

Isaiah 43:16–21  
“God Delivers”  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

March 13, 2016  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

The Old Testament – Those had been the glory years!

A land of their own, freedom from their enemies.

Great victories and amazing acts of God

—mighty miracles that had made the ears of the other nations tingle.

They feared Israel and her God back then. Back in the good ol’ days.

Now those glory years were a long time ago and far, far away.

Captives in Babylon.

Dragged there when the walls of Jerusalem

and Judah’s meager army were much too weak to keep out the invaders.

Weak. Helpless.

Oh, if only those mighty acts of God were for now—instead of for times of old!

But then there was that word from the prophet Isaiah. God’s prophet. God’s word.

And Isaiah says something for now and for the future and for always. Isaiah says:  
GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE FOR SOMETHING NEW.

**[Our Text]**

In the text, God reminds the people of his long-ago deliverance of Israel from Egypt and for a new land.

The exodus was a mighty act of God by his grace and mercy.

Seven centuries before Isaiah, God had delivered the people of Israel from bondage and the death of the firstborn by the blood of the Passover lamb sacrificed.

Then, God had brought Israel through “the mighty waters,” the Red Sea, and drowned the “chariot and horse, army and warrior” of Egypt (vv 16–17).

Israel had passed through the sea

to a whole new world,  
to a whole new land,  
a new home, of streams and water and milk and honey.

And as they remember the former glory days,  
God says, “remember not the former things” (v 18).  
God’s people needed something new—a new deliverance, this time from Babylon.  
God did not want his people to be grieving over past glories,  
but to be looking ahead to what their deliverer God would do next.

**[*Something New*]**

Now God was going to do something new:  
deliver the people of Israel from captivity in Babylon  
and return them to their old—new—home (v 19a).

God tells the people that he will make  
a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert (vv 19b–21).

Their deliverance will be grand! God will achieve it in an amazing new way!

He will cause a pagan emperor to lift up his captives for special honor  
(Is 44:28–45:5; Ezra 1:1–4).

Carried away by Babylon –“B”            Returned by King Cyrus – “C”

Now, how many times had that happened before?!

They will return to their homeland,  
They will return and God will cause it to flourish again (vv 20b–21).

It is to this deliverance that they should look,  
not just back at previous deliverances.

God’s mighty works of the past are always testimony to his power and faithfulness.  
But he always gives his people what they need also for each new day.

And as with all the deliverances by God, it is by his grace, mercy, and power, and  
not by the doing or merit of his people. Nothing new about that!

**[Today]**

And so it is with God and his people today:

our God delivers us from our pasts and makes us something new.

We, too, as sinners, have a past from which we desperately need deliverance:  
sin and its “Egyptian bondage,” its “Babylonian captivity,”  
to Satan, death, and hell (Ps 51:5).

But “blessed be the Lord, who daily bears *us* up; God is *our* salvation.

*Our* God is a God of salvation, and to GOD belong deliverances from death”  
(Ps 68:19–20)—yes, *our* deliverance.

As he has delivered his people in the past, so he delivers us.  
God has delivered us from the guilt of our sin.

The Passover lamb,  
the passage through the Red Sea,  
the return from Babylon  
were all Old Testament prefigurings of the one great deliverance.

Because God then did something completely new:  
sent the fulfillment of all the old things  
—the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus passed through death to new life,  
returned from the grave to raise us also.

We are delivered from all those sins and slaveries that once held us.

**[Baptism]**

Now something else new: the Lord forms us as his brand new people by working  
faith in us.

1. The water through which Israel passed,  
the water that drowned the Egyptian army,  
the water that God caused to spring forth in the desert,  
now drowns our sinful nature,  
and a new man comes forth daily  
“to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

2. Through Baptism, by his Word and the power of his Holy Spirit, God creates that new man or woman in us, brings us to believe that he has delivered us, and gives us new life that never ends.

This is what will happen/has happened for baby Camden as the Holy Waters were poured in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

3. The Lord makes this announcement to us through his servants of the Word, that is pastors, as he did to the people of Israel through Isaiah.

And as always, our deliverance is not because of anything we have done to merit or earn it. Our deliverance is totally by his grace and power. Still nothing new there.

Remember when Lazarus died and had been buried in his tomb for four days, Jesus came to the tomb and called him out of the tomb and out of death to life.

Jesus did it all! Lazarus did nothing to aid himself, nor did he deserve to be returned from the dead. He was delivered by the grace and power of his Savior God, just as are all sinners.

**[Conclusion]**

By God's Word and his Spirit,

we look back in thanksgiving and give God the glory for all that he has done for us,	and we look forward in great hope and expectation to that which he has prepared for us in the future (Jn 14:1-6).
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And for his great blessings of deliverance, forgiveness, and life, we declare his praise (2 Tim 4:18). Amen.

Now, let us sing a joyful noise unto the Lord. Amen.