

Is. 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

Isaiah starts this chapter with yet another reminder to Israel that it is YHWH, their Creator, Who is speaking. The repetitive statements (created-formed, Jacob-Israel) are part of Isaiah's poetic style of writing. I'm reminded that Isaiah is prophesying to the southern kingdom of Judah, but in God's eyes "Israel" is still one entity. God chose Israel and set them apart as a distinct people through whom He wanted to share His truth and His greatness with the nations. That is true of believers today. Peter states that we (the church) also occupy a unique, privileged position for that same purpose.

1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light....

"I have called thee by thy name" – I decided to look up the passage where God gave Jacob the name of Israel. The meaning given was "as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (Genesis 32:28) This was quite a change from Jacob, "supplanter, one who trips up or undermines." This seems to be making a statement that God claims Israel (the nation) as His own, warts and all. Just as Jacob fought with God that long night, the nation of Israel has fought with God throughout their history. Just as Jacob eventually came to a point of blessing after the struggle, so too will the nation of Israel eventually turn back to God in faith and repentance to enjoy His blessing.

Is. 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

As I read these word pictures, I can't help but think of certain events in scripture—God's miraculous provision for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea to escape the Egyptians (Exodus 14), for the Israelites to cross over Jordan on the dry ground to enter the promised land (Joshua 3-4), and for the deliverance of the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace (Daniel 3).

I really liked the translation from the NLT for this verse: *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.*

God was making a statement that there was nothing that would happen to His people (that includes believers today) from which He could not deliver them. He didn't say that they wouldn't experience difficult, dangerous times; He promised to be with them through those times. His presence assures His provision and His protection.

Is. 43:3 For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Is. 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

This chapter has several declarations of God as God, the One and Only, the God of Israel—their Creator, the Holy One of Israel, their Savior, their Redeemer, their King, the worker of miracles, the One Who declares the future, and the Forgiver of sins. This verse emphasizes that God is their Deliverer. Israel has been given a unique position of privilege and protection by God. Many mighty nations will be made to suffer for the cause of preserving Israel—including Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba.

“precious” = heavy, valuable, prized

Israel was uniquely set apart as a nation that God loved as a *precious* possession. Because of their position as designated by God, He has allowed or caused other nations to suffer judgment in deliverance of His prized possession.

Is. 43:5 Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

Is. 43:6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Is. 43:7 *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

Again the people of Israel are told not to be fearful of people or circumstances because God is with them. Though they had been and will continue to be dispersed among the nations for a time, God promises to gather them back together as a nation—from the east, west, north and south, wherever they might be.

The name of Israel is ever associated with the name of God. The scripture is full of descriptions of God as the *God of Israel*. When I did a phrase search in Accordance, that phrase was found 203 times. Those who are called by His name have been created for His glory. This verse stood out to me in my study of Revelation (4:11), excerpt below.

Revelation 4:11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Then we are told that the one on the throne is the Creator of all things. Why does/did He create? For His own pleasure (choice, desire, will). Isaiah also supports this truth:

Isaiah 43:7 *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

The verse in Revelation emphasizes that all things were created for His good pleasure. In Isaiah the emphasis is on the fact that those called by His name are created for His glory. Is there a difference in *glory* and *pleasure*? In looking at the definitions from the original languages and Webster, I think there is a distinct difference. All things were created according to the pleasure/choice/will/desire of God, but not all things give Him glory. Those who are called by His name have been created with the express purpose of glorifying/honoring God; we are to reflect Him in our lives—by how we act, speak, and think. [end excerpt]

Is. 43:8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Is. 43:9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, *It is truth.*

Again, the Lord employs the language of a court sitting in judgment (cf chapter 41). The wording of verse 8 seems to be referencing people who should be able to see and hear with spiritual understanding, but cannot. They are God's witnesses according to verse 10. The nations are then called together to produce a witness that can speak to a time when one of their gods acted on their behalf in any way compared to the ways God had acted on behalf of His people—any time when one of their gods had been able to predict the future as had the God of Israel. If they cannot, they should pay attention to God's witnesses, the people of Israel.

Is. 43:10 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. Is. 43:11 I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

The “blind and deaf” people of Israel have a history full of examples of God's power and of His unique ability to predict the future with complete accuracy. They have no excuse for their spiritual blindness and deafness, their lack of spiritual understanding. God is explaining that Israel has no excuse for not believing that God is Who He claims to be. God declares boldly that there was no God before Him, and there will be no God after Him. He is the one and only YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God. He is the only One able to defend, deliver, preserve and protect (from the Hebrew for *saviour*) His people.

Is. 43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange god among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.

“declared...saved...shewed” – God is saying that His actions have proven His words, and He has acted in plain view of the nations. He has proven Himself as no other “god” has. God's declarations and actions on behalf of His people as recorded in scripture (and I am sure in many ways that weren't recorded) are proof that He is God.

Is. 43:13 Yea, before the day *was I am he*; and *there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*

“before the day” – God is outside of time. The Hebrew for *day* is a reference to time from sunrise to sunset or from sunset to sunset. God created the sun and everything else. This declaration of God is one you have to accept by faith. Creation declares its truth, but it is far beyond my or any other human’s limited understanding. I can say it and know what I’m saying, but I don’t really understand it. I do, however, without a shadow of a doubt believe it.

Nothing and no one is more powerful than God. What He declares will come to pass and nothing or no one can prevent it. God will do as He pleases and no one has the power or ability to stop Him.

Is. 43:14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

Even though God will judge Israel by using Babylon, God will also redeem them from Babylon. Babylon will also be judged. Their naval power would be overthrown through the wisdom of the Medes and Persians in utilizing dams. The JFB commentary states: “Babylon was on the Euphrates, which was joined to the Tigris by a canal, and flowed into the Persian Gulf. Thus it was famed for ships and commerce until the Persian monarchs, to prevent revolt or invasion, obstructed navigation by dams across the Tigris and Euphrates.”

“your redeemer” – as discussed in verses 3-4, Babylon would eventually be sacrificed to the preservation of Israel.

Is. 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

God continues to emphasize His uniqueness and His special relationship to Israel through the prophet. I think I missed a point back in verse one that stands out more clearly to me in this verse. God is not only the Creator of the universe; He is the Creator of Israel. He brought them forth in a miraculous way through the loins of Abraham through the birth of Isaac and by preference through the sons of Jacob. He created them as a nation unique in position before Him in the earth—their only rightful King.

Is. 43:16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

Is. 43:17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

God’s deliverance of His people from Egypt was a defining point in their history. They went into Egypt as 70 and came out as thousands with great wealth. It’s really the point in history that Israel emerged as a nation among the nations, albeit without a land of their own to begin with. In these verses God is stating a

point of comparison for the miraculous things He is going to do for them in the future—that point of comparison, His miraculous deliverance of His people from Egypt so many years ago by parting the waters of the Red Sea and the ensuing destruction of the Egyptian army.

“a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters” – Chuck Missler relates the story of how this verse prompted one man’s quest to map the oceans. Quoted from an article at <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2008/773/>.

Matthew Fontaine Maury was born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, in 1806. As an avid Bible reader, he was struck by the reference in Psalm 8 to “the paths of the seas” (Psalm 8:8). He also noticed that Isaiah wrote of a “path through the mighty waters” (Isaiah 43:16). Are there pathways in the seas? Who could imagine such a thing? The pursuit of this enigma became Maury’s lifetime quest.

He entered the Navy in 1825 as a midshipman. By 1842 he was placed in charge of the Depot of Charts and Instruments, out of which grew the U.S. Naval Observatory and Hydrographic Office. To gather information on maritime winds and currents, Maury distributed to ship captains specially prepared logbooks from which he compiled pilot charts, enabling him to shorten the time of sea voyages. In 1848 he published maps of the main wind fields of the Earth.

Maury was ultimately able to produce charts of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans, a profile of the Atlantic seabed, and the first modern oceanographic text. He is internationally recognized as the “Father of Oceanography,” and Maury Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy is named in his honor. All because of a *remez*, a hint of something deeper, in a verse in the Psalms.
[end quote]

Is. 43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

Again, I think the NLT embodies the thought behind this statement: *But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.*

Is. 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Is. 43:20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

Because of the set up of the previous verses, I tend to think that God is prophesying through Isaiah about the future kingdom of Israel when the Lord is on the throne. If there were the types of miracles employed in bringing the captives back home from Babylon that would put the parting of the Red Sea to shame, I believe they would have been recorded in scripture. The real miracle will come when Israel experiences the blessings associated with the millennial kingdom.

After the Jews were driven out of Israel by the Romans, the land of Israel became a wasteland. I've learned that when the Turks took over, they established a tax based on the number of trees on one's property. This caused many of the people in the land to destroy their trees. Water is a hot commodity in Israel. In recent times they have had to make deals to purchase water from Turkey to meet the needs of the people. Also, there was no significant Jewish population to speak of in the land until the birth of the new nation of Israel in 1948.

During the millennial reign the curse on the earth seems to be lifted according to chapter 11 and the later passages in Isaiah. The prophet Ezekiel describes a healing river that will some day flow to the Dead Sea. Water will no longer be a problem. The produce of the land will be bountiful and the twelve tribes will occupy all of the land originally promised by God in Numbers 34. These changes will be the result of the miraculous workings of the Messiah when He comes to reign as King on planet earth. These miracles will make the stories of the Exodus seem like small potatoes in comparison.

Is. 43:21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

God has a purpose for the nation of Israel; His purposes will always be accomplished. God's promises to Abraham were unconditional. God's purpose for Israel included their response to Him in praise. As we look over history and into the future, it would seem that God has had to wait a long time for Israel to honor Him as He deserves; but in God's perspective it will only be a little while.

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Is. 43:22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

Is. 43:23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

Is. 43:24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

Verse 22 is a very sad statement—"but thou has not called upon me." God so desires to bless His people and to live in fellowship with them. Because He is righteous and just, He must exercise judgment as well as mercy and compassion. God is so disappointed in the response of His people. Instead of responding to Him with gratitude and obedience, they have unashamedly adopted a sinful lifestyle. They have not only flaunted their sin, they have shown no repentance for that sin. We learned earlier in the book that when they did offer sacrifices, they were offered as a matter of ritual—not from a grateful or repentant heart.

Is. 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

As I read through the different translations and thought about this verse, I began to think again of the difference in God's way of thinking. We normally think about God providing a way of forgiveness of our sins because of His love for us. I don't think that is a wrong statement, but it misses the greater truth. God loves us according to His own desires and purposes. The fact of His love and His provision for forgiveness of sin is directly related to His purposes and desires. All of God's actions are done according to His purposes—"for mine own sake."

"remember" = "to mark (so as to be recognized), i.e. to remember; by implication, to mention"

When God blots out our sins, forgives our sins, He is saying that He will never bring them up to us again. We will never be called to account for those sins. Our record is clean. This does not mean that we will not suffer the consequences of sin that is forgiven, but we will never be condemned based on that sin.

Is. 43:26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

Is. 43:27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

Is. 43:28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

In these last verses, we seem to return to a courtroom setting. The Lord is asking them to state their case that justifies turning from Him in rebellion and disobedience. The facts are that they have been sinners from the very beginning in spite of God's blessing. I tend to think that "thy first father" references Adam, but could just as easily reference Abraham. "Thy teachers" is a general reference to the spiritual leaders of the nation throughout history, but probably more specifically those in leadership at the time of Isaiah's prophecy. When I checked out the Hebrew roots for *profaned*, it referenced "wounded, defiled, polluted, sick, weak." I think the Lord is saying that He is allowing the people to suffer according to His word.

Deuteronomy 11:26-8 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Deuteronomy 28 gets quite specific about how the curse will affect them.

Still we must remember that God will always preserve a remnant that will one day experience the fullness of blessing and fellowship with the Lord.

*Zechariah 8:11-15 But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause **the remnant** of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to*

pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.