Isaiah 48:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Analysis

Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans (צְאוּ מִבָּבֶל בִּרְחוּ מִכַּשְׂדִּים)—The imperatives tse'u (go out) and birchu (flee) command urgent exodus from Babylon. Written 150 years before Babylon's rise, this prophecy anticipates Cyrus's decree (539 BC) allowing Jewish return. **With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this**—The exodus shouldn't be silent retreat but vocal testimony. The verbs haggidu (declare) and hotzi'u (bring forth, publish) mean proclaim internationally. **Utter it even to the end of the earth**—To qetseh ha-arets (end of earth), broadcast the message: **say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob**.

The verb ga'al (redeem) is kinsman-redeemer language—God as nearest relative buying back enslaved family. This typological exodus prefigures multiple fulfillments:

1. historical return under Zerubbabel/Ezra
2. spiritual exodus through Christ who 'redeemed us from the curse of the law' (Galatians 3:13)
3. eschatological 'come out of her, my people' from Revelation 18:4 regarding end-times Babylon.

Each generation hears the command: flee from systems opposed to God, proclaim redemption, and live as liberated people. The Christian life is exodus-shaped: saved from bondage, journeying toward promised rest.

Historical Context

Cyrus conquered Babylon (539 BC) and issued a decree allowing Jewish return (Ezra 1:1-4). About 50,000 returned under Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:64-65). Many remained in Babylon, comfortable in exile—to them Isaiah's 'flee!' applied. The New Testament uses Babylon as code for Rome (1 Peter 5:13) and for the world system opposed to God (Revelation 17-18), extending the exodus metaphor to Christian experience.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What modern 'Babylons' do Christians need to 'flee from'—cultural systems, value structures, worldly entanglements?
2. How does the exodus pattern (slavery, redemption, wilderness, promise) structure Christian testimony and experience?
3. Why must proclamation of redemption be public ('declare ye, tell this') rather than private religious experience?

Interlinear Text

רִנָּ ה	בְּק וֹל	מְכַשְׂדִים	בִּרְח ו	מִבָּבֶל	הוֹצִיא וּהָ
of singing	with a voice	ye from the Chaldeans	flee	of Babylon	Go ye forth
H7440	H6963	H3778	H1272	H894	H3318

הָאָ רֶץ	קְצֶ ה	עַד	הוֹצִיא וּהָ	ז את	הַשְׁמִ יעו	הַגִּ ידו
of the earth	it even to the end		Go ye forth		ye tell	declare
H776	H7097	H5704	H3318	H2063	H8085	H5046

יַעֲקֹב:	עַבְדּ וֹ	יְהוָ ה	גָּאַ ל	אָמְר ו
Jacob	his servant	ye The LORD	hath redeemed	say
H3290	H5650	H3068	H1350	H559

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:9 (Redemption): Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 51:45 (References Lord): My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:6 (Sin): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Jeremiah 50:8 (References Babylon): Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

Revelation 18:4 (Sin): And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Isaiah 63:9 (Redemption): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 26:1 (Parallel theme): In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Isaiah 49:13 (Sin): Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.