

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape. A winding river flows through the center, surrounded by dark, rocky terrain. In the background, there are mountains under a clear sky. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like brown, tan, and green, with a dark blue-green gradient overlaying the bottom half of the image.

DEVOTION OF THE DAY

God Will Make a Way

ISAIAH 43: 15-16

WORLDWIDE DAY OF PRAYER
—OCTOBER 1, 2024—

GOD WILL MAKE A WAY

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: ISAIAH 43:14-21

Context of the book

WHO IS ISAIAH

- Isaiah was the son of Amoz, husband of a prophetess and father. He had at least 2 sons, Shear-jashub (a remnant turns back) and Maher-shlchal-chash-baz (the name indicates the imminent destruction by the Assyrians).
- He is described as a deeply devout and pious man with a close relationship with God. His family was also involved in his prophetic mission, as evidenced by the names of his sons.
- He was one of the great prophets of the Old Testament and wrote a massive book of 66 chapters. It is the longest book of prophets in the Bible.
- Isaiah's messages:
 - Words about the court
 - Hope and salvation
 - Against social injustice
 - About people's unfaithfulness to God
 - Visions of future renewal and peace

WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS

- The people of Israel, especially the southern kingdom of Judah
 - Isaiah worked mainly in Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. He spoke directly to the people of Judah, warning them of the consequences if they did not continue to follow God.
- The political and religious leaders:
 - Isaiah also addressed his words to the kings and leading figures in Judah to persuade them to repent and to point out the need to be faithful to God.
- The future generations:
 - The book contains messages of hope and promise
- In visions and words from God Isaiah heard about the coming Messiah and the universal justice of God.

IN WHAT TIME ARE WE

Political and social context

- Divided kingdom:
 - Northern kingdom of Israel: Consisted of the ten northern tribes. The capital was Samaria. This kingdom existed from about 930 BC until it was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC.
 - Southern Kingdom of Judah: Consisted of the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin. The capital was Jerusalem. This kingdom existed from about 930 BC until it was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC.
- Political instability and threats:
 - Both kingdoms were often plagued by political intrigue and power struggles.
 - Both kingdoms were often involved in military conflicts, both with each other and with neighboring nations.

Economic life

- Agriculture:
 - Most of the Israelites lived from agriculture. They grew grain, grapes, olives and other crops.
 - Livestock farming was also widespread.
- Craft and trade:
 - Craftsmen such as blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers and potters played an important role in society.
 - Trade with neighboring peoples was common, especially with Phoenicia and Egypt.

Religious life

- Central temple in Jerusalem:
 - The temple in Jerusalem was the religious center of the southern kingdom of Judah and played a central role in religious life.
 - Regular sacrifices and feast days were celebrated in the temple.
- Prophecy and idolatry:
 - Prophets such as Isaiah warned against idolatry and injustice and called for repentance and faithfulness to God.
 - Nevertheless, idolatry was widespread, leading to conflict between the prophets and the people.

WELL-KNOWN PASSAGES FROM ISAIAH

There are many well-known themes in Isaiah that speak to our lives. That is why many passages from Isaiah are often quoted. Themes are:

- Comfort
- Encouragement
- Confidence
- Trust
- Hope
- Peace

Isaiah 43:14-21

Today we are looking at Isaiah 43, verses 14-21. Let's see what it says:

14 This is what the LORD says - your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride. 15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel's Creator, your King. " 16 This is what the LORD says - he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, 17 who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: 18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 See, I am doing a new thing! 20 The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, 21 the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Isaiah 43:14-21

I have divided up the verses:

- God knows about me
- God is
- God works in my life

God knows about me

14 This is what the LORD says - your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride.

- At first I thought this was the answer to the cry of the Israelites in their exile. But then I read that the Israelites were not in exile at the time of Isaiah. So this must be a prophecy for the time of the exile. God has promised Israel that he will take care of them when things get difficult.
- The conclusion is: God is already in the challenges of my life, even before I am there. God knows our future, whether it is easy or difficult. And he is with us and already has a plan. It is not always salvation from difficulties, the solution does not always look like we imagine, but he is certainly always with us.

God is

15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel's Creator, your King."

- So that I don't forget who is always with me, it is important to make me aware of who he is:

The LORD:

- The term "Lord" is used in Hebrew as "YHWH" (Yahweh), which is the holy name of God. It emphasizes God's eternal existence and his faithful presence with his people. This name points to the special relationship between God and Israel, it is the covenant name of God.
- And as we read in John 10:16 we also belong to his flock, to his covenant:
And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they will listen to my voice. And they will become one flock with one shepherd.



Your Holy One:

- God calls himself "your Holy One", which emphasizes his absolute purity, perfection and holiness. This also shows that God has sanctified his people. For only the holy can come before the Holy One. He makes us holy people.

Israel's Creator:

- God reminds Israel that he is their Creator. He is also our Creator. This emphasizes the fact that we owe our existence and identity to God. It also emphasizes that God not only created us physically, but also formed us spiritually and as his bride.

Your King:

- God declares that he is our king. This indicates his rule and authority. As king, God cares for, leads and protects his people. This is in contrast to earthly kings and rulers, who are often imperfect and limited, while God's kingship is perfect and just.

God works in my life

16 This is what the LORD says - he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, 17 who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

- Here he reminds the Israelites of what they have already experienced with God. It helps me to remember what God has already done in my life. We are often too quick to forget what he has done and to hold on to what we had hoped for but which turned out to be different. In other words, disappointment. Even if I don't know if my hope was really the better choice for us.

- We want to take time to reflect on God's work in our lives:
 - Sharing what we have experienced with God strengthens our faith and gives God the honor he deserves.
 - Perhaps you have time to share and celebrate what God has done for you recently.

- An example from me:

I can tell you what it was like when I was preparing this devotion. I wasn't at all enthusiastic about the Bible passage, but I had to deal with it for our Global Day of Prayer. Usually when I prepare devotions I have a topic that has been on my mind for a time. But to just dive into a passage of Scripture that doesn't mean anything to me - difficult! But God hasn't let me down and I'm really excited about everything I've learnt here, I've really felt his presence in this time of preparation.

READY TO TRY SOMETHING NEW WITH HIM

18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

- And yet he admonishes us here not to get stuck in the old and to always remain to be open to the new. We know that God is trustworthy, we have experienced it. That's why we can dare to do new things with him. Where am I still stuck in the old? And am therefore not ready to tackle something new?
- We are in the process of moving our office to a new location in Switzerland. At the beginning of the summer we emptied our office as a team. We decided to take some time in the empty office to let go of all the anger, frustration and disappointment we had experienced here. And we worshiped God together in the empty office for all the positive things we had here. It was important for us to take time to say goodbye to the old and prepare for the new.
 - Let's take a moment to think about where I am holding on to old things and bring it to God. He already knows anyway. But it will help us to do so.

WORSHIP

20 The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, 21 the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

- Here we see a second reason why we should worship God. What God does is worthy of worship by the whole creation. In doing so, we give God honor, praise and thanks. We worship with the aim of recognising God's greatness and holiness and giving him the reverence he deserves. And this is what God wants. Here you see it in verse 21: God made man for himself to tell of his glory. In several other places the Bible makes it clear that God wants to be worshiped. It is very clear at the entrance to Jerusalem:

*Blessed is he who comes, the King, in the name of the Lord.
In heaven peace and glory in the highest!*

*39 And some of the Pharisees who were among the people said to him, "Teacher, silence your disciples. 40 And he answered: **I tell you: If these keep silent, the stones will cry out.** Luke 19:38-40*

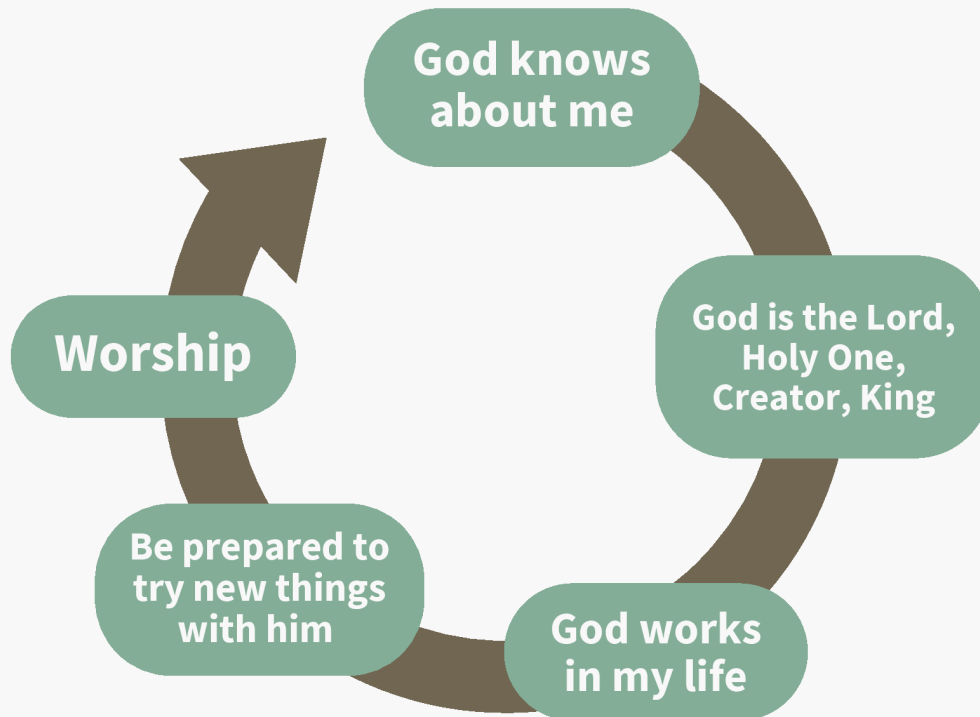


FINAL THOUGHTS

- We will be moving in this cycle, let us be vigilant and not get stuck without God.
 - God Knows me
 - What became important for me here is that I don't want to pray to God to come into my situation, but to ask him to move me towards him.
 - God is Lord, Holy One, Creator, King
 - Worship is a lifestyle.
 - Worship is not based on positive experiences, but on who God is.
 - God works in my life
 - Let's not forget this, maybe it helps to write it down. It's important to remember and also to talk about it to encourage each other.
 - Be willing to try new things with him
 - Leaving the old behind, saying goodbye, welcoming the new. Only empty hands can receive.
 - Worship
 - The circle closes.



BASED ON ISAIAH 43:14-21 WE CAN VISUALIZE IT LIKE THIS.



- The cycle begins again
 - Knowing that God knows me
 - Consciously seeing God for who He is
 - Not forgetting what He is doing in my life
 - Being willing to try something new
 - Coming to worship
- Perhaps you now have time to celebrate and worship God together.

