

Adult Study Guide for January 17, 2021
Hope For 2021.... More than Just a New Year
Isaiah 43:1-7

Goal: To reorient our lives toward God as we experience suffering and disorientation.

Key Verse: *But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. – Isaiah 43:1 (NIV2011)*

1. Think of a time when you were stuck someplace where you did not want to be. What kind of questions come to your mind? How did I get here? Why did this happen? How will I make it? In what ways did 2020 hold you back from where you wanted to go?
2. Isaiah 43 was written for the people of Israel who were hoping for deliverance from their Babylonian captivity. The first words in verse 1 “but now” refer to chapter 42 (where the prophet declared the consequences of Israel’s refusal to obey God’s law) and suggest that God will do something new – that God will redeem his people. How does remembering that God created you and redeemed you help you to conquer your disorientation and fear?
3. Read Isaiah 43:2. Notice that these verses warn us that we will face difficult times (pass through the waters; walk through the fire). The question is not *if* we will face hardship, but *when* it will come. But there is hope when God is on our side. For Israel, Cyrus would conquer Babylon and allow God’s people to return home from exile. Read Matthew 16:18 and Romans 8:31, 35-37. What are God’s promises to his Church and to us?
4. Read Isaiah 43:3-7. What is God’s motivation for delivering his people from bondage? (v. 4) Parenting can be disorienting especially through the adolescent years when teenagers are trying to work out their own identity. God’s love for Israel was demonstrated by returning scattered sons and daughters from exile. Read Philippians 2:9-11. What difference does it make to know that you were created for God’s glory as one of his sons or daughters? Are you ready to join others from every nation in praising God?
5. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. Our orientation is often limited to the here and now. But the Bible reminds us that a new day is coming. Life takes on new meaning when we look at it from the perspective of eternity and we keep our eyes on Jesus. Read the first question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism below and compare this answer to Isaiah 43:1-7.

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.