” The prophet reminds God of the parting of the Red Sea when Israel was rescued from Egypt. That powerful God will rescue His people. Verse eleven is like a song sung about the return of Israel to Jerusalem. It is a song of joy.

God responds to the prophet with gentle but powerful words. God repeats the word, I. He says, “I, even I, am He who comforts you.” The emphasis here is on the fact that God is speaking Himself. He said don't be afraid. I am here with you. He is the God who created humans, who created the heavens and the earth. He said don't forget who is much greater than your oppressor.

He said that no longer will you, the cowering prisoners, be condemned to death in your dungeon or go without food. He said that the God who makes waves in the sea, protects His people with His hand; the same one who created everything was going to make a statement.

His statement was, “You are my people.”

What a wonderful thought. The God of all things calls Israel “My people.” Yes, and just as wonderful, we who trust Jesus to be our Savior hear Him call *us* His people.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Page Three

Scripture Memory: “For I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord Almighty is His name.” Isaiah 51:15

Lesson Goal: To remind students of the great salvation of God which is forever.

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Salvation for God's People—Isaiah 51:1-16

Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. What six things does God call His people in the first eight verses of Isaiah, chapter fifty-one?
2. Whose name did God change to Israel?
3. What did God say in verses four and five that would have been “news” to the Israelites?
4. God's _____ will never fail and His _____ will never end. It is a _____ thing.
5. What kind of song does the lesson writer call verse eleven?
6. What was God's strong statement in verse 16?
7. What does that strong statement mean to Christians?

Page Four

Scripture Memory: “For I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord Almighty is His name.” Isaiah 51:15

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

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