

Called By The Lord.
Isaiah 43:1-7.
Sunday morning, August 1, 2010.

I. But now... (Words of contrast). Vs. 1

The word “but” is a word denoting contrast; the word “now” denotes time.

The contrast that is drawn for us is one between the former time or past time, and the present time. And the reference pertains to God’s old covenant people Israel or Jacob. We find their past described in Isaiah 42:22-25.

A. First a threefold description of the miserable condition of the people of God. In typical Hebrew fashion their conditions is described in three expressions; each saying the same thing twice.

1. We find a people who are robbed and plundered.
2. A people trapped in holes and hidden in prisons.
3. A people given over as prey and for plunder with no one to intervene or restore.

Application:

Does this describe you?

1. Have you been robbed and plundered of your joy and all that is left is the darkness and gloom of depression or even despair?

Have you been robbed and plundered of your peace and left with only a certain unrest that eats away at you?

Have you been robbed and plundered of the love of your heart and are left with only bitterness and resentment and grief?

2. Are you locked in some hole, or hidden in some prison, robbed of any hope?
3. Are you given over as prey and for plunder without anyone to intervene or restore?
Then listen to what happened to these people.

B. Secondly we find out who brought Israel in this deplorable condition. It was the Lord, and He did so for good reasons: Vs. 24,25.

They sinned against the Lord in two ways:

1. They would not walk in His ways; they were stubborn.
2. They would not obey His laws (even though these laws were for their good).
They were willful; demanding their own will and their own way.

Application:

Does Israel’s sin describe you in the sense of refusing to walk in the ways of the Lord, and willful in terms of wanting to walk in their own ways. “No one can tell me what to do.” And how is that working out for you?

Remember it is the Lord with whom you have to do.

“If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it.?” Amos 3:6

C. Thirdly, such blindness, ignorance, and hardness of heart had come over the people that they did not even understand what was going on:

1. Isaiah asks them the question: “Who of you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come?” Vs 23.
2. Isaiah shows them that even though the Lord did pour out His fury on them, and set all manner of fires around their land, they did not understand it; and

although it burned them, they did not take it to heart. Vs. 25.

Application:

Does this describe you; the ignorance; the blindness, and the hardness of heart? Do you attribute your hardships to chance, misfortune or fate; or to the evil of people around you? Then you need to remember that there is nothing that escapes the Lord's providence, and if there is a calamity in your city, or in your life, will not the Lord have done it? Amos 3:6.

In the midst of this sobering reality we hear the words "But now..."

II. But now... (words of a new reality and opportunity).

These words imply a new willingness to listen and to obey on the part of the people; a new sobriety and ability to discern their true condition.

A. A new creation.

1. The Lord speaks of himself as the One who created them and formed them. Created and formed are words taken out of Genesis 1, the creation account. Created means, "to make out of nothing." Formed means, "to form or to fashion in wisdom"
2. The Lord also speaks of having redeemed them, meaning that He is creating and forming them for the second time. He is speaking of new creation in Christ. In vs. 7 those same words "created and formed" occur. A third word is added, also taken from Genesis 1, "have made," meaning, to have completed or perfected something, pointing us once more to the new creation in Christ "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Cor. 5:17

B. A new name

1. He calls us what we are by nature. He also calls us where we are by nature. He says to His people, "O Jacob," that is cheater. Maybe that's what He would call you. Maybe he would call you liar, or adulterer, or thief. You probably know what He would call you.
2. However He does not leave it at that; in redemption He gives us a new name. That is why in vs. 7 He speaks of "Everyone who is called by My name." Jacob became Israel; "Prince of God." Vs. 1.

C. A new outlook and a new life principle.

1. When you pass through the waters..., through rivers..., and through the fire. Note here: not if you..., but when you, meaning you will pass through these.
2. You will not be drowned or burned or scorched; I will be with you. Yet there is something of you that will perish in these times. The three servants of the Lord who were thrown into the fiery furnace in Daniel 3 were freed by the fire from the implements with which they were bound. And by way of death and the grave we shall be freed from the remnants of corruption yet remaining in us, and we shall rise in perfection.

Application:

In baptism the Lord sets his mark of ownership on us in objective form; later a day must come when we hear for ourselves the Lord's call: "But now...thus says the Lord." Ask the Lord that you will hear His call, and when you do, say: "Amen; let it be so."