

• *Forgiveness, then deliverance*

1. First God asks us to receive his complaint about our sins

• *The problems began with prayerlessness*

• *Entangled in sin (despite religious routines)*

• *God wants us to admit our sins*

2. God is ready to forgive

• *God promises to blot out sin*

• *He forgives not because of what we do but because of His nature*

• *God demands that sin must be punished in a substitute*

• *Sin must be admitted and confessed*

The first part of God's rescue of his people is the forgiveness of their sins^{□1}. Then he will send to them deliverance from the calamities into which they have fallen^{□2}.

1. First God asks us to receive his complaint about our sins^{□1}.

²²*'Yet you have not called upon me myself, O Jacob. Indeed, you have become weary of me, O Israel!'*

It all began (as our backsliding ways always do) with prayerlessness.

²³*'It was not that you brought me sheep for burnt-offerings; it was not me you were honouring with your sacrifices. I have not made a slave of you, by burdening you with grain-offerings, nor wearied you with demands for incense.*

²⁴*You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me, or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offences.'*

There may have been plenty of religious duties fulfilled^{□1} but alongside the religious routine there were 'sins' and 'offences'. We may continue in a lot of religious routines while becoming prayerless and then becoming entangled in sin. Forgiveness will come to us, but God does want his people to admit what they have done.

2. **God is ready to forgive.** His chastening had gone on for centuries. The Assyrians had come and gone. The Babylonians would come. Then the years of exile would partially purify the people. Eventually God would be ready to bring them to a new day with a new consciousness of sins forgiven. Now he gives the people a promise for that day.

²⁵*'I, even I, am he who blots out your rebellions, for my own reasons, and remembers your sins no more.'*

Sins will be 'blotted out'. The word is the one that would be used for wiping a surface clean, removing something altogether so that it no longer exists. He saves us and forgives us 'for his own reasons'. Our forgiveness does not come from what we do. It comes to us from events that have been brought about by God and that arise by the demands of his own nature. It is God's own nature that demands atonement and sacrifice for sin. It is God's being true to himself that leads him to demand that sin must be punished in a substitute.

Yet God wants the sins to be admitted and confessed. He wants assured faith in his promise of forgiveness. He asks his people to review the past with him.

²⁶*'Review the past for me, let us together argue at law this matter; state the case for your innocence.'*

□1 43:22-44:23
□2 44:24-28

□1 43:22-24

□1 43:23

- *Ingrained wickedness in Israel – even Jacob was deceitful*

- *False prophets*

- *Word of God was perverted*

- *So the people came under judgement – nation ruined and leaders disgraced*

3. God is ready to give Israel the Holy Spirit

- *God is faithful and will forgive*

- *God's Spirit – freshness and vitality will replace dryness*

- *Pentecost – those who received the Spirit were Jewish*

- *Later gentiles were added to the 'remnant'*

- *The gift of the Spirit is assurance of salvation*

Can Judah justify what had happened in the story of the nation? Can the people argue that they were innocent? It cannot be done! Wickedness is in fact ingrained in the story of Israel. Even their 'first father', Jacob, was full of deceit and craftiness. Then false prophets arose in the story of the land. As well as particular sins in the life of the people, the word of God was perverted.

²⁷'Your first father sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me.'

As a result the people came under judgement.

²⁸'So I will disgrace the holy princes, and I will consign Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn.'

The sins of the nation eventually have consequences in national life. The upper-class leaders ('princes') fall into disgrace and the nation as a whole is ruined.

3. God is ready to give Israel the Holy Spirit. Despite their waywardness, God is committed to them. They have been faithless, but he is faithful. He will forgive their sins, and he will pour upon them the Holy Spirit.

¹'Now then, listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.'

²This is what Yahweh says, your maker, he who formed you in the womb, and who will go on helping you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.'

³For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground . . . '

God's faithfulness is rooted in his choice of the people. They are his elect. 'Jacob have I loved', says God. He is the Creator of his people, as well as the Creator of the universe. His Spirit will be given to them and the dryness of their lives will be replaced with freshness and vitality.

The Spirit is promised to the nation. On the Day of Pentecost everyone who received the Spirit was Jewish. The Spirit was being given to believing 'Israel'. Only later were gentiles added to the 'remnant' of Israel. God's spiritual 'Israel' consists of believing Israelites plus believing gentiles.

'I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.'

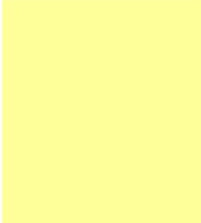
⁴They will spring up among the grass, like poplar trees by flowing streams.'

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit? Judging by Isaiah 44:5 it is a gift of assurance of salvation. It leads immediately to a sure and certain knowledge that we belong to God.

⁵'One will say, "I belong to Yahweh"; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, "I belong to Yahweh" and will take the name Israel.'

• *Outpouring of the Spirit – consciousness of our salvation*

The outpouring of the Spirit leads to an immediate consciousness of who we are and to whom we belong. Our salvation is 'sealed' not only in itself, but also to our own consciousness. The Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are children of God. As in the predictions of Joel (see also Ezekiel 39:29), removal of chastening is followed by a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit.



slices.org.uk

Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations
<p>To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk</p>		