

ISAIAH 43 | *A New Exodus*

Beloved Israel

1 But now thus says Yahweh, he who created (ברא)¹ you, Jacob, he who formed (יצר) you, Israel:

Fear not, for I have redeemed (גאל)² 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 3 For I am Yahweh your God (יהוה אלהיך), the Holy One of Israel (קדוש ישראל), your Savior (מושיעך). I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. 4 Because you are precious in my eyes and honoured, and I love (אהב) 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 seed (זרע) 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 (יצר) and made (עשה).

Duelling Witnesses

8 Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! 9 All the nations (גוים) 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 [Israel] are my witnesses, declares Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you (pl.) may know (ידע) and believe (אמן) me and understand (בין) that I am he (אני הוה). Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. 11 I, I am Yahweh, and besides me there is no savior (מושיע). 12 I declared, saved, and proclaimed when there was no strange god among you. And you are my witnesses,⁴ declares Yahweh, and I am God (אל). 13 Also henceforth I am he (אני הוה). There is none who can deliver from my hand. I work, and who can turn it back?

¹ Yahweh specially created Israel as his vehicle to redeem and bless the nations. Israel does not derive from the nations.

² Israel, the redeemer of the nations, needed herself to be redeemed.

³ Judgment of flood and fire will not destroy Israel.

⁴ See *Witness Testimony*.

Babylonians on the Run

14 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer (גֹּאֲלֶיךָ), the Holy One of Israel:

For your sake I send to Babylon (בְּבָבֶל) and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice. 15 I am Yahweh, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel (בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל), your King (מֶלֶךְ).

A New Exodus

16 Thus says Yahweh, 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 am 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 (עַמִּי בְּחֵירָי) [Israel], 21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

Weariness All Around

22 Yet you did not call upon me, Jacob. But you have been weary of me, 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 bought 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.

Sins Blotted Out

25 I, I am he (אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא) who blots out (מָחָה)⁵ your transgressions (פְּשָׁע) for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. 26 Put me in remembrance. Let us argue together.⁶ 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 (שָׂרֵי) of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction (תְּהָרִם) and Israel to reviling.

⁵ “[T]o wipe out, annihilate” (*HALOT*, 567). **Is 44:22** 22 I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. **Ps 51:1** 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **Ps 51:9** 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **Zec 3:9** 9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares Yahweh of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

⁶ **Is 1:18** 18 Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Commentary

1. Isaiah 43.

- a. The main theme of this chapter is “God’s activity on his people’s behalf.”⁷
- b. “[F]ar from being rejected for their sins or abandoned by a helpless god, Israel will be delivered by the all-powerful God, and in so doing he will graciously use his people to demonstrate his incomparability.”⁸
- c. The focus is on God’s “undeserved grace (43:22–28) and the giving of the Spirit (44:1–5), which are the message of the gospel. ...God would indeed produce evidence far surpassing the exodus that he was the Savior, the only Savior, of the world.”⁹

2. Beloved Israel (Is 43:1-7).

- a. **Is 43:1-7** 1 But now thus says Yahweh, he who created (ברא) you, Jacob, he who formed (יצר) you, Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed (גאל) 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 Yahweh your God (יהוה אלהיך), the Holy One of Israel (קדוש ישראל), your Savior (מושיעך). I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba [both in southern Egypt] in exchange for you. 4 Because you are precious (יקר) in my eyes and honoured, and I love (אהב) 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 seed (זרע) 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 (יצר) and made (עשה).
- b. But now, Yahweh, Israel’s creator, has something to say to her (v. 1).
 - (1) With “but now,” this paragraph contrasts starkly with the previous one (Is 42:18-25).
 - (a) “[T]he nation had come under the severest judgment from God. But now, God says, a new day is at hand. God will act on behalf of his chosen people out of the purest grace.”¹⁰
 - (2) Israel is God’s supernatural creation. She did not derive naturally from the nations.

⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 137.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 144.

⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 152.

¹⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 136.

- (a) “In the language of Gen. 1 and 2 Isaiah reminds the people that just as God created and shaped the physical universe, so he brought them into existence as his own people.”¹¹
- c. Israel is not to fear, because Yahweh has redeemed her (v. 1).
 - (1) “Do not fear” is repeated over and over again in these chapters (Is 41:10, 13, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:1, 8). It is the primary application for the Jews living in the Babylonian exile.
 - (2) “Redeemed” means “to purchase out of slavery” and is repeated several times in this segment of Isaiah (Is 41:14; 44:22–23; 48:20; 52:9; 63:9).
 - (3) “Redeemed” is probably a prophetic perfect, which treats the future if it were past.
- d. Yahweh has called Israel by name. Israel belongs to him (v. 1).
 - (1) Israel has a special relationship with Yahweh as his covenant people.
 - (2) “Much can be endured if we have a sense of destiny borne out of particular identity.”¹²
- e. Israel will pass through flood and fire, but Yahweh will be with her. She won’t be drowned or burned (v. 2).
 - (1) God’s people do pass through floods and fires, but they survive because of God’s presence.
 - (a) **Ps 66:12** 12 You let men ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water. Yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.
 - (b) **Ro 8:35–39** 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Messiah? Shall tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, For your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord.
 - (c) **1 Pe 1:6–7** 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Messiah.
 - (2) “[N]o calamity can swallow up the chosen people.”¹³
 - (a) Israel is a chosen people. The church, too, is a chosen people. Both Israel and the church are chosen people, but Israel is not the church.
- f. Yahweh is Israel’s God, the Holy One, her Saviour (v. 3).
 - (1) A savior is “one who steps in when someone is unable to help himself.”
- g. Yahweh gives Egypt, Cush, and Seba in exchange for Israel (v. 3).

¹¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 137.

¹² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 137.

¹³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 137.

- (1) As a ransom or reward for releasing the Jewish captives from Babylonia, Persia was enabled by God to conquer Egypt, Cush, and Seba.¹⁴
- (2) Israel is extremely valuable to God. No cost is too high to ransom her.¹⁵
- (3) It was ultimately not Egypt and Nubia that God gave in ransom, but his own Son.¹⁶
 - (a) **Mt 20:28** 28 ...Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
- h. This is because Israel is precious to him and honoured. Yahweh loves her (v. 4).
 - (1) **Dt 10:14-15** 14 Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 Yet Yahweh set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.
 - (2) **Dt 23:5** 5 But Yahweh your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because Yahweh your God loved you.
 - (3) This is a prime example of God's impersonal love. God's special love for Israel is not because of something she did or some quality she possesses. It is because of his choosing her.
- i. Israel is not to fear, for Yahweh is with her (v. 5).
 - (1) **Is 7:4** 4 And say to [Ahaz], Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smouldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah.
 - (2) **Is 8:10** 10 Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing. Speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.
 - (3) **Je 30:10-11** 10 Then fear not, Jacob my servant, declares Yahweh, nor be dismayed, Israel. For behold, I will save you from far away, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you to save you, declares Yahweh. I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end.
 - (4) We are not to fear our circumstances, for God is with us. We are to trust God with our family, our finances, and our future.
- j. Yahweh will gather together Israel's descendants from the east, west, north, and south, from the end of the earth (v. 6).
 - (1) **Dt 30:3-6** 3 [T]hen Yahweh your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. 4 If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. 5 And Yahweh your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that

¹⁴ John A. Martin, "[Isaiah](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1097.

¹⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 137.

¹⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 140.

you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 And Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, so that you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

(2) **Is 11:11-12** 11 In that day Yahweh will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. 12 He will raise a signal (סֵּוּ) for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

(3) There are three great returns for Israel in Scripture: the one following 586 bc, the one following ad 70 and 135 (which we saw in the 20th century), and the one preceding the Millennium.

(a) **Mt 24:31** 31 And [Jesus] will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

k. This applies only to believers from among Israel, those who are called by Yahweh's name, whom Yahweh created for his glory (v. 7).

(1) **Ro 9:6-7** 6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his seed, but Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

3. Duelling Witnesses (Is 43:8-13).

a. **Is 43:8-13** 8 Bring out the people [Israel] who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! 9 All the nations (גּוֹיִם) gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this and show us the former [predicted] things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them [the witnesses] hear and say, It is true. 10 You (pl.) [Israel] are my witnesses, declares Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you (pl.) may know (יָדַע) and believe (אָמַן) me and understand (בִּין) that I am he (אֲנִי הוּא). Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. 11 I, I am Yahweh, and besides me there is no savior (מוֹשִׁיעַ). 12 I declared, saved, and proclaimed when there was no strange god among you [Israel]. And you are my witnesses, declares Yahweh, and I am God (אֵל). 13 Also henceforth I am he (אֲנִי הוּא). There is none who can deliver from my hand. I work, and who can turn it back?

b. Yahweh summons the spiritually blind and deaf of Israel. Then he gathers the nations for a debate. He challenges them to make their case and support it with evidence (vv. 8-9).

(1) "This" (v. 9) probably refers to Cyrus's defeat of the Babylonians and the Jews' return to Jerusalem.

c. The people of Israel are Yahweh's witnesses, his chosen servant, that they may *know*, *believe*, and *understand* that Yahweh is the only God and Saviour (vv. 10-11).

(1) "God calls on the idols to present witnesses who can confirm the deity of the gods because of their ability to predict the future (v. 9). Then, with great daring, God announces that the captive Judeans will be his witnesses."¹⁷

¹⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 144.

- (2) In the Church age, we are God’s witnesses, not Israel.
 - (a) **Ac 1:8** 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
- (3) “Calvin says with some justification that the three verbs *know*, *believe*, and *understand* detail the progress of the faith, extending from initial experience of God through dependence on him to an understanding of his nature and ways.”¹⁸
- d. Yahweh declared, saved, and proclaimed all alone, and Israel is a witness to this fact (vv. 12-13).
 - (1) Isaiah’s “hanging everything on God’s ability to predict the events and the meaning of the future has profound implications for the claims of the book to have originated with Isaiah of Jerusalem.”¹⁹
 - (a) Because God is infinite and eternal, it is not difficult for him to predict future events. He see the future as clearly as he sees the present.
 - (2) Isaiah may be stressing a process in which promise leads to fulfillment, which leads to further promise.²⁰
 - (3) “The Israelites themselves are the living evidence that their God is the only one.”²¹
 - (a) In our age of pluralism, biblical monotheism must be strongly asserted by the church.
- e. When Yahweh works, no one can turn it back (v. 13).
 - (1) “If [God] calls wicked Babylon to account, Marduk and Nebo can do nothing about it. If he determines that the days of her empire are at an end, Ishtar is helpless to prevent it.”²²
 - (a) The idols of our age are the -isms: communism, socialism, capitalism, individualism, postmodernism, humanism, statism, etc. These idols are powerless when the real God chooses to act.
 - (2) “God’s revealing His plans and saving His people could not be duplicated by any foreign god.”²³

4. Babylonians on the Run (Is 43:14-15).

- a. **Is 43:14-15** 14 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer (רִדְּמֶךָ), the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I send to Babylon (בְּבָבֶל) and bring them all down as fugitives, even the

¹⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 147.

¹⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 146.

²⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 148-149.

²¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 149.

²² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 149.

²³ John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1097.

Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice. 15 I am Yahweh, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel (בּוֹרֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל), your King (מֶלֶךְ).

- b. Yahweh is the Holy One of Israel, Israel's Redeemer, Creator, and King (vv. 14-15).
 - (1) It is not Cyrus, but Yahweh who conquers the Babylonians. Cyrus is only God's instrument.
- c. On Israel's behalf, he is bringing down the Babylonians as fugitives in their own ships (v. 14).
 - (1) God will fulfill his covenant obligations to Israel.²⁴
 - (a) God is free and didn't have to obligate himself to Israel. But he did so.
 - (2) The Babylonians switch from being the conquerors to the conquered. Their "ships" were the trading vessels she used on the Euphrates River and in the Persian Gulf.²⁵ They will become *fugitives*, rushing for their ships to flee down the Euphrates.²⁶
 - (a) **Is 13:14** 14 And like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land.

5. A New Exodus (Is 43:16-21).

- a. **Is 43:16-21** 16 Thus says Yahweh, 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 am 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 (עַמִּי בְּחֵירָי) [Israel], 21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.
- b. Yahweh makes a way in the sea and extinguishes chariots, horses, and armies (v. 17-18).
- c. Israel is not to remember the past because Yahweh is doing a new thing (vv. 18-19).
 - (1) **Je 23:7-8** 7 Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when they shall no longer say, As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, 8 but, As Yahweh lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them. Then they shall dwell in their own land.

²⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 153.

²⁵ John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1097.

²⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 153.

- (2) “God’s claims are based not merely on the past; he will demonstrate his lordship by doing new works of deliverance.”²⁷
- (3) “We humans are inveterate idolaters. We turn everything into a fetish if we are allowed to. So for Israel, the glorious, saving events of the past with all their details had become a straitjacket into which every other act of God was forced (cf. Mark 9:5–6). As a result the Israelites were frequently unable to recognize God’s new actions when they came (John 1:11).”²⁸
- (4) “[T]he Israelites should not so concentrate on what God has done for them in the past that they cannot see the new things he will do on their behalf.”²⁹
- (5) In Prince Caspian, Aslan says something like, “I never do the same thing twice.” The greatest chapters in the biblical story are yet to be written.
- (6) “Still a third and more glorious ‘Exodus’ will take place when the Messiah returns to regather His people (cf. 43:5-6) and establish His millennial reign on earth.”³⁰
- d. Yahweh will make away in the wilderness and give drink to his chosen people, Israel (vv. 19-20).
 - (1) “...God is master of the cosmos and can do with it exactly as he wishes to achieve his purposes. The gods have neither an overriding purpose nor the power to alter the natural order to achieve that purpose if they had one. But God, the true God, can turn wet to dry, or dry to wet, for the sake of his *chosen people*.”³¹
- e. He formed Israel for himself in order that she might declare his praise (v. 21).
 - (1) **Eph 1:4-6** 4 In love 5 [God] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 - (a) Like Israel, the church is new creation of God (Eph 2:15).
 - (2) **1 Pe 2:9** 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

6. Weariness All Around (Is 43:22-24).

- a. **Is 43:22-24** 22 Yet you did not call upon me, Jacob. But you have been weary of me, 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 bought me spice reed 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.

²⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 151.

²⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 154-155.

²⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 152.

³⁰ John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1097.

³¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 155.

- b. Despite God's promises and faithfulness, Israel has not called upon Yahweh. She has grown weary of him. She has not honoured him with burnt offerings, sacrifices, incense, or spice reed (vv. 22-24).
- c. Yahweh is weary with Israel, too. He is burdened and weary with her sins (v. 24).
- (1) **Is 1:11-14** 11 What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says Yahweh. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 12 When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? 13 Bring no more vain offerings. Incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them.
- (2) “God had not *enslaved* and *wearied* his people with arduous ritual. But they *have enslaved* and *wearied* God with their sins and iniquities.”³²
- (a) Religious ritual with relationship is tiresome for us. It is tiresome for God, too.
- (3) “What [God] really wanted was a people with whom he could have fellowship because their characters reflected his own. The rituals were useful representations of lives surrendered to him, and likewise they could represent the nature of what God had done and would do through his Son to make such fellowship possible, but the symbols themselves had no effectual force.”³³
- (4) “The very purpose of ritual in the history of religion has been to appease the gods and satisfy any claims they may have on us so that we may use the power of the gods to pursue our own goals.”³⁴
- (5) “...Isaiah's point is that the carefully performed rituals had been as though not done at all, because they had not reflected genuine submission and real changes of heart. Thus the rituals themselves were sinful and iniquitous.”³⁵
- (6) “The future ‘Exodus’ from Babylon would not come as the result of Israel's religious acts...”³⁶

7. Sins Blotted Out (Is 43:25-28).

- a. **Is 43:25-28** 25 I, I am he (אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא) who blots out (מחה) your transgressions (פְּשָׁעֶיךָ) 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 [Jacob] sinned, and your mediators [priests] transgressed against me. 28

³² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 160.

³³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 159.

³⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 159.

³⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 160.

³⁶ John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1098.

Therefore I will profane the princes (עֲרִי) of the sanctuary [priests], and deliver Jacob to utter destruction (הָרַם) and Israel to reviling.

- b. To end this mutual weariness, Yahweh himself will blot out Israel's sins and no longer remember them (v. 25).

(1) מַחָה: “[T]o wipe out, annihilate” (*HALOT*, 567).

(a) **Is 44:22** 22 I have blotted (מַחָה) out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.

(b) **Ps 51:1** 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loyal love. According to your abundant mercy blot out (מַחָה) my transgressions.

(c) **Ps 51:9** 9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out (מַחָה) all my iniquities.

(d) **Zec 3:9** 9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares Yahweh of hosts, and I will remove (מִוֶשֶׁת) the iniquity of this land in a single day.

(e) The big question is: on what basis will God blot out Israel's sins?

(2) “God's exercise of his power on behalf of Israel is not because of any righteous behavior of theirs.”³⁷

(3) “Nothing Israel has done or can do can qualify them for forgiveness like this. If God did not wish to do it, no court could require him to do so, and no power could compel him. It is purely an expression of the gracious character of him who is at the center of all things, encompasses all things, and is beyond all things.”³⁸

(4) **Is 53:10-12** 10 Yet it was the desire of Yahweh to crush [his Servant]. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days. The desire of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the Righteous one, my Servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

- c. Yahweh challenges Israel to prove herself righteous by her own good works (v. 26).

(1) **Ro 10:1-4** 1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

(a) Here we see the close connection between Isaiah and Paul. Isaiah is the Paul of the Old Testament, and Paul is the Isaiah of the New Testament.

(2) **Is 1:18** 18 Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

³⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 151.

³⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 160–161.

- (a) God loves to reason with mankind about self-righteousness and imputed righteousness.
- (3) “[U]ntil we recognize our need for grace, all our energies, energies designed for the praise of God, will be spent in fruitless self-justification.”³⁹
- d. But Israel won’t be able to. Her first father, Jacob, and her mediators have sinned against him (v. 27).
 - (1) **Dt 26:5** 5 And you [Israel] shall make response before Yahweh your God, A wandering Aramean [Jacob] was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.
 - (2) **Hos 12:2-3** 2 Yahweh has an indictment against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways. He will repay him according to his deeds. 3 In the womb [Jacob] took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God.
- e. The consequence is Yahweh will profane Israel’s priests and deliver Israel to (temporarily) to “the ban” (v. 28).
 - (1) “[T]he nation is given up to the *ban*. This term refers to the total destruction of a nation that has sunk so far in sin that there is no further justification for its existence. The irony here is that the ban was particularly applied to the Canaanites and Amalekites, the enemies of Jacob’s family who sought to prevent the fulfillment of God’s promises to them (Josh. 6:17; 1 Sam. 15:21).”⁴⁰
 - (2) “It is against this backdrop that the grace of God, to which the prophet returns in the following verses, is so marvelous. The nation has not merely sinned; it has become the very opposite of what it was meant to be. Far from its behavior providing some justification for deliverance, that behavior gives ample reason for its complete abandonment. Nevertheless, God will not allow that to happen. Why not? Solely because of his own grace.”⁴¹
 - (a) Just as Israel is saved by grace, so are we.
 - 1) **Eph 2:8-9** 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

8. Application.

- a. Don’t fear.
- b. Expect God to do new things in our world.
- c. Thank God for blotting out our sins through Messiah Jesus.

³⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 161.

⁴⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 162.

⁴¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 162.