

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 26, 2020

The Lord with you.

Imagine for a moment, imagine that you were locked down in your house, imagine that you were not able to go to your house of worship. Imagine being anxious about things you see happening in your country. Imagine being fearful about what a new normal will look like. Imagine, imagine, even wondering if God has forgotten you.

Well, if you can imagine any of that, then you have a pretty good picture of what the people of God are facing in a scripture that I'm looking at today, it's in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 43. Here's the setting, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah is writing to the Jewish people who are exiles, they are captives in Babylon. I'm gonna call this the Babylonian lockdown, because of their rebellion against God, and their idolatry the people of God are locked down in a faraway pagan Babylon as armies have destroyed the temple, the place where they went to worship, they have done away with their king and the capital Jerusalem is a smouldering ruin and they have been taken in chains to Babylon. And the people of God. Well, they're thinking that God has forgotten them, that they have zero hope for the future that the new normal, is horrific, but then God steps in and God gives Isaiah, these words for his people. Isaiah 43, verses 14 through 19, I am the Lord, the Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King, thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea who brings it and horse army and warrior, they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick. I do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I'm about to do a new thing. Now it springs forth. You cannot perceive it. I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Follow what the Lord is saying here, God is saying, remember now, forget remember now, forget remember what I once did for my people in the exodus out of Egypt, "Remember my great saving power. Now, forget it, forget it, because I am about ready to do something new and wonderful for you. God is saying, "Do not let memories of a great past keep you from believing for your future, do not let memories of what God once did in the good old days keep you from believing what God is about to do. Now, keep in mind that it was God who had commanded his people to celebrate Passover every year to help them to remember the Exodus, how he had made a way for them in the sea, how he had made a path in the mighty waters and now after centuries of telling his people to remember the exodus, God says, "Forget it. Because what I'm about to do, will be even greater. Do not remember the former things are consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing.

God says, "Don't get stuck on what I once did, don't let believing what I once did. Keep you from believing what I'm doing now, I'm about to do a new thing now. It springs forth. Do you not perceive it?

The Hebrew language here is the language of a little seed silently germinating in the ground and then the shoot starts bringing up and there's a then a flower. God says this new thing now, it springs

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forth. Do you not see it?

I don't know about you, but I can get so stuck on the way things used to be, I can get stuck on the great things that God once did that. I do not let myself see the new thing that God is already doing.

There was a time when I was an atheist, I was an atheist, in practice with what I mean is I was a believer, as far as believing that in the past, God did great things. I did believe that, and I was a believer, as far as God doing out there in the future or some great things, I believe that I just didn't believe that God would show up to do anything now that the God might really answer prayers now, that that God might powerfully change lives now that God might do things that I could even imagine now.

I even have a pretty good theological system to explain why God was a locked down in the past. I could give you chapter and verse to support my unbelief of God doing something new now.

And so it was two people who had given up hope for the future to people who had locked down God in the distant past. The Lord says, I'm about to do a new thing. Now it springs for it. Do you not perceive it?

As I look at scripture, I see how God is the God of the new a new covenant, a new birth a new creation, a new life, new heavens and new Earth. God says that He gives us a new song, he gives us new surprising experience of His love, and grace.

So probably the favorite prayer of my wife and me to pray is simply Lord surprises as the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3, that God likes to answer prayers in ways that are abundantly far more. And then we can ask or imagine. So Lord, you just go ahead and surprise us.

God says, "I will make a way in the wilderness, I will give you rivers in the desert.

And I have learned through the years that that is true that God does make a way in the wilderness, God does give rivers in the desert. A song I learned when I was five years old, is a song that is proven true for me through the years my Lord knows the way through the wilderness.

All I have to do is follow strength for today is mine, all the way and all that I need for tomorrow. The Lord knows a way through the wilderness, God says "I'm about to do a new thing. Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? Oh Lord, give us eyes give us eyes to see the new thing, springing up in our day.

I am Tim Smith. A fellow traveler in the pilgrim way.

Thank you for listening, until next time...

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