

## TEXT – Isaiah 43:16-21

Introduction: What's new for 2010? Here are some products that we should start to see as scheduled to come out this year. One of the more unique products is the waterless washing machine. It uses nylon beads to clean clothes instead of water. We all wondered when it would come, but it should finally be here – the Jetson style flying car. The Terrafugia Transition is the first flying car. It's actually more like a driving plane that is scheduled to hit highways sometime this year. For our techno people you might want to look out for what are called Tri-specs, that is, your ipod, headphones, wi-fi headset, and sunglasses all in one. Every year there are new and innovative products designed to make our lives easier and more enjoyable. However today, we are going to look back 700 years before Jesus was even born for God's new product. We are told by the prophet Isaiah that **GOD IS DOING SOMETHING NEW**. Isaiah reminds us that yes 1) the former things are great, but 2) the new thing is better.

### I. The former things are great

- God did many great things for his Old Testament people. Isaiah recalls the most well-known event in Israel's history, a great demonstration of God's power and his promise to deliver his people from their suffering. Isaiah in poetic form retells the account of Israel crossing the Red Sea.
- Just picture this. The nation of Israel, some 2 million people walked on dry land through the middle of a sea with a wall of water on each side. As they made their way on dry ground through this mighty water piled up on each side Pharaoh's army followed in hot pursuit to destroy them. But God revealed his glory that day by drowning horses and chariots and all of Pharaoh's army. God snuffed out their lives just like one would blow out the flame on a candle.
- What an amazing sight this must have been for the Israelites. They had seen the mighty miracles God performed in Egypt to deliver them from their slavery. But there at the Red Sea God easily destroyed the most powerful army in the world at that time. What a sight it must have been to see water come crashing down, fragmenting pieces of chariots and dead horses and soldiers washing up on shore.
- And yet this whole section of Isaiah speaks of an even greater deliverance than the one at the Red Sea. It was the deliverance of God's people from Babylon. God used Cyrus king of the Medes and Persians to order that the Jews could return from Babylon to the Promised Land of Canaan. They were given money from the royal treasury and protection along the journey. Who has ever heard of such a thing like this?
- Look at what God has done for you throughout your life. God provided a way out of your suffering when it all seemed so hopeless. He took an impossible situation and made it work out beautifully. He orchestrated what seemed like chaos and made everything fall into place, each piece of the puzzle at just the right time.
- Hasn't God always been there for us? Hasn't he always provided for all our needs? Hasn't he always done what is best, even if we didn't realize it? The Lord has done great things for us. He promises never to leave or forsake us, ever.
- A little boy was eagerly looking forward to the birthday party of a friend who lived only a few blocks away. When the day finally arrived, a blizzard made the sidewalks and roads nearly impassable. The boy's father, sensing the danger, wasn't going to let his son go. The youngster reacted tearfully. "But Dad," he pleaded, "all the other kids will be there. Their parents are letting them go."
- The father thought for a moment and then said, "All right, you may go." Surprised but overjoyed, the boy bundled up and plunged into the raging storm. The driving snow made visibility almost impossible, and it took him more than half an hour to trudge the short distance to the friend's party. As he rang the doorbell, he turned briefly to look out into the storm. His eye caught the shadow of a retreating figure. It was his father. He had followed his son's every step to make sure he arrived safely.
- The psalmist says, "The LORD watches over you – the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night." Day and night the Lord watches over us. Just think about all the Lord has done for you throughout your life. The writer to the Hebrews wrote, "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"

Transition: God has done many things for us in the past. But Isaiah wants us to focus on something new. God is doing something new. The former things are great but this new thing is so much better.

## II. The new thing is better

- The Lord speaking through his prophet Isaiah says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" Yes, God's saving activities in the past were great. He delivered the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt, destroying Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. The Lord brought his people back from their captivity in Babylon.
- But there was something far greater that God would do – some new thing unlike anything anyone had ever seen. Like the deliverance from slavery in Egypt, this new thing would be a freedom from slavery. Similar to the return of God's people to the Promised Land, this new thing would allow God's people, his children to return home.
- The Lord describes it this way through Isaiah his prophet, "See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." What is springing up and what is coming is God's redemption for sinners. It is God's deliverance from their slavery to sin. It is an eternal redemption as God's children will be delivered from this world of captivity and heartache and taken to their eternal home in heaven.
- John the Baptist prepared the way for the Savior. "A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.'" The way is also a road on which only the righteous through faith in Christ will travel that leads them right into heaven. Isaiah writes, "A highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be there for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it."
- Isaiah speaks of streams in the wasteland, the wild animals honoring God because of the water that he provides in the desert. God gives this water as Isaiah tells us "to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."
- This is something new, something different – water in the desert, streams in the wasteland. This water and these streams that God provides are the spiritual blessings he gives thirsty sinners to drink in Christ as they wander through the spiritually dry desert of this life.
- This wasteland of a world presents all sorts of mirages that promise cool, refreshing water for our thirsty souls but in reality it offers nothing. What true spiritual peace, comfort, forgiveness and joy can be found in more money or more friends or more toys to play with? What water for our parched and dying souls can a sinful world offer that only encourages more sin, more ways to rebel against God? Our thirsty souls are led to thirst even more.
- God is doing something new, something radical and unheard of in a sinful world. He is quenching thirsty souls. He is letting sinners drink from the waters of salvation. To give sinners to drink of his salvation, God bled his own Son dry of life. He punished sin in the person of his Son. God drove Jesus to the depths of hell offering no relief from the fires of hell as he suffered God's wrath for sin on Calvary's cross.
- This is something new, unlike anything anyone has ever heard of before. This is water and streams in the desert, water and streams of spiritual blessings – peace with God, comfort, forgiveness and joy in sins forgiven through Jesus our Savior. This is the waters of God's salvation soaking us with his grace and love in Christ Jesus.
- This new thing also causes something new to those whose souls have been quenched. It is a new song of praise to God. The psalmist writes, "Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God."
- In what new way are you praising God for your salvation? Maybe it's revitalizing your worship, concentrating more during worship or taking worship home with you. Maybe it's being a better spouse, parent, child, or worker. Maybe it's getting more involved at church or taking much more seriously the Lord's call for you to be his witness, God's voice, in this sinful world.

Conclusion: What's new for 2010? I'm not so sure a waterless washing machine is the answer. Sometimes the older products work better. Maybe they are not the most energy efficient but clothes do get cleaner. Every year we see new products that come out to make our life better. God is doing something new. God has done some great things in the past but this is even better. God provides us with the waters of salvation, like water in the desert, through Christ our Savior. No, this is not new in the sense of never hearing of it before. But it is new to sinners who don't know Christ. It is also new to us who put our faith in Christ as every day we sing our new song of praise to God finding new ways to serve him. It will certainly be new to us as Christians when we walk through the gates of Paradise into an eternity of perfection and glory in God's very presence. God is doing something new, and you ain't seen nothin' yet. Amen.