



OUT OF DARKNESS ... A NEW SONG

ISAIAH 42: 10-17

Sing to the LORD a new song! Sing his praise from the ends of the earth!

You who sail the sea and all that fills it, the coastlands and their residents.
Let the desert and its towns shout aloud, the villages that Kedar inhabits.
Let the cliff dwellers sing; from the top of the mountains let them shout.
Let them give the LORD glory and declare God's praise in the coastlands.

The LORD will go out like a soldier; like a warrior God will stir up rage.
God will shout, will roar; over enemies he will prevail.
I've kept still for a very long time. I've been silent and restrained myself.
Like a woman in labor I will moan; I will pant, I will gasp.

I will wither mountains and valleys, and I will dry up all their vegetation.
I will turn rivers into deserts, and I will dry up pools.
I will make the blind walk a road they don't know,
and I will guide them in paths they don't know.
But I will make darkness before them into light and rough places into level ground.
These things I will do; I won't abandon them.

Turned backward, utterly shamed are those who trust in idols,
who say to a cast image,
"You are our god!"

THE THREAT OF CHAOS THE PROMISE OF RECREATION



“we find it difficult to appreciate this image in the way our ancient ancestors did, for in our time scientific theories have replaced the mythic cosmology of their worldview. We need to remember that the threat of all that was good, from the greening of the earth in spring to the security and prosperity of the nation, was perceived as arising from unruly forces of chaos. Hope sprang from the image of an active God, engaging those threatening forces in order to restore order and renew creation. With the Divine Warrior’s appearance came the replenishing rains, the birthing of cattle, the retreat of enemy forces and the prosperity of the nation.” Paul Hanson

I'VE KEPT STILL FOR A VERY LONG TIME. I'VE BEEN SILENT BUT LIKE A WOMAN IN LABOUR
I WILL CRY OUT... ISAIAH 42:14

SIGNS OF LIFE ... AN ANSWERED LAMENT

- ▶ In Isaiah 40 we read 'the punishment is over'. A word of comfort is to be spoken. In Isaiah 42 that message is given new force and urgency with language taken from the delivery room.
- ▶ Like a woman in the final throes of labour, God can wait no longer. He has become an engaged partner again. What follows is a picture of the transformation that occurs when God draws near. Brueggeman



Hear, deaf ones, and blind ones, look and see!

Who is blind if not my servant and deaf like my messenger whom I send?

Who is blind like the restored one, blind like the servant of the LORD?

You have seen many things, but don't keep watch.

With ears open, you don't hear.

God intended, out of the goodness of his heart, to be lavish in his revelation.

But this is a people plundered and looted, everyone trapped in holes and hidden in dungeons.

They have become plunder with no one to rescue, loot with no one to say, "Give it back."

Which of you will listen to this, will pay attention and respond from now on?

Who gave Jacob to the looter, and Israel to the plunderers?

Wasn't it the LORD,

the one we sinned against?

They were not willing to walk in God's ways, and wouldn't listen to his teaching.

So God poured out on Jacob the heat of his anger

and the fury of battle.

It scorched him, and he didn't know it;

it burned him, but he didn't give it much thought.



I CANNOT HEAR! I CANNOT SEE!

“the entire Exodus tradition of treasured memory is premised on Yahweh’s attentiveness: “God heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites and God took notice of them . Brueggeman

“The shocking irony of their lamentable situation is addressed with the kind of unrestrained straight talk that hopes to restore Israel to right thinking in place of the self-deception that had set the stage for national catastrophe.” Paul Hanson

But this people is compromised. ... They have lost—things, liberty, place, and name. They are all trapped in holes and tucked away in prisons. They've been plundered and depleted with none to the rescue.

HITTING BOTTOM: A FALL FROM GRACE

“Receiving honest confrontation of past sins is much more difficult than abiding in the protection of illusions that blame everyone else, including God. ... The prophet calls us to look deeply into one's soul, even if that means discovering what is shameful and reprehensible. If this is true in the case of the individual it is equally true of a nation on a larger scale”

Paul Hanson

“Israel was being offered a new opportunity to confront reality. The prophet, with words that on the surface may sound uncommonly harsh, was God's chosen agent in the struggle for the heart of a wayward people. The prophet was seeking to draw the people to the new future intended for them by their loving God.” Paul Hanson



“Then comes the question that pierces to the heart of the matter, testing the very foundations of biblical faith and pressing the age-old issue that divides the religions of the world.”

...

“Who brought on the calamity that destroyed temple and nation and thrust the people into exile?”

Paul Hanson

“GOD IS ALWAYS FOR US. EVEN WHEN HE MUST BE AGAINST US, HE IS FOR US.”

GEORGE MACDONALD

ALL FOR LOVE?? ALL FOR JUSTICE??

- ▶ “God poured upon his people the heat of his anger” (42:25), ... “You are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you.” (43:4)
- ▶ “Only those who recognize God’s word in both are able to confess that the one true God is sovereign over all of life, over joy and sorrow, over life and death, over wholeness and calamity, and to add to this confession with confidence that ultimately joy, life and wholeness will prevail.” Paul Hanson



A GOD OF PARADOX



“God is not a Lord aloof in divine isolation and intentionally ignorant of human beings as they tread the precarious path between life in covenant and death through disobedience. God through the prophetic word tears into the sloth and complacency, the guilt and despair, that threaten to numb human beings ... Both destruction and deliverance come from God, and both are dedicated to the same redemptive purpose.”

Paul Hanson

How I look forward now to the glimpse of its coming

Stories, tales and parables do not solicit that desired response:

that need for breath, the ecstasy of beauty, that call, which just being should carry

When it shows itself on the horizon, peeking thru, like the setting light thru dark of clouds

a glimpse is caught, its coming

recognized,

the chilling closeness is felt so deep.

Then all my senses come alive, the sweetness of your promises are tasted,

the needed calming of your presence breaks through,

now every breath becomes a recital

Eyes see, ears hear the comfort in your

promises

heard at depths not reached before,

calming of the empty silence which before

was deafening.

Revealing the essence, of eternal life.

Being, knowing that I am your beloved.

Thank you my relentless pursuer

Thank you my faithful servant

Thank you my parting friend

You brought the gift you were ordained for

Where, O death is your victory,

For you have been swallowed up in life.

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A WAY FORWARD

“But I'll take the hand of those who don't know the way, who can't see where they're going. I'll be a personal guide to them, directing them through unknown country. I'll be right there to show them what roads to take, make sure they don't fall into the ditch. These are the things I'll be doing for them - sticking with them, not leaving them for a minute.”

Isaiah 42:16