

Isaiah 43 • I am the LORD, and besides me there is no Savior

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Isaiah chapter 43 tonight. So open your Bibles, please, to that chapter.

You know, I remember back when I was a fairly new believer, but I was dealing with people from some other religious persuasions. I'll just come out and tell you, I was having some conversations with some Mormon people. And I knew that we were coming from very different theological positions. But I was still finding my way through the Word of God, at least as it relates to those differences.

And I remember coming upon Isaiah chapter 43 and feeling like I had discovered a gold mine of information and insight that would help me to be able to speak to groups like the Mormons and others, frankly, who had a different theological position as to the nature of God. Because in this chapter, in Isaiah chapter 43, we learned so much as God just speaks to the people, the Jews, about Himself.

And this chapter is a very personal communication from God to the nation of Israel. But it was a personal message to a backslidden nation. You need to remember that Isaiah lived during a time when he saw a lot of backsliding taking place. There were, in his lifetime, there were some good kings, like Hezekiah. And then, of course, right after Hezekiah was Manasseh, his son, who was awful, absolutely awful. And Isaiah watched as the kingdom was going downhill.

And there's a lot of judgment that comes in the Book of Isaiah in the first 39 chapters of this book. And, we muscled our way through those first 39 chapters in past weeks. And sometimes it takes a little doing because there's a lot of difficulty. There's a lot of negativity. There's a lot of judgment that comes in those first 39 chapters.

And you might remember that when we got to chapter 40, we saw this huge shift away from judgment to comfort. Which is particularly interesting when you're talking about addressing a backslidden nation or a backslidden people.

When anybody backslides and I get emails all the time from people who have backslidden and are coming back to the Lord.

And some aren't even sure if they can come back to the Lord. Because one of the biggest questions that comes into people's hearts when they're even considering the idea of returning to the Lord from a backslidden state is the simple question, will he take me back? Will the Lord receive me? Or, have I gone too far? Have I gone past the point of no return, as it were, in my sinfulness? Will he receive me back?

The theme of this chapter to a backslidden nation is also a wonderfully comforting message to any backslidden people, Christians, who are listening right now to this study. Because this theme is all about hope and reassurance for the most part.

And as we said, that theme kind of begins in chapter 40 of Isaiah. And it's actually going to continue on through chapter 55 of the total 60 chapters of this very long book. But through these chapters, God is going to reaffirm His love and His plan for His people, the nation of Israel.

So what we're going to do here tonight is we're going to read through the whole chapter. We're just going to read through it. And then, all 28 verses, and then we're going to, we're going to pray. And then we're going to ask the Holy Spirit to use these words to minister to our hearts.

So let's read through these verses. Beginning in verse 1, it says,

“But now thus says the LORD, (thus says YAHWEH) he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

⁵ *Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.*

⁶ *I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth,*

⁷ *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

⁸ *Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!*

⁹ *All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true.*

¹⁰ *"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.*

¹¹ *I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.*

¹² *I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and I am God.*

¹³ *(And)...henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?"*

¹⁴ *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice.*

¹⁵ *I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King."*

¹⁶ *Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,*

¹⁷ *who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched, like a wick:*

¹⁸ *"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.*

¹⁹ *Behold, I'm doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

²⁰ *The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,*

²¹ *the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.*

²² *"Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel!"*

²³ *You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense.*

²⁴ *You have not brought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities.*

²⁵ *I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*

²⁶ *Put me in remembrance; let us argue together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right.*

²⁷ *Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me.*

²⁸ *Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling." (ESV)*

We'll stop there. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for this chapter. It's a powerful one. And these words, although they were spoken to Israel, have a great deal of meaning and insight, even for we who are of the church, the body of Christ.

And I pray that we would be able to gain from these words tonight, what You would have us to understand about Your heart, Your dealings with Your people, Your purpose and plan and redemption. Your purpose also for Israel. Be with us

we pray Father and speak to our hearts. For we ask it in the name of Jesus, who is the Messiah, amen. Amen.

This chapter begins with the word, but. And that's actually a good word when you're hearing negative things from someone. Because when they're laying out something negative and then they say, but you know that there's going to be something that's probably going to redeem what you've just heard.

And this actually begins with the words, but now, if I started a sentence to you... if you... if I walked into the room and I just started talking to you and I said, but now, you would know that what I'm about to say to you is predicated upon something that I had previously said.

And you'll remember in the previous chapter, which was Isaiah 42, God was outlining the consequences to the nation of Israel. And I'm saying Israel now, although Isaiah is primarily prophesying to the remaining kingdom of Judah. Israel, the northern kingdom, has already been taken captive by the Assyrian army. They are the world power at the time when Isaiah is writing this. And only the people in the southern kingdom of Judah are left. And yet God continues to speak to Israel as a whole.

But he's been outlining for them the fact that their sins had very serious consequences due to their refusal to obey the covenant that God had made with them. And part of the consequences would be them being conquered. Just like their northern brothers and sisters in Israel had been conquered by Assyria. God has prophesied that the southern kingdom of Judah will also be conquered. And they will be taken, not only conquered, but taken captive. By the people of Babylon.

Now what's interesting about that is Babylon is not a world power at this time. And this is, and we'll talk more about this, but this is that element of prophecy that we see in the Word of God. That so clearly makes it the Word of God from the standpoint of time. Because God speaks into the future, things that have not yet taken place.

Assyria is the world power at this time in history, when these words are being given. And yet God is not only going to talk about Babylon, when we get to the end of this chapter, He's going to talk about the judgment of Babylon and how they are going to be conquered. They haven't even done the conquering yet. And God's going to talk about them as if they are a conquered people by the time we get to the end of this chapter.

So God is speaking to the people of Israel, and he uses that word, but and that's such an important word because it reminds the people of Israel that God is not finished with Israel. He speaks in that, in the last chapter about consequences of sin, and then he says, but, but, but.

We use the same word a lot when we're sharing the gospel with people. We say, you're a sinner, but, He's a savior. There's nothing you can do to save yourself, but Jesus came to save all mankind. We are lost and separated from God, but Jesus made a way for us to know the Father and be able to come into His presence. So that word, but, is really important when we're turning the tide of what would otherwise be bad news, and we turn it into good news.

And God has a word of good news to the people of Israel. Because He begins to speak to them here about the reality of his love for them and his redemptive plan toward them. He says, *"But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you..."* Notice now here, He establishes his connection with His people and He brings His message to them.

Now, can I stop you just for a moment to remind you about something? These words that Isaiah is writing now, prior to the people from Judah being taken captive by the Babylonians, these words are going to be read by the Jews when they are in captivity. They're going to read these prophecies, and they are going to be thinking about, and they're going to be needing to hear these prophecies. This these prophecies that begin with the word, but to remind them that God is not finished with them.

Because, now keep in mind for a second, by the time they read this, they will probably have been in the Babylonian kingdom for about 5 decades. And that means that a lot of the people who were taken captive from Israel from Jerusalem and hauled off to Babylon, most of them will have died by that time. Only the children, and there's a great many of them who will be born in Babylon and will have never known what it was like to even live in Israel. They will have never lived there. Some of them will be nearing 50 years old and they don't have any recollection of Israel. God is speaking to those people and they have to be wondering, has God abandoned us?

I mean, they've had a lot of time for introspection, you know what I mean? They've had a lot of time to think over their sin. Here they are captive to the Babylonian Empire, and they're thinking about all the things that got them there in the first place. And they're probably wondering, is there any chance for us? Is there any hope for us?

And God goes on here, and He says, still in verse 1, "*Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*" Now can you imagine what that's like to hear and to read those words, when you've been an exile for, say, 50 years. You're in another country, a country not your own, and the Lord speaks through His Word in a very personal sort of way. And He says, "*Fear not, ...I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*" Wow! Those are just such powerful words. Fear not. Fear not.

Doesn't it seem kind of funny sometimes when God says that? Fear not. I almost smile sometimes when I'm reading in the gospel accounts how Jesus is walking on the water (laughing.) And these guys are screaming their brains out because they think they see a ghost. And He says, fear not. And it's like, are you joking? People don't walk on water every day.

But this is a word that God speaks over and over again in the scriptures to you and I, and He says, fear not. And what's interesting about that is, fear is such a common human condition. And when people give into fear, and God knows this, it literally becomes a terrorist in our lives. And it terrorizes our heart. It literally holds us captive to its desires.

And so, you got to wonder about these people reading these words who are in Babylon in exile, and they had reason to be afraid. They had reason to fear. And God speaks to them here and says, fear not.

And then He says, "*I have redeemed you;*" Now that's interesting, isn't it? He says, "*I have redeemed you.*" That means I've purchased you. I've bought you back. Wow!

And then I love how He says the next thing he says, "*I've called you by name.*" You know, to speak to someone by name is a very personal and intimate thing to do. I mean, it's none of us like to be called, hey you, or whatever your name is, get over here, sort of thing. Pretty impersonal or whatever. Instead of those sorts of impersonal things, God replaces His speaking to his people, Israel, with an expression of closeness and familiarity. The kind of expression that you would expect from family.

And that is underscored even more by the next statement when He simply says, "*you are mine.*" You are mine. You almost have to wonder if the apostle Paul had this, these words in Isaiah in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians in 1st Corinthians chapter 6. Let me put this on the screen for you from 1st Corinthians. It goes like this, he says,

1 Corinthians 6:19-2a (ESV)

"...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price."

"...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? (Look at these words) You are not your own, for you were bought with a price."

That's such a wonderful scripture. It's such an encouraging scripture from the Word of God. It's the same kind of encouragement that God is giving to the people of Israel at this time.

And now He goes on to assure them that whatever might come their way, His presence will be with them. And I want you to listen to these verses here, beginning in verse 2, because you're going to hear the heart of God here.

He says, *"When you pass through the waters, I'll ...be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."*

Now granted, these are nice promises to hear from the Lord. But I want you to notice here that God doesn't promise in this verse that their path is going to be an easy one, or it's not going to be necessarily even a dangerous one. Did you catch that? You know what he's promising them is that when the danger comes, He's going to enable them to stand. And He's saying to them, it won't overwhelm you.

So many times we pray to get out of things, don't we. We pray that God would deliver us from all of the difficulties that we face. We pray that we never have to go through them. Why do I have to go through this? Lord, deliver me from this situation. And sometimes He does. Gloriously. And we rejoice with those who are so delivered.

But more often than not, He is just with us through the storm and that's what He's saying here. When the danger comes you will stand. You will stand for I will enable you to stand and not to fall. And this is so similar to the promise that Jesus gives all of us when we hear His word and put it into practice. Let me show you this from Matthew 7:24 and following. It says,

Matthew 7:24-25 (ESV)

“Everyone ...who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”

“Everyone ...who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”

Once again, you'll notice in that passage from Matthew, the promise isn't that we won't go through the difficulty. We see here that even on those who put the Word of God into practice in their lives, the rain still falls, and the floodwaters rise, and the winds howl and blow and beat against the structure that is their lives. But it remains because it is founded on a foundation that is immovable. And that is Christ, who is the living Word of God.

So he says, when you hear my word and when you put it into practice, you won't be moved. And that's essentially what He's telling the nation of Israel here in Isaiah.

He says in verse 3, *“For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”* Now keep in mind, He's talking to people years in the future who are in captivity in the Babylonian Empire, who have lost a lot of their connection with God. The temple, they haven't been in the temple for probably 50 years by now. And they've got another 20 years to stay in the Babylonian Empire.

And so there's a distance between them and the Lord. So He's coming to them and saying, I am YAHWEH," your God. I am the Holy One of Israel. I am your Savior, He says.

He says, *“I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.”* And He talks about how He gives people in return for them. And these are very interesting verses. And the principle that He's expressing in these verses, is that God is willing to pay a very high price to ransom the exiles from their position of captivity. We aren't really sure how all that played out historically, but God says, I'm willing to do it.

Isn't that interesting? God pays ransom for us. Do you know, even though we're not sure how He did this, with these nations that he mentions here, Cush and

Seba and Egypt, we know how our ransom was paid, don't we? Let me show you.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV)

...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ, like that, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Knowing (Peter writes) *“that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver...gold or anything like that, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”* You and I have been ransomed too. Ransomed from the empty way that was handed down to us by our forefathers.

So God goes on to say in verse 5, look with me in your Bible, *“Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.”* And this is where God promises that after their exile, their period of... and we know that it was 70 years that they were there total. He, God says, I will regather you from wherever you've been scattered.

Because other people were scattered other places. The northern kingdom of Israel was scattered by the Assyrian Empire many years before. And he says, I will bring you all back. In fact, He's not just talking about people coming back from Babylon. He goes on in verses 6 and so forth to talk about speaking to the north, speaking to the south; He's going to bring them all back.

And notice that it even goes beyond just the people of Israel. Look at verse 7, it says, *“everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, who I formed and made.”* I'm going to call them forth. Wow!

Now, again, some of these exiles who are probably reading this many years after Isaiah wrote it, they might have been wondering, "is this Yahweh? Is he the God that we ought to worship?"

And the Lord now begins to challenge the pagan gods of the Babylonians. Whom, they are probably, the Jews are very familiar with now, after being in the Babylonian empire for so long.

He says in verse 8, *“Bring out the people who are blind, yet they have eyes, (and bring out the people, He says,) who are deaf, (and) yet, (interestingly*

enough,) *they have ears!*” And He's making reference to the people who worship the gods of Babylon.

And you know why he mentions this? It's because their gods have no eyes and their gods have no ears. And as a result, the people who worship them, they have become blind and deaf spiritually themselves. Because we become like the gods we worship. And so He says, bring them out.

Verse 9, He says, *“All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true.”* And what he's asking here is, which of these gods that the Babylonians or all the other pagans worship, have proclaimed the former things before they happened.

Which of them have done that? And God is really speaking here of that element of predictive prophecy that we see in the Word of God demonstrated over and over again throughout the scriptures. And He's basically asking the question, who can do the same? Can the gods of these peoples do the same? And He's putting out a challenge here.

Do you know what's interesting? In the religious writings that you find in so many other religious groups, that element of predictive prophecy is often absent. Or if it is there, it's been proven dreadfully wrong. Many prophecies have gone unfulfilled by other groups that claim to predict and speak of future things.

And now God turns to His own people in verse 10. Look what he says to them. I love this. He says, *“You are my witnesses.”* You, the nation of Israel, *“You are my witnesses, declares the Lord.”* In fact, He says, you're my servant, whom I've chosen." Why? So *“...that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.”* In other words, God is saying, I've spoken all these things that were to come so that you may know and believe and understand that I am God. I am God and there is no other.

And one of the most important things that God revealed about Himself to Israel is what sets them apart from all the other pagan nations as far as their belief in God. Look what He goes on to say. *“Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”* And this statement is so incredibly important for you to see in the scriptures tonight, brothers and sisters in Jesus.

In fact, it's so important. I want to put it on the screen for you for just a moment. And I want you to just look at it. I know you can see it in the scriptures in your

Bible or whatever device you're looking at the Word of God on. But I want you to look at it on the screen, and I want you to see those words as I read them again,

Isaiah 43:10b (ESV)

"Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be after me."

"Before me (This is YAHWEH speaking) no god was formed, (There were no gods formed before YAHWEH) nor shall there be after me."

I remember when I was a little kid I asked the pastor of our church, who made God? And that's a natural question coming from a created creature, being. Because everything for us is created. Everything has a beginning. God has no beginning.

But He goes on to say, *"nor shall there be any after me."* So here we go. You ready? Based on Isaiah chapter 43, the last part of verse 10, the question is, how many gods are there? Well, this verse answers that question for any group or any belief system that attempts or claims to, that another God has ever been formed or ever will be formed. God closes that door right here and eliminates that possibility. He says, no god was formed before me, no, god will ever be formed after me.

So as Christians, we have to take this verse just the same as anybody else. Now, what would you say if somebody came to you and said, okay, fine! So where does that leave Jesus? Because as to His human nature, there was something that was literally created. Right? I mean, as to His humanity, that had a starting point.

We know that there was a point in time the angel said to Mary, that there would be a life conceived in her. Yes, through the Holy Spirit, but it would have a starting point. Right? And so somebody could begin to talk about the humanity of Jesus and say,

"Well, don't you Christians believe that Jesus is God?"

"Yes, we do."

"Well, then there's obviously two gods! Because you believe Jesus is God and you believe that God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, conceived that child in Mary. Right?"

"Yes, that's what we believe."

"Well, then you got two gods on your hands."

Well, that's a problem, isn't it - with Isaiah 43:10. Because God said, there are no gods formed before me, nor will there be any after me. Well, Jesus actually clears this up for us. I don't know how much He clears it up, but He actually answers it for us in John chapter 10. Look at this on the screen, if you would for a moment. Very simple statement by Jesus,

John 10:30 (ESV)

"I and the Father are one."

"I and the Father are one."

We are one. Now, that simply means Jesus, does not constitute a second God because He and the Father are one. There are not 2 gods. There are not 3 gods. There are not 10 gods. There are not a multiplicity of gods in other worlds elsewhere. There is one God. There's one God.

Now, Jesus explains a bit more about how this can be in the very beginning of John's gospel. We read this: look at John chapter 1. You know these are great verses, but it says,

John 1:1-3 (ESV)

"In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made."

"In the beginning was the Word; and the Word (you'll notice it's capitalized) was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made."

And then you skip down to verse 14 and you read this,

John 1:14 (ESV)

"...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

"...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

That which is eternal and divine became flesh. In other words, a created human being, and He dwelt among us. So that is how we understand the deity of Jesus. He is the Word of God. Jesus is literally the Word of God.

Now, I want you to think about this for just a moment, okay? And stop trying to compare us with God. People do that all the time. They'll go,

“You know, I just don't understand this because, I have a father and I've got a son, but he's not me and I'm not him.”

And I always come back and go, “yeah, and you're not God!”

Because you can't compare yourself with God. So it's fruitless, futile to even try. But, when you think about the fact that you're hearing my words right now, my word is not alive. My words they come out of my mouth and they're heard for a moment and then they fade off into the silence. But God's Word is eternal. His words don't fade away.

And there's something else about His words, His Word is alive. Not just alive, His Word is a person. A separate person. I know that sounds crazy and it is crazy to you and I. My words are not a separate person. God's Word is a separate person.

And the Word, we're told in John 1:1, has not only always been with God, the Word has always been God. And that Word became flesh. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us.

But if you're ever, if you're ever in a debate with somebody and they want to know another reason how you believe that Jesus is God, I can give you another one right from Isaiah here. Look what he says, look what God says in verse 11.

In verse 11, He says, “*I, I am (YAHWEH I am) the LORD.*” And I want you to notice these next words, “*and besides me there is no savior.*” So not only are there no other gods, YAHWEH tells the nation of Israel, there is no other savior. Right? No savior exists apart from God.

Well now wait a minute, you got a problem here because in the New Testament we read about a savior. In fact, do you remember what the angel said to the shepherds out in their fields? Let me put it on the screen for you from Luke 2:11:

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.”

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David (Uh oh!) a Savior who is (Messiah the Lord) Christ the Lord.”

Now, are these angels out preaching heresy? No, not at all. But I thought there's only one Savior and that's YAHWEH? That's right. There is only one Savior, and He was born as a baby. The very Word of God made flesh among us. And it's a beautiful picture of the one true God. And that's why I said that this chapter is full of great insights to help us understand the nature of God.

So God continues to lay it out there. Look at verse 12 in your Bible here in Isaiah 43. He says, *“I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you;”* Right? No other gods around and I'm the one who declared to you these things. I saved you. I proclaimed all these truths.

And He says, *“and you are my witnesses,”* (you are my witnesses) *declares the LORD, “and I am God.”* In other words, there should be no question in your minds about who you're going to worship because I am the only God. There are no other gods.

Verse 13, He says, *“And...henceforth, I am he;”* In other words, just as in the past, but also going forward, *“I am he; (and) there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?”*

Now, underline that last part of verse 13 in your Bible and then write this word next to it, sovereignty. If you don't know how to spell it, you might have to look it up. Because that is one of the best descriptive statements of sovereignty that you're going to find in the scripture.

If somebody were to say to you, what does it mean that God is sovereign? You could just say, well, it means that there's none who can deliver from his hand.

He says, God says, *“I work and who can turn it back. There's nobody who can turn it back because there's nobody above Me. There's nobody who has that ability above me to countermand me.”* Right?

Now, as the Lord continues to speak here, He's going to speak of Babylon's downfall even before they became a world power. And this is so interesting

because this is predictive prophecy that you're going to be hearing here, okay. And again, this is unique to the scriptures of God. But of course, it's nothing for God Himself, who has no barrier in time to His knowledge.

Verse 14 says, *"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice.'"*

Now remember, when Isaiah spoke these words, Babylon wasn't a world power yet. Babylon hadn't done any conquering yet. And yet God is speaking now about the fact that He's going to judge them.

He says in verse 15, *"I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea,..."* As you notice in verse 14, He talked about, he's going to bring them down in the ships that they rejoice in.

And now He says in verse 16, I'm going to make a way in the sea. In other words, they're going to be conquered even at the place of their greatest military strength. He says, I'm the one *"...who makes a path in the mighty waters,..."*

Now, *"a path in the mighty waters,..."* What does that remind you of? A path in the mighty waters. Wow! That reminds me of the Red Sea. Doesn't it, you? And there's always a correlation that God is making here. And He's actually talking to them about how He's going to judge Babylon in the sea. And that, of course, is going to instantly make the Jews think about how He judged Egypt in the Red Sea. And conquered the Egyptian army when they came after the people of Israel.

Notice, He says in verse 17, He's speaking of Himself, He says, *"who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, (in fact) they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:"* And so God says, He's calling to mind that which was done in Egypt. He's saying, I will do it yet again in the future with Babylon.

But here's the important thing, whenever God calls the people of Israel to think about the past, there's nothing wrong with looking at God's work in the past. There's nothing wrong with that. And remembering God's goodness in the past. But you can't live there. Because God isn't working in the past, He's working in the present, in your present. He's working in your life.

And so there's a word here to those who would want to just sit back and remember all the wonderful things God used to do in the past. Look what He says in verse 18 to such people. He says, "*Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old...*" even though He's just made reference to it. He's saying, don't dwell upon my past work of delivering my people as if that's all that's ever going to happen.

And then He says in verse 19, this is important. He says, "*Behold, I am doing a new thing;*" I got something new on the horizon. And He's talking about the coming deliverance of Israel from their exile to the judgment of the Babylonian kingdom.

And He says, "*now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*" And I love this verse of, these verses here, 18 and 19, because God is challenging His people, and I think He's challenging you and I too.

But He's challenging His people not to dwell upon the past and instead to look to the work that He desires to do among them in the future. He calls it "*a new thing,*" and He asks the question, "*do you not perceive it?*" Do you know that it's impossible to perceive what God is doing in the present, if you're fixated on the past.

What is God doing today? What is God doing right now, today? What's He doing? What's He up to? There's a lot of upheaval going on right now. August, what, 11th, 2020? The year of upheaval. Worldwide upheaval. What's God doing? What's He doing? What's He up to? He's obviously carrying out His plan. What is that plan? Do you not perceive it?

If we're only going to remember the days of old, oh, those were the good old days, we're not going to see that God is making a way. God is making a way. He has not abandoned his people. He is making a way.

Notice He said earlier that He's going to bring forth springs in the desert and rivers and so forth. And He says, "*the wild beasts...*" they're going to be thrilled when I do this. And they're going to "*...honor me, the jackals and the ostriches,*" they're going to be absolutely tickled pink because of all the water that I'm going to cause to come forth in the wilderness to take care of my people as they journey back into their homeland. I'm going to take care of you, God says.

“These people (He says in verse 21) whom I formed for myself, that they may declare my praise.” The people whom God formed for Himself. You ever stop and think about that? You've been formed for God. You've been formed for God. We tend to think of our lives as our own. In fact, you hear people say that in the world all the time. My life is my own. It's my life. I can do what I want with it.

And of course, as a Christian, we can't say that. You've been formed for God. We already saw that passage where it says, *“you have been bought with a price.”* You are not your own. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

We talked as we began the service tonight about offering ourselves as living sacrifices, saying, Lord, I'm yours. I am yours, which is our spiritual act of worship, Paul says. God formed you for himself. He formed you, your life, your gifts, your abilities for Himself that you might declare His praise.

Now, as He finishes up the chapter, He's going to remind them of why they're in Babylon. And again, we're assuming that people are reading this years into the future who are in exile in Babylon. And He reminds them, He says,

“Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been (you've actually been) weary of me, O Israel!” Can you imagine being weary of God? He says, *“You've not brought me,... sheep for burnt offerings, (you've not) honored me with the sacrifices.”* I've not even burdened you with any extra requirements during this time or wearied you with anything that I've asked you to do or bring me.

He says, *“you haven't brought me (anything like the) sweet cane (or) with money...or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices.”* He says, you know what you have done? You've *“burdened me with your sins.”* I haven't burdened you, but you've burdened me with your sins. You've *“wearied me with your iniquities.”* But *“...I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and (look at this promise) I will not remember your sins.”* That's one of the most incredible statements God makes in the scripture.

So He says, *“Put me in remembrance; let us argue together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right. Your first father sinned.* (He's going all the way back to Adam now. And He says,) *and your mediators (even your mediators... A mediator is someone who stands between God and the people. That would be the priests. He says your mediators even) transgressed against me.”* Those who spoke on your behalf were sinners themselves.

And He says, *“Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling.”* So He ends this section by reminding His people that it was because of their sin and their failure to trust God for the solution to sin, that all of this happened.

And He's reminding them that they weren't in Babylon when those exiles read this in years to come. They're going to remember, well, it's not for any, it's for not for no reason that we are here.

But I took note of that statement where He said, even your mediators sinned against me, they transgressed my law. Aren't you glad Christians, that we have a new mediator that didn't transgress? Aren't you glad?

Let me show you a passage from 1st Timothy. I love this. Chapter 2, verses 5 and 6. We're going to close with this:

1 Timothy 2:5-6 (ESV)

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all which is the testimony given at the proper time.”

“For there is one God, (we learned that tonight, didn't we in Isaiah 43. But He also goes on to say) and there is one mediator between God and man. (Who is He?) the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom (there it is again) for all which is the testimony (the message, the proclamation) given at the proper time.”

Oh, what a wonderful thing we have a mediator. And I want to encourage you if you're watching, there's, we have a mediator with the Father. Our mediator is Jesus. And what that means is you don't... If you're confessing your sins or you want to talk to God, you don't need to go through anybody else. You have a Mediator in heaven.

The Bible says He is always interceding for us. Our Mediator, who has not transgressed the law, but kept the law perfectly, He is your mediator. He is the one who speaks to the Father on your behalf. And He says to the Father, this one is mine.