

# EXPERIENCING REDEMPTION Sunday School- January 2, 2011

## Unifying Topic: I AM YOUR REDEEMER

### Lesson Text

I. Remember And Return (Isaiah 44:21-22)

II. Celebrating God's Redemption (Isaiah 44:23-24)

III. Faithful To His Word (Isaiah 44:25-26)

**The Main Thought:** I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. (Isaiah 44:22, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** In the face of devastating circumstances, people want to know that there is hope for rebuilding their lives. How can we know that something can be rebuilt out of destruction? Isaiah 44 speaks comfort and hope that God will not forget Israel and will redeem all things.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students appreciate how God promised Israel redemption from Babylonian captivity.

**Life aim:** To teach how God is steadfast in His love for us, never forgetting us, and offering us redemption and freedom from bondage and sin.

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44:21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

44:23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

44:24 Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

44:25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

44:26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.

### **HISTORY:**

**Idols Are False gods:**

**Chapter 44:1-8** God's people had sinned from the beginning of their existence (Is.43:27); yet the people of Israel remained the Lord's chosen. **44:1** This chapter opens with God addressing **Jacob** as **my servant** and **Israel** as the one whom He has **chosen**. Throughout this section of the book of Isaiah, the prophet stresses the significance of the election of Israel as the people of God. **44:2** The phrase **formed thee for the womb** identifies God's activity on behalf of His people from the very beginning. Jacob (lit. trickster) is paralleled to **Jesurun** (upright one, cf. Deut.32:15). **44:3-4** The pouring out of **water** is paralleled to the pouring out of God's **spirit upon thy seed**. As water brings life to dry ground, so the Lord's Spirit will bring new life to His people. "*Archer (p.640) correctly relates this to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2.*" The futuristic nature of this promise would indicate that in the future there was yet coming a time when this would happen.

**44:5** The idea of this passage is that untold thousands of Gentiles, seeing the blessings of the Lord upon Israel, will no doubt take as a surname the **name of Israel**. This means that heathen nations, instead of looking scornfully on and uttering gibes and jeers, even as they have done for thousands of years, will hasten to enroll themselves among the worshippers of Jehovah, and will do so through Israel. **44:6** is one of the Old Testament prophetic scripture emphasizing the oneness of God by stating that **beside me there is no God**. Yet at the same time, it distinguishes between **the Lord the King of Israel** and **His Redeemer the Lord of hosts**. The personal name Yahweh is used of both the King and His redeemer, the one referring to God the Father and the other referring to God the Son. Let all know and understand: there is no Redeemer but the Lord! there is One god, manifest in Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Who are all One in essence (1 Corth.8:6; Eph.4:3-6; Heb.1:8; Jh.1:1-2; 20:28; acts 5:3-4; II Jh.3; Acts 2:34).

**44:7** The question is raised as to who else can predict the things that are coming with the kind of accuracy that He can. God calls the people to be His witnesses to the fact that He can indeed predict events in advance of their fulfillment. This issue becomes one of the great theological problems of the Old Testament. The word "**them**" in the last sentence refers to idolaters. They are challenged to declare the things that are coming, and that shall come, as

only the Lord can do! Thus, the modern critic sets himself up, not only as a judge of the Old Testament scripture, but as critic of the inspired New Testament as well! **44:8** Israel's Saviour keeps assuring His people here that they are His; that they always have been His; that they always shall be His; that He will never forget them; that though all other nations may perish, they never shall. God asks the question: **Is there a God beside me?** (lit. means "*There is no Rock*"; i.e. "*no sure ground of trust or confidence in anything else.*") Then God proceeds to answer His own question; there is no God; **I know not any.** What God is stating here is that He is the ultimate authority on divinity!

**44:9** In order to prove His statement, He accuses the other gods of being nothing more than idols made by men. This expose' of the idolatry is most powerful in all to the Bible! Here the prophet Isaiah, serving as the spokesman of Jehovah, shows the utter foolishness of belief in several deities. The **graven image** (carved idol) is called **vanity** (nothingness). **Detectable things** refer to the extreme adornment of idols with gold, silver, and precious stones. The prophet announces his verdict that the idols themselves are **their own witnesses** (*'edeyhim*). They testify against themselves. They **neither see nor know**; they have neither vision nor intelligence. **44:10-17** If we make a god, we cannot expect it to empower our lives. So it can be said that all who do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ have formed their own god. Thus Isaiah ridicules the many false gods and those that make and construct them. Because of their own helpless condition, they are ultimately **ashamed** (yeboshū, meaning to dry up). Thus, these helpless idols leave their devotees without help or hope – **the fellows** (habarim, companions); **the workman** (artians); **the smith** (ironworker); **the carpenter** (woodworker) are mere men giving backbreaking labor required to shape these expensive idols. Thus, the prophet exposes the basic fallacy of idolatry, a god made in the image of man. By contrast, the Bible teaches that man is made in the personal image of God. God made the **trees**, then senseless man deceived by Satan, takes one and proposes to make a god of it. How stupid! Isaiah points out how absurd it is to make a god from the same tree that gives him firewood to **warm himself** and **bake his bread** and then turn around and **worship it**. He has to be more intelligent than what he has made. So why worship something that is less intelligent than the maker? Hence, men take on the nature of that which they worship. In this case, it is a dumb idol, its' maker becomes more dumb when he falls down and says, "**Deliver me; for you are my god.**" What is worse is not only that the pagan would worship this so-called god, but that he prayed unto it and expects it to deliver him.

**44:18-20** Those who carve out idols willfully blind themselves to the truth. The word **shut** means to be daubed with clay. Thus it is that they **cannot see** and **cannot understand** truth in the spiritual realm. To the mind of God, such idolatry is an **abomination** (thō ebah, abhorrence). This says, **he feeds on ashes** having a deceived (hūthal, cheated) heart. His ultimate condemnation shall be that he **cannot deliver his soul** from judgment because what he holds in his **right hand** (i.e., an idol) is really a **lie**.

## LESSON:

### Isaiah 44:21-22 Remember And Return

**44:21** God has been pointing out the idiocy of idolatry. The idols are not gods. They are powerless to speak, and those who make them are fools. And so He begins verse 21 by saying, "**Remember these things...**" Having pointed this out in the above verses, he reminds the people again.

- Remember the futility of idol worship.
- Remember – He calls Jacob and Israel His **servant**. Israel has not been called to serve other gods.
- Remember – He says, **Israel "shall not be forgotten by Me."**
- Remember – The words **I have formed you** pertain to the duty of absolute and unquestioning obedience contained in the relation of that which is formed to that which has formed it.

**44:22** The point is expressed in two words: "*Remember*" and "*return*." The object of the argument is, to turn their attention to God, and to lead them to put their trust in Him. It should be noted that the Lord has **blotted out** their transgressions as a thick cloud and their sins as a cloud and has **redeemed** them; and yet, He urges them to **return** (shūbah, repent) **unto me**. Sins and transgressions are compared to clouds. Our transgressions and our sins are as a thick cloud between heaven and earth: sins separate between us and God; they threaten a storm of wrath. When God pardons sin, He blots out, He dispels this cloud, this thick cloud, so that the way to heaven is open again. And as, when clouds are blotted out, there is a clear sky, a serene heaven, the sun shines in its brightness, and everything is

pleasant and delightful. The difference between the two words rendered here '*thick cloud*,' and '*cloud*' is, that the former is expressive of a cloud as dense, thick, compact; and the latter as covering or veiling the heavens. Both words, however, usually denote a cloud. This decree made the danger that was hanging over the city, pass away like a cloud or vapor. Since sins are pardoned, and such mercy has been shown, return now, and serve me. It is such a sure promise that it is spoken in the past tense to be future. In the Old Testament, when God made atonement for sin, the word used was "kaw-FAR," which mean "*to cover over*." It is a great thing, to have God throw a blanket over your sin! In the New Testament Covenant, our sin isn't just covered - it's completely erased! The fact that God has forgiven us imposes the strongest obligations to devote ourselves to His service. The fact that we are redeemed and pardoned is the highest argument why we should consecrate all our powers to Him who has purchased and forgiven us.

## Isaiah 44:23-24 Celebrating God's Redemption

**44:23** It's common in the sacred writings to call on the heavens, the earth, and all created things, to join in the praise of God on any great and glorious event. The heavens are called to sing; the lower parts of the earth are called to shout; the mountains, forest, and every tree are called to break forth in singing. <sup>1</sup>By the **heavens** are meant the angels which are in heaven; by the **lower parts of the earth**—the more humble and obscure republics of the pagan; by the **mountains**—the greater and more mighty kingdoms; by the **forest**, and the **trees**, large and spacious cities, with their nobles. All of creation is to burst forth in singing and praise because of the Lord's redemption. The Lord hath done it! He has delivered His people from their captivity in Babylon which is a type of the redemption He has wrought by Christ which all God's people in all nations have reason to rejoice because they are redeemed from sin and Satan, and the law, and death and hell, and all spiritual enemies, therefore, the glory of God is great in their salvation. And it is a cause for celebration.

**44:24** God is identified as **Thy Redeemer** (*go'el*), and His redemption is correlated to His creative action. <sup>2</sup>God reminds Israel just Who it is that redeemed them:

- He is the one who **formed them from the womb**.
- He is the one who is the Creator of all things - the heavens and the earth.

His stretching out the heavens by Himself denotes the boundless extent of His power.

## Isaiah 44:25-26 Faithful To His Word

**44:25** He is Omnipotent Creator who has called Israel to be His people from eternity past. He is the Omniscient and sovereign Lord of history who **frustrateth** (Hebrew, 'Breaking:' that is, destroying, rendering vain) **the tokens of the liars** ('ophōth badiym, the signs of the babblers). He maketh diviners (soothsayers or predictors) **mad** by overturning their false predictions; that is, makes them foolish, or deprives them of wisdom; puts them to shame.

- He is the One who directs the path of the future, often purposefully making sure that the predictions of psychics don't come true, just to ruin their reputations.
- He is the One who insures that the words of His prophets come true.

By delivering His people out of Babylon, would frustrate the tokens of the liars, of all the lying prophets, that said the Babylonian monarchy had many ages yet to live, and pretended to ground their predictions upon some token, some sign or other, which, according to the rules of their arts, foreboded its prosperity. Finding they cannot go on with their projects, they are forced to quit them; and so He makes the judges fools, and makes their knowledge foolish.

**44:26** The confirmation which this would give to the oracles of God, which the Jews had distrusted and their enemies despised: God **confirms the word of his servant** (a collective sense, for the prophets); He confirms it by accomplishing it in its season; and **performs the counsel of the messengers** –the prophets – whom He hath many a time sent to His people, to tell them what great blessings He had in store for them. Note, the exact fulfilling of the prophecies of scripture is a confirmation of the truth of the whole book and an incontestable evidence of its divine origin and authority.

<sup>3</sup>Isaiah has foreseen and described the threat of Babylon, that great empire of the ancient world. Even though Babylon had not yet come into prominence as a world power, Isaiah sees beyond its rise under Nebuchadnezzar and his

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/18557/eVerseID/18557/RTD/Barnes>

<sup>2</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4421.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/3837/0584.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

conquering of much of the world, to the time when the Persians shall rise and Cyrus the Great will come and take Babylon captive. <sup>4</sup>Yet, nevertheless, there should be a return of the Jews from captivity, and this city should be peopled and inhabited again; and also, that the cities of Judah, which were now in good status, should be laid waste, and all the adjacent country be in a ruinous condition, all which should be rebuilt and restored to a flourishing state again. The Lord had said it, and it should be done. He is faithful to His Word.

### SUMMARY:

God is letting Jacob, who is Israel remember that as a servant of God Almighty, the Master does not forget His people; does not forget His promise, and they are to not forget. When He blots out a thing it is blotted out, it is never to be found or seen again, like vapor that disappears. Redemption has occurred in God's view, the enemy is defeated. It may not look like it at times, however, God has promised redemption. It's time for the people to return to Him –back home. Two words are prevalent: "*remember*" and "*return*."

He is Redeemer of His people and it's time to break forth in singing. If the heavens, the lower parts of the earth, the mountains, forest, and every tree can sing for joy, surely the people can, the nation can, His servant can!

*"I am the Lord that maketh all things."* There's none that can be compared to Him because they all will be frustrated and mad. He confirms His promises by the Word of His servant and fulfills the predictions of His messengers. He that has redeemed us at so vast an expense will not lose His purchase. Jesus paid the price for our release from sin. Whatever was ruined or decayed will be restored and raised up.

### APPLICATION:

The work of redemption which God has fulfilled by His Son for us encourages us to hope for all promised blessings from Him. Remember and return to Him to experience redemption! God is the only Redeemer!

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=044&verse=026>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>