

Is. 44:21-23 (WCF 15:4) “The Fog Lifts”

For the Children: Countries where there is very bad air pollution may experience what the British used to call a “pea soup fog” – a thick, yellowish fog that sometimes caused people to die when they breathed it. But even a thick fog can quickly disappear if the wind is blowing in the right direction. Our sins are like that thick fog. Even small sins deserve hell. Even small sins can kill. And we have many sins in our lives. But the Lord Jesus is like that wind that blows away the pea soup fog. His death for us is so powerful, that even the worst sins are forgiven when we truly repent. That makes us so thankful that we give glory to God, turn away from our sins as we become aware of them and are filled with joy. **Questions:** How does it help us to deal with our sin when we remember that we are God’s children and servants? Does God forgive us because He is impressed with our repentance? How does it help us repent to know that we have already been saved by the Lord Jesus?

Introduction:

First Point: A Call to Remember

- 1) Remember What?: The Lord calls on Israel to remember the earlier points in the chapter – that the Lord “formed” Israel, made them His servants and will bless them; that He is the only God; and that idolatry is folly. Since God is their Creator and Master, He will not forget them.
- 2) Application to the Problem of Sin: The Lord Himself will not forget these truths as He considers the sins of His people – whether those sins are great or small. He will not forget His works, including the work of redemption. Vss. 22 and 23 stress that the Lord *has* redeemed His people. It is already done. The word “redeem” here refers to the duty of the Kinsman-Redeemer to pay the price necessary to buy those close to him out of slavery. Christ is the Great Kinsman-Redeemer. His work results in our forgiveness. Though our sins are like a thick cloud or heavy mist (v. 22) – for even the lesser sins deserve death (Mt. 12:36) – the infinite value and power of Christ’s work can drive that fog away with ease. See Is. 1;18, WCF 15:4.

Second Point: A Call to Repent

- 1) The Motive for Repenting: We should be motivated to repent by considering who God is and by considering the loathsomeness of our sins. However, the reason given here is that the Lord has already redeemed His people. The motive is then gratitude for that mercy as well as the recognition that redeeming us gives God an additional right to call us to repentance and obedience.
- 2) The Ground of Forgiveness: Note that we are not forgiven because of the quality of our repentance; rather, we are to repent because of the quality of God’s grace. See WCF 15:3 on redemption as God’s free grace in Christ. If it depended on our repentance, every sin would be too great for us to be redeemed. The reason “no sin is so great that it can bring damnation on those who truly repent” is because salvation and forgiveness rest on Christ’s work.

Third Point: A Call to Rejoice

- 1) Because God Has Done It: The whole of Creation, from its heights to its depths, is called upon to rejoice (v. 23) – because God has redeemed Israel. Creation’s renewal is tied up with man’s redemption (Rom. 8:18f).
- 2) God-Centred Joy: This is not simply a call to rejoice because of the benefit that comes to man and his world. It is a God-centred joy. It is because “The Lord has done it” and “in Israel He shows forth His glory.” He shows His infinite love, mercy, compassion and faithfulness by redeeming His people – yet without “winking” at sin, for He still calls on His people to repent. That joy can only exist because God does the redeeming by grace. We can have that joy because we know that no sin, no matter how great, can take the repentant believer from the Lord. But at the same time, we are reminded to take all sin seriously, no matter how small it may seem, by turning from that sin and returning to the Lord.

Conclusion: