

1. Our last LifeLines verse for winter will be 1 Peter 1:9, on February 12, 2024.
2. LifeLines will resume after Easter, on April 8.

LifeLines February 5, 2024

Today's Scripture: 2 Verses

Isaiah 43:18-19

**Do not remember the former things, or consider the days of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make *a way* in the wilderness & rivers in the desert.**

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

The book of Isaiah is full of Messianic prophecy, & it's the most cited OT book in the NT. Isaiah constantly reminded the people that God keeps His promises & can be trusted to intervene & protect His own. (God, Himself, is speaking to the prophet Isaiah.) Throughout this chapter, God refers to Himself by these titles: the Lord, God, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the Creator of Israel, your Savior, your King.

Some consider Isaiah 43 to be one of the high points of the Old Testament. It was probably written about 550-538 BC, midway through the Babylonian exile. It speaks of a new exodus from Babylon which mirrors the one out of Egypt. This time, God would bring the Israelites out of bondage & back home through the *wilderness*. He tells them this exodus will be more glorious than making *a way* through the *sea* & drowning chariots & warriors. These words were the first hope they'd had of returning to Israel (Judah).

God tells them to forget the former things. He wants them to *concentrate on the future* as opposed to dwelling on the past. Because of the disobedience of the generation that didn't survive the exodus from Egypt, many captives probably thought they were destined to punishment, that their best days were behind them, & that there was no hope for another exodus.

Previously, God made *a way* for His people through *the sea*. Now, He will make *a way* through *the desert*! He dried up the Red Sea & will now make *streams* in the desert. He wants them to *hope*, because *He* knows He's going to do more impossible things!

For believers, Jesus is *the Way*, so I'd like us to consider this verse in relation to the *new thing* done at Calvary through the crucifixion & resurrection of the Son of God!

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV or versions shown below.)

AMP

Do not remember the former things, or ponder the things of the past. Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing. Now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

EASY

The Lord did all that for you, but now He says, “Forget those things that happened a long time ago. Do not think about past events. Look! Now I will do something that is new! It is already beginning to happen. Surely you can recognize it. Yes, I will make a road through the desert. I will make streams in the wilderness.”

ERV (Easy to Read)

So don't remember what happened in earlier times. Don't think about what happened a long time ago, because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, & rivers will flow through that dry land.

MSG

Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand new. It's bursting out! Don't you see? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands.

NCV

Look at the new thing that I am going to do. It is already happening. Don't you see it? I will make a road in the desert & rivers in the dry land.

NIV

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness & streams in the wasteland.

NLT

But forget all that – it is nothing compared to what I am doing. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

TLB

But forget all that – it is nothing compared to what I'm going to do! For I am going to do a brand-new thing. See, I have already begun! Don't you see? I will make a road through the wilderness *of the world* for My people to go home, & create rivers for them in the desert! (Italics added.)

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

Do not remember the former things, or consider the days of old... God frequently told His people to remember! Remember! Remembering who God is & what He's done encourages *us* in our present seasons of life as well as for our future battles. He wanted His people to know He was still the Redeemer of Israel. Here, He wants the people *not* to dwell on the past or their past behavior or their shortcomings. He wants the people to be prepared to *trust in what is not yet seen*, in other words have faith (Hebrews 11:1).

The Holy Spirit will help us deal with the past & not keep rehearsing it or reliving those events that are better off left in the past. If we let Him, He enables us to deal with former things emotionally, spiritually & relationally. We must not let ourselves be bound by or paralyzed by the past.

I am about to do a new thing... Sarah Young, in Jesus Always, January 11 entry, states, "Even the most fulfilling times in life must eventually give way to something new." The new things we choose for ourselves aren't always in our best interest, but God's thoughts & ways are always higher than our own (Isaiah 55:8-9). God said He'd deliver the people home from Babylon. The new thing He refers to in our verses also alludes to the coming of Jesus. When Jesus came, the new thing God did was make *a way* to bring *all* His children home to Him! God wants us to turn once & for all to Him! He wants us to give up selfish ways & pursue Him alone. He will deliver us to Himself, our heavenly home.

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?.. God's question is a good one! Often, when He's doing something new in our life, for our benefit, we're totally oblivious. That's because even though we desire to 'walk by faith, not by sight,' we have a tendency to keep relying on our own abilities – what we can see, feel, hear & touch - all carnal things, which inhibit our ability to walk by faith. God is asking people to have faith, & see what He is doing, what He longs to do, so they can participate in His plan.

This statement begins with the word, *now*. God knew then & knows today when the time is right to bring forth guidance, direction, a blessing, a new thing to change the entire course of a life. Let's keep watch *now* for His new things on the horizon.

I will make a way in the wilderness & rivers in the desert... Wilderness seasons can blind us or make us forget the purposes God has for us in His eternal plan. God delivers His people with a purpose. He delivered the Israelites in Egypt to the Promised Land. He would deliver the captives in Babylon back to Israel, & He has made a way for us to be delivered to Him for eternity.

Sometimes the deaf & blind are given physical sight & hearing, & sometimes we're given spiritual sight & hearing. Spiritually speaking, this happens at salvation. Isaiah previously recorded that it will happen *again* when Christ returns. Our *way in the wilderness & our river in the desert* is Christ. He transforms the wildernesses in our lives into gardens of abundance & the deserts into fields nourished by His blessings & grace.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (What other verses come to your mind?)

Psalm 31:14-15a, But I trust in You, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand.

Psalm 105: 41, He opened the rock, & water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river.

Psalm 106:43-44, Many times He delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes, & were brought low through their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their distress when He heard their cry.

Isaiah 35:8, A highway shall be there, & it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

Isaiah 40:3, A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

Isaiah 40:5, “Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, & all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 42:9, See, the former things have come to pass, & new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Isaiah 43:8, Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!

Isaiah 43:25, I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, & I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 48:6, You have heard; now see all this; & will you not declare it? From this time forward I make you hear new things, hidden things that you have not known.

Isaiah 53:5b, Upon Him was the punishment that made us whole, & by His bruises we are healed.

Isaiah 55:8-9, For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways & My thoughts than your thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:13, O hope of Israel! O Lord! All who forsake You shall be put to shame; those who turn away from You shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord.

Habakkuk 2:3, For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, & does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.

Luke 3:4 & 6, As it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight...& all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

John 4:14, “But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

John 14:6, Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Acts 9:2, And (Paul) asked him (the high priest) for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 24:14, But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law written in the prophets.

1 Corinthians 10:13, No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, & He will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing He will also provide *the way* out so that you may be able to endure it. (Italics added.)

2 Corinthians 5:17, So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Hebrews 11:1, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

1 Peter 2:10, Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 21:4-5, He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning & crying & pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. And the One who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also He said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy & true.”

SUMMARY

What are the wilderness areas, deserts, badlands, dry lands, wastelands in your life? Do you have a tendency to “relive” or “return to” unpleasant things in the past? Why?

How does it make you feel? Is it possible that doing so limits God in new things He longs to do in your life?

When Isaiah said God would do a new thing, He meant God would do something for the people of that day (& us) that they (we) couldn't do for themselves (ourselves). God is the One delivering us & bringing new things about in a way we mustn't miss. What things? A fresh start, blessings, a new beginning, a new pathway for His people to come to Him & remain with Him forever - something today's world can't *imagine* or thinks is impossible. Have you ever longed for a new beginning?

God doesn't deliver His people because we're good! Throughout history, we have burdened Him with our sins, offenses & complaints. God delivered Israelites from Egypt & from Babylon, & He delivers us today – from our sins & sinful, carnal ways, so we can be made right with Him & declared righteous. God blots out our sins for *His own sake*, not for *ours*! He redeems us because He wants a people who will know Him for who & what He is & who will give Him the praise, honor & glory He deserves for His steadfast love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, & salvation through the gift of His Son & the Holy Spirit.

Before Christians were called “Christians,” those who believed in Jesus Christ for salvation were referred to as, “The Way.” In Isaiah 35:8 (above), we're told we will one day journey on the “Holy Way.” The NIV calls it the “Way of Holiness.” Our redemption through Christ's sacrifice on the cross brings us into the Presence of God, a *way* He planned for us since the beginning of time, through His Son Jesus, the Way, the Truth & the Life. God is always offering us “a way” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

CONCLUSION

What new thing does God want to begin in your life? Why not ask Him? Are you already thanking Him?

God is doing many new things, even though we can't *yet* perceive what He's doing. At the crucifixion on Good Friday, the people had no idea what God was accomplishing. It was the beginning of a truly astonishing new thing. Did the people of that day see it right away? Do we see it now? Do we understand all He did? He saved us from sin, & He opened our way to eternity. Do we have faith to see all He's doing today?

If we do not limit God, He, who acted in the past, will still do new things in our lives, our families, our church, community, nation, & world. There are still *streams of mercy & rivers of grace* that will flow into our lives. Allen Jackson, World Outreach Church, Murfreesboro, TN, said, “In the Bible, the desert is a place where God gets people's attention, but it's also a place where God's people experience His deliverance, His provision, His revelation, His renewal, & His preparation for a new season.” What a great statement!

In Jesus Always, January 30, Young writes, “I am making everything new! This is the opposite of what is always happening in your world...The world is in such a desperately fallen condition that there is only one remedy for it: making everything new...It needs to be made completely new! And this is absolutely guaranteed to happen at the end of time, for My words are trustworthy & true. You have good reason to rejoice, beloved, because I will make everything – including you – new & gloriously perfect!”

Our hope was never meant to be in *anyone* or *anything* – other than God! The return of Christ is still in the future, & we can't see it yet, but we know God will be redeeming & creating a whole new world one day. Jesus was with God in the beginning & is with Him throughout eternity – as we will be. For now, let us have eyes to see & ears to hear! When we connect Isaiah's prophecy to all the promises God has already filled, our hope is renewed, & we can trust Him for all that is still to come. He said...

**“Do not remember the former things, or consider the days of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness & rivers in the desert.”**

Let Isaiah 43:19 be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!

Take a minute or two & write something you want to remember about this LifeLine:
