

# SLAY THOSE DRAGONS!

New Year 2022

**Introduction:** In ancient times, when all the world was flat (they thought), map makers of the day had a quaint custom. They drew their “safe” known world in great detail – and on the outer, unknown areas, they would inscribe “*Here be Dragons*”

(Map from time of Henry V)



- “Here be Dragons” – a fear of the unknown
  - A fear of unemployment / financial problems
  - Fear of uncertain health outcomes
  - Fear of political or ecological upheaval
  - Maybe even fear of death
- Isaiah 43 is often quoted during a New Year period
  - In particular, verse 19 “*I will do a new thing; pathways through wilderness; rivers in the desert.*”

**Isaiah 43:1-7** *But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says: “Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.*

*For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I gave Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba as a ransom for your freedom.*

*Others died that you might live. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honoured and I love you.*

*Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will gather you and your children from east and west, and from north and south. I will bring my sons and daughters back to Israel from the distant corners of the earth.*

*All who claim me as their God will come, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.*

## Background:

- Isaiah ministered during the reign of three kings:
  - Ahaz (bad)
  - Hezekiah (good)
  - Manasseh (worst king in Israel's history)
- Prophecy given approx 700BC
  - Between later reign of Hezekiah or beginning of Manasseh
  - It is both a warning and a promise:
    - Babylon is coming
    - Babylon will be defeated by someone called Cyrus (Isaiah 43:14)

### 1. Do NOT be Afraid:

**Isaiah 43:1** *But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says: "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine."*

- (a) Speaking to a community (Israel):
  - Speaking to us (N3C)
- (b) Do not be afraid:

### 2. Remember You are Called

- (c) You are ransomed (bought back):
  - Once owned by another, but no more

*V4: Others died that you might live. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honoured and I love you.*

- Lives were traded for you.
  - Jesus' life was traded for yours.
- (d) Called by Name:
  - Even a nick-name, but not a derogative one.

### 3. Who is Your Life-Guard?

**Isaiah 43:2a** *When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown!*

- Two types of water danger:

(a) When you go in over your head

Psalm 69:1-2 *Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck.*

*Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can't find a foothold to stand on. I am in deep water, and the folds overwhelm me.*

- Water that sweeps you away.

(b) Water in your Boat:

ILLUSTRATION: Mark 4&5 tell story of Jesus, the storm and the demoniac.

- Jesus can bring peace in the midst of the storm
- Jesus goal is to take us to the “other side”
- God’s word.

### 4. The Fire will not Last.

**Isaiah 43:2b** *When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.*

- Fire: consuming or devouring
- Oppression may come, but you don’t need to be consumed by it.

ILLUSTRATION: story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

**Conclusion:** There is a story of an atheist who defiantly printed out a text in large letters: GOD IS NOWHERE

His daughter looked at it, and read “GOD IS NOW HERE”