

# CHAPTER 48

God, having in the foregoing chapter reckoned with the Babylonians, and shown them their sins and the desolation that was coming upon them for their sins, to show that he hates sin wherever he finds it and will not connive at it in his own people, comes, in this chapter, to show the house of Jacob their sins, but, withal, the mercy God had in store for them notwithstanding; and he therefore sets their sins in order before them, that by their repentance and reformation they might be prepared for that mercy.

**I.** He charges them with hypocrisy in that which is good and obstinacy in that which is evil, especially in their idolatry, notwithstanding the many convincing proofs God had given them that he is God alone, (v. 1-8).

**II.** He assures them that their deliverance would be wrought purely for the sake of God's own name and not for any merit of theirs (v. 9-11).

**III.** He encourages them to depend purely upon God's power and promise for this deliverance (v. 12-15).

**IV.** He shows them that, as it was by their own sin that they brought themselves into captivity, so it would be only by the grace of God that they would obtain the necessary preparatives for their enlargement (v. 16-19).

**V.** He proclaims their release, yet with a proviso that the wicked shall have no benefit by it (v. 20-22).

## ISAIAH 48:1-8

### GOD'S EXPOSTULATION WITH HIS PEOPLE

We may observe here,

**I.** The hypocritical profession which many of the Jews made of religion and relation to God. To those who made such a profession the prophet is here ordered to address himself, for their conviction and humiliation, that

they might own God's justice in what he had brought upon them. Now observe here,

**1.** How high their profession of religion soared, what a fair show they made in the flesh and how far they went towards heaven, what a good livery they wore and what a good face they put upon a very bad heart.

**(1.)** They were the *house of Jacob*; they had a place and a name in the visible church. *Jacob have I loved*. Jacob is God's chosen; and they are not only retainers to his family, but descendants from him.

**(2.)** They were *called by the name of Israel*, an honourable name; they were of that people to whom pertained both the giving of the law and the promises. *Israel* signifies *a prince with God*; and they prided themselves in being of that princely race.

**(3.)** *They came forth out of the waters of Judah*, and thence were called *Jews*; they were of the royal tribe, the tribe of which Shiloh was to come, the tribe that adhered to God when the rest revolted.

**(4.)** They *swore by the name of the Lord*, and thereby owned him to be the true God, and their God, and gave glory to him as the righteous Judge of all. They *swore to the name of the Lord* (so it may be read); they took an oath of allegiance to him as their King and joined themselves to him in covenant.

**(5.)** They *made mention of the God of Israel* in their prayers and praises; they often spoke of him, observed his memorials, and pretended to be very mindful of him.

**(6.)** They *called themselves of the holy city*, and, when they were captives in Babylon, purely from a principle of honour, and jealousy for their native country, they valued themselves upon their interest in it. Many, who are themselves unholy, are proud of their relation to the church, the holy city.

**(7.)** They *stayed themselves upon the God of Israel*, and boasted of his promises and his covenant with them; they *leaned on the Lord*, <sup>301</sup> Micah 3:11. And, if they were asked concerning their God, they could say, "*The Lord of hosts is his name*, the Lord of all;" happy are we therefore, and very great, who have relation to him!

**2.** How low their profession of religion sunk, notwithstanding all this. It was all in vain; for it was all a jest; it was *not in truth and righteousness*.

Their hearts were not true nor right in these professions. Note, All our religious professions avail nothing further than they are made in truth and righteousness. If we be not sincere in them, we do but *take the name of the Lord our God in vain*.

**II.** The means God used, and the method he took, to keep them close to himself, and to prevent their turning aside to idolatry. The many excellent laws he gave them, with their sanctions, and the hedges about them, it seems, would not serve to restrain them from that sin which did most easily beset them, and therefore to those God added remarkable prophecies, and remarkable providences in pursuance of those prophecies, which were all designed to convince them that their God was the only true God and that it was therefore both their duty and interest to adhere to him.

**1.** He both dignified and favoured them with remarkable prophecies (v. 3): *I have declared the former things from the beginning*. Nothing material happened to their nation from its original which was not prophesied of before — their bondage in Egypt, their deliverance thence, the situation of their tribes in Canaan, etc. All these things *went forth out of God's mouth and he showed them*. Herein they were honoured above any nation, and even their curiosity was gratified. Their prophecies were such as they could rely upon, and such as concerned themselves and their own nation; and they were all verified by the accomplishment of them. *I did them suddenly*, when they were least expected by themselves or others, and therefore could not be foreseen by any but a divine prescience. *I did them and they came to pass*; for what God does he does effectually. The very calamities they were now groaning under in Babylon God did from the beginning declare to them by Moses, as the certain consequences of their apostasy from God, <sup><1871></sup>Leviticus 26:31, etc.; <sup><1886></sup>Deuteronomy 28:36, etc.; 29:28. He also declared to them their return to God, and to their own land again, <sup><1804></sup>Deuteronomy 30:4, etc.; <sup><1854></sup>Leviticus 26:44, 45. Thus he showed them how he would deal with them long before it came to pass. Let them compare their present state together with the deliverance they had now in prospect with what was written in the law, and they would find the scripture exactly fulfilled.

**2.** He both dignified and favoured them with remarkable providence (v. 6): *I have shown thee new things from this time*. Besides the general view given from the beginning of God's proceedings with them, he showed them new things by the prophets of their own day, and created them. They

were *hidden things*, which they could not otherwise know, as the prophecy concerning Cyrus and the exact time of their release out of Babylon. These things God *created now*, v. 7. Their restoration was in effect their creation, and they had a promise of it not from the beginning, but of late; for to prevent their apostasy from God, or to recover them, prophecy was kept up among them. Yet it was told them when they could not come to the knowledge of it in any other way than by divine revelation. “Consider,” says God, “how much soever it is talked of now among you and expected, it was told you by the prophets, when it was the furthest thing from your thoughts, when you had not heard it, when you had not known it, nor had any reason to expect it, and when your ear was not opened concerning it (v. 7, 8), when the thing seemed utterly impossible, and you would scarcely have given any one the hearing who should have told you of it.” God had shown them hidden things which were out of the reach of their knowledge, and done for them great things, out of the reach of their power: “Now,” says he (v. 6), “*thou hast heard; see all this*. Thou hast heard the prophecy; see the accomplishment of it, and observe whether the word and works of God do not exactly agree; *and will you not declare it*, that as you have heard so you have seen? Will you not own that the Lord is the true God, the only true God, that he has the knowledge and power which no creature has and which none of the gods of the nations can pretend to? Will you not own that your God has been a good God to you? Declare this to his honour, and your own shame, who have dealt so deceitfully with him and preferred others before him.”

### **III.** The reasons why God would take this method with them.

**1.** Because he would anticipate their boastings of themselves and their idols.

**(1.)** God by his prophets told them beforehand of their deliverance, lest they should attribute the accomplishment of it to their idols. Thus he saw it necessary to secure the glory of it to himself, which otherwise would have been given by some of them to their graven images: “I spoke of it,” says God, “*lest thou shouldst say, My idol has done it or has commanded it to be done*,” v. 5. There were those that would be apt to say so, and so would be confirmed in their idolatry by that which was intended to cure them of it. But they would now be for ever precluded from saying this; for, if the idols had done it, the prophets of the idols would have foretold it;

but, the prophets of the Lord having foretold it, it was no doubt the power of the Lord that effected it.

**(2.)** God foretold it by his prophets, lest they should assume the foresight of it to themselves. Those that were not so profane as to have ascribed the thing itself to an idol were yet so proud as to have pretended that by their own sagacity they foresaw it, if God had not been beforehand with them and spoken first: *Lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them*, v. 7. Thus vain men, who would be thought wise, commonly undervalue a thing which is really great and surprising with this suggestion, that it was no more than they expected and they knew it would come to this. To anticipate this, and that this boasting might for ever be excluded, God told them of it before the day, when as yet they dreamed not of it. God has said and done enough to prevent men's boastings of themselves, and that *no flesh may glory in his presence*, and, if it have not the intended effect, it will aggravate the sin and ruin of the proud; and, sooner, or later, *every mouth shall be stopped, and all flesh shall become silent before God*.

**2.** Because he would leave them inexcusable in their obstinacy. *Therefore* he took this pains with them, because he knew they were obstinate, v. 4. He knew they were so obstinate and perverse that, if he had not supported the doctrine of providence by prophecy, they would have had the impudence to deny it, and would have said that their idol had done that which God did. He knew very well,

**(1.)** How wilful they would be, and how fully bent they would be upon that which is evil: *I knew that thou wast hard*; so the word is. There were prophecies as well as precepts which God gave them because of the hardness of their hearts: "*Thy neck is an iron sinew, unapt to yield and submit to the yoke of God's commandments, unapt to turn and look back upon his dealings with thee or look up to his displeasure against thee; not flexible to the will of God, nor pliable to his intentions, nor manageable by his word or providence. Thy brow is brass; thou art impudent and canst not blush, insolent and wilt not fear or give back, but wilt thrust on in the way of thy heart.*" God uses means to bring sinners to comply with him, though he knows they are obstinate.

**(2.)** How deceitful they would be and how insincere in that which is good, v. 8. God sent his prophets to them, but they did not hear, they would not know, and it was no more than was expected, considering what they had been. Thou *wast called*, and not miscalled, *a transgressor from the womb*.

Ever since they were first formed into a people they were prone to idolatry; they brought with them out of Egypt a strange addictedness to that sin; and they were murmurers as soon as ever they began their march to Canaan. They were justly upbraided with it then, <sup><B></sup>Deuteronomy 9:7, 24. Therefore *I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously*. God foresaw their apostasy, and gave this reason for it, that he had always found them false and fickle, <sup><B></sup>Deuteronomy 31:16, 27, 29. This is applicable to particular persons. We are all born children of disobedience; we were called *transgressors from the womb*, and therefore it is easy to foresee that we shall deal treacherously, very treacherously. Where original sin is actual sin will follow of course. God knows it, and yet deals not with us according to our deserts.

## <sup><B></sup>ISAIAH 48:9-15

### ENCOURAGEMENT TO GOD'S PEOPLE

The deliverance of God's people out of their captivity in Babylon was a thing upon many accounts so improbable that there was need of line upon line for the encouragement of the faith and hope of God's people concerning it. Two things were discouraging to them — their own unworthiness that God should do it for them and the many difficulties in the thing itself; now, in these verses, both these discouragements are removed, for here is,

**I.** A reason why God would do it for them, though they were unworthy; not for their sake, be it known to them, but *for his name's sake, for his own sake*, v. 9-11.

**1.** It is true they had been very provoking, and God had been justly angry with them. Their captivity was the punishment of their iniquity; and if, when he had them in Babylon, he had left them to pine away and perish there, and made the desolations of their country perpetual, he would only have dealt with them according to their sins, and it was what such a sinful people might expect from an angry God. “But,” says God, “*I will defer my anger*” (or, rather, *stifle and suppress it*); “I will make it appear that I am slow to wrath, and will refrain from thee, not pour upon thee what I justly might, that I should cut thee off from being a people.” And why will God thus stay his hand? *For my name's sake*; because this people was called by

his name, and made profession of his name, and, if they were cut off, the enemies would blaspheme his name. *It is for my praise*; because it would redound to the honour of his mercy to spare and relieve them, and, if he continued them to be to him a people, they might be to him for a name and a praise.

**2.** It is true they were very corrupt and ill-disposed, but God would himself refine them, and make them fit for the mercy he intended for them: *"I have refined thee, that thou mightest be made a vessel of honour."* Though he does not find them meet for his favour, he will make them so. And this accounts for his bringing them into the trouble, and continuing them in it so long as he did. It was not to cut them off, but to do them good. It was to refine them, *but not as silver, or with silver*, not so thoroughly as men refine their silver, which they continue in the furnace till all the dross is separated from it; if God should take that course with them, they would be always in the furnace, for they are all dross, and, as such, might justly be put away (<sup>281B</sup>Psalm 119:119) as reprobate silver, (<sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 6:30). He therefore takes them as they are, refined in part only, and not thoroughly. *"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction, that is, I have made thee a choice one by the good which the affliction has done thee, and then designed thee for great things."* Many have been brought home to God as chosen vessels and a good work of grace has been begun in them in the furnace of affliction. Affliction is no bar to God's choice, but subservient to his purpose.

**3.** It is true they could not pretend to merit at God's hand so great a favour as their deliverance out of Babylon, which would put such an honour upon them and bring them so much joy; therefore, says God, *For my own sake, even for my own sake, will I do it*, v. 11. See how the emphasis is laid upon that; for it is a reason that cannot fail, and therefore the resolution grounded upon it cannot fall to the ground. God will do it, not because he owes them such a favour, but to save the honour of his own name, that that may not be polluted by the insolent triumphs of the heathen, who, in triumphing over Israel, thought they triumphed over the God of Israel and imagined their gods too hard for him. This was plainly the language of Belshazzar's revels, when he profaned the holy vessels of God's temple at the same time that he praised his idols (<sup>281B</sup>Daniel 5:2, 4), and of the Babylonians' demand (<sup>281B</sup>Psalm 137:3), *Sing us one of the songs of Zion*. God will *therefore* deliver his people, because he will not suffer his glory to be thus given to another. Moses pleaded this often with God: Lord,

what will the Egyptians say? Note, God is jealous for the honour of his own name, and will not suffer the wrath of man to proceed any further than he will make it turn to his praise. And it is matter of comfort to God's people that, whatever becomes of them, God will secure his own honour; and, as far as is necessary to that, God will work deliverance for them.

**II.** Here is a proof that God could do it for them, though they were unable to help themselves and the thing seemed altogether impracticable. Let Jacob and Israel hearken to this, and believe it, and take the comfort of it. They are God's called, *called according to his purpose*, called by him out of Egypt (<sup>301</sup>Hosea 11:1) and now out of Babylon, a people whom with a distinguishing favour he calls by name, and to whom he calls. They are his called, for they are called to him, called by his name, and called his; and therefore he will look after them, and they may be assured that, as he will deliver them for his own sake, so he will deliver them by his own strength. They need not fear them, for,

**1.** He is God alone, and the eternal God (v. 12): "*I am he* who can do what I will and will do what is best, he whom none can compare with, much less contend with. *I am the first; I also am the last.*" Who can be too quick for him that is the first, or anticipate him? Who can be too hard for him that is the last, and will keep the field against all opposers, and will reign till they are all made his footstool? What room then is left to doubt of their deliverance when *he* undertakes it whose designs cannot but be well laid, for he is the first, and well executed, for he is the last. As for this God, his work is perfect.

**2.** He is the God that made the world, and he that did that can do any thing, v. 13. Look we down? We see the earth firm under us, and feel it so; it was his hand that *laid the foundation* of it. Look we up? We see the heavens spread out as a canopy over our heads, and it was his hand that spread them, that *spanned* them, that stretched them out, and did it by an exact measure, as the workman sometimes metes out his work by spans. This intimates that God has a vast reach and can compass designs of the greatest extent. *If the palm of his right hand* (so the margin reads it) has gone so far as to stretch out the heavens, what will he do with his outstretched arm? Yet this is not all: he has not only made the heavens and the earth, and therefore he in whom our hope and help is omnipotent (<sup>302</sup>Psalms 124:8), but he has the command of all the hosts of both; when he calls them into his service, to go on his errands, they stand up together,



they come at the call, they answer to their names: “Here we are; what wilt thou have us to do?” They stand up, not only in reverence to their Creator, but in a readiness to execute his orders: *They stand up together*, unanimously concurring, and helping one another in the service of their Maker. If God therefore will deliver his people, he cannot be at a loss for instruments to be employed in effecting their deliverance.

**3.** He has already foretold it, and, having infinite knowledge, so that he foresaw it, no doubt he has almighty power to effect it: “*All you of the house of Jacob, assemble yourselves, and hear this for your comfort, Which among them, among the gods of the heathen, or their wise men, has declared these things, or could declare them?*” v. 14. They had no foresight of them at all, but those who consulted them were very confident that Babylon should be a lady for ever and Israel perpetual slave; and their oracles did not give them the least hint to the contrary, to undeceive them; whereas God by his prophets had given notice to the Jews, long before, of their captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem, as he had now likewise given them notice of their release (v. 15): *I, even I, have spoken*; and he would not have spoken it if he could not have made it good: none could out-see him, and therefore we may be sure that none could outdo him.

**4.** The person is pitched upon who is to be employed in this service, and the measures are concerted in the divine counsels, which are unalterable. Cyrus is the man who must do it; and it tends much to strengthen our assurance that a thing shall be done when we are particularly informed how and by whom. It is not left at uncertainty who shall do it, but the matter is fixed.

**(1.)** It is one whom God is well pleased in, upon this account, because he is designed for this service: *The Lord has loved him* (v. 14); he has done him this favour, this honour, to make him an instrument in the redemption of his people and therein a type of the great Redeemer, God's beloved Son, *in whom he was well pleased*. Those God does a great kindness to, and has a great kindness for, whom he makes serviceable to his church.

**(2.)** It is one to whom God will give authority and commission: *I have called him*, have given him a sufficient warrant, and therefore will bear him out.

**(3.)** It is one whom God will by a series of providences lead to this service: “*I have brought him from a far country, brought him to engage*

against Babylon, brought him step by step, quite beyond his own intentions.” Whom God calls he will bring, will *cause them to come* (so the word is), to come at the call.

**(4.)** It is one whom God will own and give success to. Cyrus will *do God's pleasure on Babylon*, that which it is his pleasure should be done and which he will be pleased with the doing of, though Cyrus has ends of his own to serve and has no regard either to the will of God or to his favour in the doing of it. *His arm* (Cyrus's army, and in it God's arm) *shall come, and be upon the Chaldeans*, to bring them down (v. 14); for, if God call him and bring him, he will certainly *make his way prosperous*, v. 15. Then we may hope to prosper in our way when we follow a divine call and guidance.

## ~~286~~ ISAIAH 48:16-22

### ENCOURAGEMENT TO GOD'S PEOPLE

Here, as before, Jacob and Israel are summoned to hearken to the prophet speaking in God's name, or rather to God speaking in and by the prophet, and that as a type of the great prophet by whom God has in these last days spoken unto us, and that is sufficient: *Come near* therefore, *and hear this*. Note, Those that would hear and understand what God says must come near, and approach to him; let them come as near as they can. Let those that have hearkened to the tempter now come near, and hear this, that they may be confirmed in their resolutions to serve God. Those that draw nigh to God may depend upon this, that his secret shall be with them. Here,

**I.** God refers them to what he hath both said to them and done for them formerly, which if they would reflect upon, they might thence fetch great encouragement to trust in God at this time.

**1.** He had always spoken plainly to them *from the beginning*, by Moses and all the prophets: *I have not spoken in secret*, but publicly, from the top of Mount Sinai, and in the chief places of concourse, the solemn assemblies of their tribes; he did not deliver his oracles obscurely and ambiguously, but so that they might be understood, ~~300~~ Habakkuk 2:2.

2. He had always acted wonderfully for them: “*From the time that they were first formed into a people there I am, there have I been resident among them and presiding in their affairs (he sent them prophets, raised them up judges, and frequently appeared for them), and therefore there I will be still.*” He that has been with his people hitherto will be to the end.

II. The prophet himself, as a type of the great prophet, asserts his own commission to deliver this message: *Now the Lord God* (the same that spoke from the beginning and did not speak in secret) *has by his Spirit sent me*, v. 16. The Spirit of God is here spoken of as a person distinct from the Father and the Son, and having a divine authority to send prophets. Note, Whom God sends the Spirit sends. Those whom God commissions for any service the Spirit in some measure qualifies for it; and those may speak boldly, and must be heard obediently, whom God and his Spirit send. As that which the prophet says to the same purport with this (<sup>381</sup>Isaiah 61:1) is applied to Christ (<sup>402</sup>Luke 4:21), so may this be; the Lord God sent him, and he had the Spirit without measure.

III. God by the prophet sends them a gracious message for their support and comfort under their affliction. The preface to this message is both awful and encouraging (v. 17): *Thus saith Jehovah, the eternal God, thy Redeemer*, that has often been so, that has engaged to be so, and will be faithful to the engagement, for he is *the Holy One*, that cannot deceive, *the Holy One of Israel*, that will not deceive them. The same words that introduce the law, and give authority to that, introduce the promise, and give validity to that: “*I am the Lord thy God, whom thou mayest depend upon as in relation to thee and in covenant with thee.*”

1. Here is the good work which God undertakes to fulfil in them. He that is their Redeemer, in order to that, will be,

(1.) Their instructor: “*I am thy God that teaches thee to profit*, that is, teaches thee such things as are profitable for thee, things that belong to thy peace.” By *this* God shows himself to be a God in covenant with us, by his *teaching us* (<sup>380</sup>Hebrews 8:10, 11); and none teaches like him, for he gives an understanding. Whom God redeems he teaches; whom he designs to deliver out of their afflictions he first teaches to profit by their afflictions, makes them partakers of his holiness, for that is the *profit for which he chastens us*, <sup>382</sup>Hebrews 12:10.

(2.) Their guide: *He leads them to the way and in the way by which they should go.* He not only enlightens their eyes, but directs their steps. By his grace he leads them in the way of duty, by his providence he leads them in the way of deliverance. Happy are those that are under such a guidance!

2. Here is the good-will which God declares he had for them by his good wishes concerning them, v. 18, 19. He had indeed brought them into captivity, but it was owing to themselves, nor did he afflict them willingly.

(1.) As when he gave them his law he earnestly wished they might be obedient (*O that there were such a heart in them!* <sup><1829></sup>Deuteronomy 5:29. *O that they were wise!* <sup><1829></sup>Deuteronomy 32:29), so, when he had punished them for the breach of his law, he wished they had been obedient: *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!* v. 18. *O that my people had hearkened unto me!* <sup><1813></sup>Psalms 81:13. This confirms what God had said and sworn, that he has *no pleasure in the death of sinners.*

(2.) He assures them that, if they had been obedient, that would not only have prevented their captivity, but would have advanced and perpetuated their prosperity. He had abundance of good things ready to bestow upon them if their sins had not *turned them away,* <sup><2891></sup>Isaiah 59:1, 2.

[1.] They should have been carried on in a constant uninterrupted stream of prosperity: *“Thy peace should have been as a river; thou shouldst have enjoyed a series of mercies, one continually following another, as the waters of a river, which always last.”* *Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis aevum — It flows, and will for ever flow;* not like the waters of a land-flood, which are soon gone.

[2.] Their virtue and honour, and the justice of their cause, should in all cases have borne down opposition by their own strength, *as the waves of the sea.* Such should their righteousness have been that nothing should have stood before it; whereas, now they had been disobedient, the current of their prosperity was interrupted, and their righteousness overpowered.

[3.] The rising generation should have been very numerous and very prosperous; whereas they were now very few, as appears by the small number of the returning captives (<sup><1364></sup>Ezra 2:64), not so many as of one tribe when they came out of Egypt. They should have been *numberless as the sand,* according to the promise (<sup><1217></sup>Genesis 22:17), which they had forfeited the benefit of: *“The offspring of thy bowels would have been*

innumerable, *like the gravel of the sea*, if thy righteousness had been irresistible and unconquerable as the waves of the sea.”

[4.] The honour of Israel should still have been unstained, untouched: *His name should not have been cut off*, as now it is in the land of Israel, which is either desolate or inhabited by strangers; nor should it have *been destroyed from before God*. We cannot reckon the name either of a family or of a kingdom destroyed till it is destroyed from before God, till it ceases to be a name in his holy place. Now God tells them thus what he would have done for them if they had persevered in their obedience, *First*, That they might be the more humbled for their sins, by which they had forfeited such rich mercies. Note, *This* should engage us (I might say, enrage us) against sin, that it has not only deprived us of the good things we have enjoyed, but prevented the good things God had in store for us. It will make the misery of the disobedient the more intolerable to think how happy they might have been. *Secondly*, That his mercy might appear the more illustrious in working deliverance for them, though they had forfeited it and rendered themselves unworthy of it. Nothing but a prerogative of mercy would have saved them.

3. Here is assurance given of the great work which God designed to work for them, even their salvation out of their captivity, when he had accomplished his work in them.

(1.) Here is a commission granted them to leave Babylon. God proclaimed, long before Cyrus did, that whoever would might return to his own land (v. 20): “You have a full discharge sent you: *Go you forth out of Babylon*; the prison-doors are thrown open, and the trumpet sounds, proclaiming a release.” Perhaps with this word, as a means, the Spirit of the Lord stirred up the spirits of those that did take the benefit of Cyrus's proclamation (<sup>106</sup>Ezra 1:5): *Flee you from the Chaldeans*, not with an ignominious stolen flight, as Jacob fled from Laban, but with a holy disdain, as scorning to stay any longer among them; flee you, not silently and sorrowfully, but with a voice, with a voice of singing, as they fled of old out of Egypt, (<sup>107</sup>Exodus 15:1.

(2.) Here is the news of this sent to all parts: “Let it be declared; let it be told; let it be uttered; make it to be heard by the most remote, by the most remiss; send the tidings of it by word of mouth; send it by writing, from city to city, from kingdom to kingdom, even to the utmost regions, *to the ends of the earth*.” This was a figure of the publishing of the gospel to all

the world; but that brings glad tidings which all the world is concerned in, this only that which it is fit all should take notice of, that they may be invited by it to forsake their idols and come into the service of the God of Israel. Let them all know then,

[1.] That those whom God owns for his are such as he has dearly bought and paid for: *The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob*; he has done it formerly, when he brought them out of Egypt, and now he is about to do it again. Jacob was God's servant, and therefore he redeemed him; for what had other masters to do with God's servants? Israel is God's son, therefore Pharaoh must let him go. God redeemed Jacob, and therefore it was fit that he should be his servant (~~116~~ Psalm 116:16); the bonds God had loosed tied them the faster to him. He that redeemed us has an unquestionable right to us.

[2.] That those whom God designs to bring home to himself he will take care of, that they want not for the necessary expenses of their journey. When he brought them out of Egypt, and *led them through the deserts*, they *thirsted not* (v. 21), for in all their removals the water out of the rock followed them; thence *he caused the waters to flow*, and, since rock-water is the clearest and finest, God *clave the rock, and the waters gushed out*; for he can fetch in necessary supplies for his people in a way that they think the least likely. This refers to what he did for them when he brought them out of Egypt; when all this was literally true. But it should now be in effect done again, in their return out of Babylon, so well provided for should they and theirs be in their return. God does his work as effectually by marvellous providences as by miracles, though perhaps they are not so much taken notice of. This is applicable to those treasures of grace laid up for us in Jesus Christ, from which all good flows to us as the water did to Israel out of the rock, for that rock is Christ.

(3.) Here is a caveat put in against the wicked who go on still in their trespasses. Let not them think to have any benefit among God's people. Though in show and profession they herd themselves among them, let them not expect to come in sharers; no (v. 22), though God's thoughts concerning the body of that people were thoughts of peace, yet to those among them that were *wicked* and hated to be reformed *there is no peace*, no peace with God or their own consciences, no real good, whatever is pretended to. What have those to do with peace who are enemies to God? Their false prophets cried Peace to those to whom it did not belong; but

God tells them that there shall be no peace, nor any think like it, to the wicked. The quarrel sinners have commenced with God, if not taken up in time by repentance, will be an everlasting quarrel.