

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

You are the great Redeemer! You redeemed Israel from Egypt through mighty miracles, you redeemed Judah from captivity through Cyrus, and you redeemed me from sin through Jesus the Messiah. You have swept away my transgressions like a cloud and my sins like a mist. I shout for joy with the heavens, the earth, the mountains and the trees—“the LORD has done it!” (Isa 44:22–23). Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the last part of Isaiah’s “Book of Comfort” (Isa 40–48). Isaiah told the people of Judah that you were going to do a new thing (Isa 43:19). In the past, you made a way through the waters of the sea, but in the future, you were going to make a new way—through the desert! Water, formerly a barrier, would be a blessing, with you as its source. With this exciting new “Exodus” in mind, Isaiah reminded the people of their failure to love you. You had formed them for yourself that they might declare your praise, but they did not honor you or call on your name. You reminded them that you were the God “who blots out your transgressions for my own sake” (Isa 43:25). Yes, you had punished them for their sin, but you longed to forgive them. You comforted them with the promise of future blessing: “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants” (Isa 44:3). This teaches me that your description of the great things you will do for Israel and the world are intended to draw me to you. After all, who wouldn’t want to be part of the “new thing” that you will do? Isaiah continued by painting a compelling picture of the futility of idolatry (Isa 44:6–23). ‘Just think,’ Isaiah said, ‘the man who cuts down a tree uses half to make a fire and the other half to make an idol’ (Isa 44:19). What pathetic self-deception! You urged Judah, ‘Remember who made you, Israel. I formed you, you are my servant! Return to me, for I have redeemed you!’ (Isa 44:21–23). This teaches me that *the proper response to the knowledge that you are my Creator is worship!* Isaiah concluded by foretelling the coming of Cyrus, the king of Persia, some 150 years before he came to power. Babylon would be destroyed and your people would return from their exile. Cyrus would be your faithful servant. He would rebuild both Jerusalem and the temple (Isa 44:28; 45:13). What should Judah learn from all this? “I am the LORD your God!” (Isa 48:17). If they would pay attention to your words and obey your commands, their peace (*shalom*) would be like a river and their righteousness like the waves of the sea (Isa 48:18). So it is with me—Isaiah calls me to be faithful to my Redeemer. How blessed are those whose God is the LORD!

Reflection

You said the day would come when your people would eagerly call themselves by your name: “This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’...and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s’” (Isa 44:5). Am I proud to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Do I eagerly tell others that I belong to you?

Request

Father, guard me from idols (1 John 5:21). Keep me from letting anything or anyone take your rightful place of supremacy in my life. Write on my heart the name of God! (Rev 3:12).

Thanksgiving

You asked Judah, “Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any” (Isa 44:8). How grateful I am that you are the one true God! I look for no other Rock—I look only for my Redeemer!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “Redeemed, Restored, Forgiven” – Henry W. Baker.

Meditation Verse: Isaiah 45:22.