

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Answers in Exile

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

Isaiah 40:12-31

Theme: Exiles have questions and God has answers; listen and be comforted.

Introduction: There are a number of metaphors for the Christian life in Scripture. Three common ones are the way, ambassadors, and exiles. It is this latter category of *exiles* that applies to Judah after God's judgment through Babylon, and it applies to our lives as well. Exiles understandably have questions in this life, and it is in turning to God that they find their answers.

Last week's passage answered one fundamental question: does God want to deliver us? Today's passage answers two further questions:

1. Can God deliver us? (12-26)

In reading the history of Israel, we can be tempted to think: *why didn't they just obey?* Why did Israel persist in disobeying God?

But if we're honest, we recognize that there have always been competing voices to God's. Every age, including our own, offers alternate saviors.

At the bottom of so much of our unbelief is the idea that "God can't really..." (save us, help us, sustain us, etc).

Isaiah uses a repeated set of 4 ideas to show the Lord's superiority to any alternative:

1) rhetorical questions showing God is the sole Creator; 2) affirmations of the Lord as the one true Ruler; 3) rhetorical comparisons of God to anything else; and 4) claims of God's absolute superiority over every other god.

So the answer to the question, *can God deliver us?* is not only yes; it's: Yahweh is the only God. He's the only one who can save.

2. Will God deliver us? (27-31)

In answering this question, we have to reckon with the issue of timing. God will save his people, but not always according to their timeframe. His purposes and priorities are his own.

The temptation is for us to complain. Complaining make us feel powerful, like authoritative persons who can blame something or someone outside of ourselves. It also grants us victim status, which is powerful in our day.

Instead, we must wait on the Lord. He is accomplishing his purpose. We must find our comfort in him and trust in his good timing. Just as Jesus came in the fulness of time, so we can trust his timing and purposes in our lives.

Questions:

1. What do you make of the idea of being an exile in this world?
2. How often do you complain?
3. How do you need to grow in confidence and comfort in the Lord? How does the gospel transform you to grow?