

A God Big Enough to Save

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[0 : 00] Tonight's reading is Isaiah 41 verses 1 to 20, which is on page 726 of the Church Bibles. Be silent before me, you islands, let the nations renew their strength.

Let them come forward and speak. Let us meet together at the place of judgment. Who has stirred up the one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him.

He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before.

Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, with the first of them and with the last, I am he.

The islands have seen it and fear. The ends of the earth tremble. They approach and come forward. They help each other and say to their companions, be strong. The metal worker encourages the goldsmith and the one who smooths with the hammer, swears on the one who strikes the anvil.

[1 : 12] One says of the welding, it is good. They have nails down the idol so that it will not topple. But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham, my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth.

From its farthest corners I called you and I said, you are my servant. I have chosen you and I have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced. Those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.

Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear, I will help you.

Do not be afraid, you worm, Jacob, little Israel. Do not fear, for I myself will help you, declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

[2 : 19] See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, reduce the hills to chaff. You will winnow them.

The wind will pick them up and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel. The poor and needy search for water, but there is none.

Their tongues are parched with thirst. But I, the Lord, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights and springs within the valleys.

I will turn the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into springs. I will put it in the desert, the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland and the fir and the cypress together so that people may see and know and may consider and understand that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Thank you. Great. Thank you, Simon. Thank you, Robin, for leading. Thank you, Martin, for praying. Thanks for all the musicians for playing.

[3 : 31] Fantastic. I won't pray as Robin's prayed for us, but just to open. Sometimes I get asked, James, what does this Bible book mean?

What's going on in this Bible book? Is there a short summary video of it that I can watch somewhere that tells me what this book is about? Well, yes, there is.

www.bibleproject.com And I'm going to cheat tonight and let them do my intro for me. The book of the prophet Isaiah.

In the first video, we explored chapters 1 to 39, which was Isaiah's message of judgment and hope for Jerusalem. He accused Israel's leaders of rebellion against God and said that through Assyria and then Babylon, Israel's kingdom would come crashing down in an act of God's judgment.

And so chapter 39 concluded with Isaiah predicting Jerusalem's fall to Babylon in the exile. And a hundred years after Isaiah, it all sadly came to pass. But Isaiah's greater hope was for a new purified Jerusalem where God's kingdom would be restored through the future messianic king.

[4 : 45] And all nations would come together in peace. And so chapters 40 and following explore this great hope. The first main section, chapters 40 to 48, open with an announcement of hope and comfort for Israel.

The people are told that the Babylonian exile is over and that Israel's sin has been dealt with. A new era is beginning. So they should all return home to Jerusalem where God himself will bring his kingdom and all nations will see his glory.

Now, let's stop for a moment because this opening announcement, whichever view you end up taking, everybody agrees that these chapters are announcing that the future hope has come. That God is fulfilling Isaiah's prophetic promises.

And so the prophet hopes that Israel will respond by becoming God's servant. That is, after experiencing God's justice and mercy through history, that they will now begin to share with the nations who God truly is.

But that's not what's happening. Israel, instead of bearing witness to the nations, is actually complaining and even accusing God. They say the Lord doesn't pay attention to our trouble.

[5 : 50] In fact, he's ignoring our cause. The Babylonian exile, understandably, caused Israel to lose faith in their God. I mean, maybe he's not that powerful. Maybe the gods of Babylon are way greater than our God.

And so the rest of these chapters, 41 to 47, are set up like a trial scene. God is responding to these doubts and accusations with the following arguments. He says first that the exile to Babylon was not divine neglect.

Rather, it was divinely orchestrated as a judgment for Israel's sin. And second, it was for Israel's sake that God raised up Persia to conquer Babylon so they could come back home fulfilling Isaiah's words.

So the right conclusion that Israel should draw is that their God is the king of history, not the idols of the nations. In the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Persian king Cyrus, Israel should see God's hand at work and so become his servant telling the nations who he is.

But by the end of the trial, chapter 48, we find that Israel is still as rebellious and hard-hearted as their ancestors. And so God disqualifies them as his servant. But God still is on a mission to bless the nations.

[6 : 56] And so the prophet says God's going to do a new thing to solve this problem, which moves into the next section, 49 to 55. Excuse the subtle bad editing bit there.

That was me. Great. Right. We remember from last week that Isaiah's writing in 700 BC. And he predicts that Israel will be judged and destroyed and sent into exile in Babylon for their idolatry, for their rebellion against God, for their injustice towards the poor.

But Isaiah also predicts that just as God has judged Israel, he will rescue them and bring them back to Jerusalem. But the question still remains in the mind of the Israelites.

And that is at the heart of Isaiah 40 to 48. Has God not disregarded us? So we remember how we looked last week and we saw that, verse 40, 47.

And won't we be better off by following idols and the small gods of Babylon? That's what the chaps who are returning from exile were asking themselves. Won't we be better off following the small gods of Babylon?

[8 : 21] So to settle the matter, Isaiah invites us and invited the Israelites into a heavenly courtroom where they were going to decide the matter once and for all.

Were they going to follow the Lord? Was the Lord the ruler of the world? That's Yahweh. Or was it the idols of Babylon?

And so we read there in verse 1. God brings all of creation to attention. So he says, Be silent before me, you islands. Let the nations renew their strength.

Let them come forward and speak. Let us meet together in the place of judgment. And what is going to happen is that God is going to give his evidence as to why he is the real, true, and living God.

And next, after that, the idols are going to give their evidence. And you islands there is a reference to the ends of the earth. The whole world is summoned to this trial.

[9 : 24] And that word there that they use right at the end of verse 1, judgment, is a word that they use for declaring a once and for all declaration of an issue.

The issue has been resolved. It's a final judgment. So in verse 2, God presents his evidence. And we read, Who has stirred up the one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service?

And the essence of what God is saying is, Which of all these idols has been moved to save and deliver you from exile like I have?

Who has worked in history and brought about the events that have resulted in your freedom from Babylon? That coming freedom.

And he says they're the one from the east. And that's a reference to this Persian king, King Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

[10 : 25] And who sent out a decree saying the Israelites should return home to Jerusalem. So what does the Lord do? Well, he stirs up Cyrus to rescue his people from Babylon.

He calls them into a service. And Cyrus moves from Persia, far, far away from Babylon, conquering country after country on his way towards Babylon, where he will finally liberate the Israelites, that they may get home.

And what do we read there? God hands over nations over to him and subdues kings before him. They become like dust before Cyrus. Cyrus pursues his enemies and they scatter before him like cockroaches in the night when you switch the lights on.

He moves on unscathed. A sword never touches Cyrus. The Lord directs Cyrus' path. He leads his feet into lands that he has never been before.

Always nearer, closer, battle by battle, decision by decision, victory by victory, within history towards Babylon and towards the liberation of the Israelites from exile so that they can go home.

[11 : 40] And then the Lord says in verse 4, Isaiah says in verse 4, Who has done this and carried it through? That is, the Lord works determinedly.

Once he puts his hands to something, he never gives up. He always lets that thing be happening. It's always going to happen. But notice, it's not just Cyrus.

The Lord has always been shaping history to do his purposes. That is, he's been calling forth the generations from the beginning. From the beginning, from the beginning of the world, God has been ordering creation and history to do his will.

Whether they're the big events in human lives, so Brexit, world wars and that sort of thing, or whether they're the ordinary, mundane details of our ordinary lives and histories.

God has been arranging them and ordering them for you, his people, is what he's saying in this passage. For your good and for the Lord's glory.

[12 : 48] And then God says in the second half of verse 4, For I, the Lord, with the first and the last of them, and with the last, I am he. That is, the beginning and the end of all things.

And that is, the Lord, he is the beginning and the end of all things, and he covers everything that is in between them. And the Lord there, when we look at the Bible, when we read that capital letter L-O-R-D, that's the covenant intimate name for God, Yahweh, that the translators translate out of respect for the Lord as Lord, in capital letters there.

And there's three big applications from this little section that we've looked at so far. And that is, the first is that we live in Yahweh's world.

What do I mean? What I mean is that God is not like, I wonder if you've seen that movie Moana. So he's not like Maui in the movie Moana. You know how Maui boasts to Moana about all the things that he's done, and he says, you should really say welcome.

And what we see is Maui's acting in creation. He does all these things in creation. That's not how the Lord is. The Lord is outside of creation.

[14 : 04] He is bigger than creation. He owns all of creation. He's not like a superhero with superhero powers acting in creation. He owns creation.

Everything is his. And the second thing that we notice is, the second big application for us, is that God is active in his creation. So God says, unlike other gods, I show that I am God by what I do.

So if God went to a job interview, what's the kind of thing he might say? He says, if he was applying for a job, what's the situation? My people need rescuing from Babylon.

What's the task? To free my people from exile. What's the action I should take? I will raise up King Cyrus and rescue my people and wipe out all the nations and kingdoms before him so that he can get to Babylon and liberate my people.

And what's the reflection? I have demonstrated that I am God by acting in history to save. And the third application that we notice there is by saving his people and rescuing them from exile, God demonstrates that integral to being God is being a savior.

[15 : 23] To be God is to save. That is, God gives of himself in saving his people. That is what it is to be the first and the last.

Now consider how the people respond in verses 5 to 7. That is, the enemies of Yahweh, they see Cyrus coming, and they are rightfully fearful.

In verse 5, the islands have seen it, and fear the ends of the earth tremble. But then look at how ridiculously they act in verses 6 and 7.

They approach and come forward. They help each other, and they say to their companions, Be strong! The metal worker encourages the goldsmith. The one who smooths with the hammer spurs on the one who strikes the anvil.

And it's a caricature of the absolutely ridiculousness of the human condition, of humans caught in idolatry.

[16 : 21] Those who make idols and construct idols. And they're encouraging one another into making these false gods with their own hands to be their gods that will save them.

Really? And it's ridiculous, isn't it? The one says, It is good, as if the idol is ready to save them, while the other is busy nailing the idol down so it won't fall over.

It's a ridiculous picture, isn't it? It's an absolute mockery. And they do all of this, hoping that these idols will save them.

The one that they've literally just propped up. They're trusting that to save them. Those idols couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag.

Never mentioned Cyrus coming to conquer everything in his path, like dust. And God says, Well, if you want to see my evidence that I am the God of the universe, that I am the God who saves, who acts in history, well, just look to Cyrus.

[17 : 28] I am going to send him to liberate my people. If you want to know who rules the world, God does. Now, I wonder if you'll just pause with me and look down at the evidence that the idols give as to whether they rule the world or not.

I looked up, and there isn't any. You see, idols are mute and dumb. They don't speak, and they don't respond in this passage.

They don't save. Instead, when they should speak, there is an awkward silence. And that is why idols in our own lives are so disappointing.

Whenever we build something up to take the place of God in our lives, and we drift towards that thing, and we build that thing up, and when life gets hard, and we find struggles, and we turn to that thing to save us, we are always disappointed because that thing never speaks to us.

It never communicates to us. It is always mute. It is always dumb. It doesn't save us. So whatever it is, think about daydreaming.

[18 : 38] Maybe it's comparing yourself to others. Maybe it's your car. Maybe it's your job. Maybe it's that university degree looking forward. Maybe pornography or something like that or something that holds you captive.

When life is really hard, they cannot speak back. They cannot save. They just leave you alone and lonely. But what does it look like to be rescued by God?

And that's our second point. If you're following along on the duck blue sheets there, verses 8 to 16 in the middle there. And the first thing that we do is we look down and consider verses 8 to 9, and we read, But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you, descendants of Abraham, my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from the farthest corners, I called you.

I said, you are my servant. I have chosen you, and I have not rejected you. So God says to the Israelites that he will rescue them from the ends of the earth, from wherever they are, God will rescue them, and he'll rescue them from Babylon.

But in these verses, Isaiah says more than this. He says that not only is God going to deliver them in the future, but he is going to give them a job to do.

[19 : 58] So notice what the Israelites, what God calls the Israelites in verse 8. But you, O Israel, my servant. And again, verse 9, you are my servant.

Now the title, my servant, was only given to the most special in the Bible. So you think of Moses, you think of Job, you think of Israel, Isaac initially.

And to be called Yahweh's servant is an enormous privilege. But there's no room for arrogance in claiming to be called servant.

There's no room where the Israelites can be arrogant here. So what do we see? But rather, it is because they have been chosen by the Lord. Jacob, I have chosen.

And again, verse 9, I have chosen you. And notice how he ends this. I have not rejected you. You see, during their time in the exile, the Israelites were tempted to think, well, God's abandoned us.

[21 : 10] He's left us. He's rejected us. He's given up on us. We've really blown it this time. Or perhaps maybe he's not powerful enough to save.

But look at what God says in this passage. I haven't given up on you. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. I sent you through the judgment of exile in Babylon. Not because I rejected you, but rather because of the exact opposite.

Because I love you and I want you to be with me. And the same is true for us today. Whenever we go through tough times in our lives and we're tempted to think, we've really blown it this time.

We've given up on God or God's given up on us. I can't understand why this really bad thing is happening to me. Whatever it is, maybe it's a bad breakup. Maybe it's home life issues.

Maybe it's problems with family at home. Maybe it's joblessness, illness, failure. You look at failing a course or something. And you tend to think, well, God has rejected me.

[22 : 15] Well, he says, oh, no, no, no. I have not rejected you. I've sent this hardness in your life, this tough thing in your life, because I love you and I want you in my kingdom.

So look at verse 8. You descendants of Abraham, my friend. And my friend there, that's the Hebrew word, ahav. And that probably means something more like, my beloved.

So what is he saying to them? He is saying, because they are children of Abraham, because the Israelites were children of Abraham, he loves them. And what's he saying to us now?

Because we are spiritually the children of Abraham, he loves us. Why can we be so confident of this? Well, because God always keeps his promises.

He doesn't forget not even one of them. He always honors his word. All his promises to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, he is going to keep.

[23 : 19] Remember Genesis 12, those promises to bless you, to make you into a nation, to be your God and you will be my people. He is going to keep all those promises. And he kept it to the Israelites and he keeps them to us now, today.

Now, if Israel had understood this then, and if we understand this now, then those truths that God keeps his promises, that he loves us, will be a rock, an immovable rock under our lives.

That will mean that we'll never be shaken, that we'll never be dismayed, that we'll never be fearful, no matter what we come up against. And so we look there to verse 10 and he says, so, and that's the therefore, do not fear.

Why? For I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Now, look and consider how the Lord describes the enemies of, how Isaiah describes the enemies of the servants and the Lord in verse 11. They're ashamed.

[24 : 32] They're disgraced as nothing. Perishing. In verse 12, though you search for your enemies, you will not find them.

Those who wage war against you will be as nothing. And it's laughable, isn't it? See, rather than fearful and trusting Yahweh, the Israelites are shown, the Israelites here are predicted, the Israelites are not fearful.

They look for their enemies and their enemies are nowhere to be seen. So you can imagine them saying, hello, hello, where are you? And there's no response because the enemies are as nothing before them.

There's nothing but silence. And that's as true for us today as it was for the Israelites then. And it will be as true for us in the future on that final day when we'll meet Jesus in glory.

So many oppose God's word today. Many twist it. They malign it. Or they simply disregard what God says in his Bible.

[25 : 41] They say things might seem very hard for Christians today. We heard about that, didn't we, in our prayers. We consider the opposition that Christians in China face today.

It's dreadfully hard. Well, there's a day in the future because God keeps his promises that that opposition will come to nothing. Their opposition will be as nothing before God and his servants.

And in those 14 and 16, what we have is a picture of utter victory that the Lord is going to accomplish as he rescues his people from exile.

So the Lord says Isaiah, his prophet, do not be afraid because I myself will help you. And notice what the Lord calls himself, your redeemer. And that is, to redeem is perhaps an old-fashioned word for us today.

Well, it means to buy something back at a price. So when you redeem something, what that person owes becomes what you owe and vice versa.

[26 : 49] So classically, my friend Andy got married and he married a lovely girl called Hannah and Hannah got Andy's rather ridiculously large board game collection and Andy got Hannah's university debt.

So to, I don't know who got the better deal there. To redeem something is to assume the expenses they have had, all the bad things they've done.

That's what it is. It's to buy something back at a price. And Yahweh rescues his people by buying them back at a price.

And he doesn't spell that out fully here, but he's looking forward to what he's going to say later in Isaiah. See, all the expenses of their spiritual debts that they owed or for their spiritual idolatry, their waywardness, the Lord takes on and is going to pay in the end later on.

What we'll see later on in Isaiah. And he does this because he loves them and he wants them to see his glory so that they might be in a relationship with him.

[27 : 56] The living, extraordinary Lord of all. But the Lord doesn't just want to rescue them. He doesn't just want to give them all these blessings so they can put them in a box and hide them under the bed or somewhere else.

He wants all of creation to see who he really is. That he is the God who rules everything. And to see his glory.

That all of creation, all people might see him, might know him and be saved. And this is what we see in verse 15, don't we? So how the Lord is going to use his servants to promote his glory.

See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them and reduce the hills to chaff.

You'll winnow them. The wind will pick them up and will blow them away. Now, I don't know how up-to-date you are with old-fashioned farming techniques.

[29 : 00] But a thresh is basically like a big wooden platform. And you put rocks in it and you put like blades and whatnot under it and you reap your corn. You throw your corn on the ground and you pull this thresh back and forth, back and forth.

What the thresh does, it cuts all the corn up into little stalks. So you've got this big mush of stalks. And what you do then is you winnow it. And winnowing it is literally picking it up, throwing it up in a basket.

And what happens? The valuable, valuable, that's the seeds that are heavy, they fall straight down onto the ground. They remain, but all the chaff and all the rubbish is blown away.

And so what we have here in these verses is of a picture of a giant thresh, a thresh enormously big, bigger than St. Silas, grinding down these mountains, flatter and flatter and flatter and flatter and flatter until they are eventually completely flat and disappear totally.

You see, the mountains in Isaiah, right at the start of Isaiah, Isaiah 2, we haven't covered it just yet, but the mountains are seen as competing idols, competing with the Lord, with the great mount Zion upon which that heavenly city is built.

[30 : 19] and so as these false idols are ground down, as the mountains are ground away, what happens? The glory of the Lord can go out and fill the earth and those idols are conquered and wiped away and crushed and are blown away as nothing.

And so although these idolatries will be destroyed, erased, and forgotten, those struggles that tempt you away from the Lord, those who trust in the Lord, by contrast, will rejoice in the Lord and find their glory in the Holy One of Israel.

So although in these verses Isaiah is predicting that God will deliver Israel from exile in Babylon by the hand of King Cyrus, the restoration that Isaiah portrays in his prophecy is also much more than this.

So what do I mean by that? What do I mean by saying he's talking about something much more than simply a physical coming back from Babylon? That is, Isaiah is speaking about the return of the exiles from Babylon, but he is also looking ahead to something much bigger, a full and final restoration that is true for all Christians who have ever trusted the Lord.

So if you're watching a movie, maybe a rom-com, and there's a boy and a girl and the boy and the girl have a bit of a fight and then they finally get together at the end of the movie and what happens?

[31 : 52] They have their first kiss. What Isaiah does is like as they're having their first kiss, there's wedding bells ringing in the background. So Isaiah is portraying this immediate rescue but there's this wedding bells in the background of something much bigger that's going to happen in the future, a full and final restoration of God's people to be with him in his place under his rule.

So what is this final restoration going to look like? And that's our last point on the service suite if you're taking notes. So look down with me at verse 17. The poor and the needy search for water but there is none.

Their tongues are parched with thirst but I, the Lord, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. And the first thing that we notice is that the poor and the needy who were neglected and robbed of justice in Israel's day such that they thirsted, God will remember them.

They will not thirst but it is also those who are spiritually poor, those who have been previously excluded from God's people in his kingdom.

The nations, the Gentiles, they will come in and they will find living water. But look at what else Isaiah goes on to say in verses 18 and 19.

[33 : 22] I will make the rivers flow on barren heights and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, the parched ground into springs.

I will put the desert in the desert, the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together.

What's he saying there? He's saying that the Lord on that final day is going to make the desert bloom in super abundance like it has never bloomed before.

What do I mean? Well, I wonder if you saw the BBC, those pictures of the desert blooming in South Africa this week. No one see that? No? Well, a couple of years ago I went to the Sahara Desert, right?

And what I didn't realize about the desert, I don't know if you've realized about the desert, is that there's no water in the desert. You think it's obvious. But here's the issue. We're 90% water.

[34 : 23] So when you go into the desert, you literally feel all the water, every molecule of water in your body trying to break out and get away from you, which is bad.

Isn't it? I think that's Browning motion. I don't know if my GCSE physics was that. It's literally trying to get out of you. So deserts are not a place of life and abundance, but they are a place of death.

And in Isaiah, the desert is a picture of spiritual death. It's a place of destruction of the created order in divine judgment.

It's a place that is desolated by God's divine judgment. But there is also a literal desert separating Babylon from Jerusalem that the Israelites had to go through to get home to Jerusalem.

So here is a, but here there is a picture of God coming to rescue his people from exile, literally of physically leading them through the desert. And it's a picture of him spiritually restoring them to better than they ever were before.

[35 : 43] And the reason that God does this wonderful thing of making his people better than they were ever before, of giving them super abundance of spiritual life, we see in verse 20, so that people may see and know and may consider and understand that the Lord has done it.

The Holy One of Israel has created it. And you know that, don't you? So you see a friend who hasn't known the Lord and they come to know the Lord and what happens? Their life begins to bloom, doesn't it?

They settle down with a boy or girl and they stay with them and they get married and they have kids. And all the things that plagued their life before disappeared. But that is only a small picture of what is going to happen on that final last day when God returns.

And the word that he uses for created right at the end of our passage here, and Israel, the Holy One of Israel has created it. That's the exact word that he uses in Genesis 1 verse 1.

So what is pictured here is a picture of God almost recreating the world for the very first time again, but making it better than it was when he originally made it.

[37 : 04] So in doing this, in rescuing and restoring his people from their exile in Babylon, from the place of judgment of their sin and their rebellion, God is giving a picture here of undoing all the effects of sin.

He is wiping away the memory of judgment. It's as if they will be and will be back in the garden of Eden, but the garden of Eden will be even better than it was.

All the goodness and greenness of life, the prosperity, that sin and rebellion had robbed the people of, God is going to restore, and he's going to put it back better than it was before.

And why does he do this? That the people may see and know and may consider and understand that he is the Lord, the one true God.

You see, in rescuing and restoring the Israelites from exile, in judging sin once and for all, God is saying, judgment is over, and he is using it as an opportunity to set the world aright, creationally, morally, relationally.

[38 : 11] So how about you? It's a new academic year. I don't know how last year went. I don't know where you are today. I don't know what struggles you're carrying.

I don't know what memories of past sins haunt you now. I don't know what's robbed you of your joy and drawn you away from the Lord. I don't know that. And maybe something's gone wrong in the past.

Maybe you've made some mistakes. Maybe you need to come to the Lord for the first time and ask him to make you a new person. Maybe you've been wondering about those mistakes, how they could ever be put right.

Maybe you're wondering if this year is going to be exactly like the last academic year or if it's going to be better. Well, this is God's promise for you from this passage.

I am the Lord, your God, Lord of everything. I will rescue you. I will deliver you from exile, from struggles, from temptation, from sin, from desolation, from death, from darkness.

[39 : 17] And I will restore you. I will fix you from all the damages of sin, all the broken relationships, all the hurts and upset.

I will make the desert bloom again as a new creation. And as surely as I sent King Cyrus to rescue his people then, I have sent my son to rescue and restore you once and for all.

And he will come again to my praise and glory as a warrior to lead his people home. Father, we thank you for this passage in Isaiah.

We thank you for that picture of you leading us through the desert back home to you and everything blooming. Lord, we thank you for Jesus.

Amen.