

Commentary on Isaiah 43:1-7, 11-12
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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **December 26, 2010**, is from **Isaiah 43:1-7, 11-12**. Five **Questions for Discussion** follow the *Bible Lesson Commentary*. The **International Bible Lessons** can be read at: <http://internationalbiblelessons.com/>; new *International Bible Lessons* are also published each Saturday in [The Oklahoman](#).

Isaiah 43:1-7

1 But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

For important context, read Isaiah 42:18-25. The Jews had become spiritually blind and rebellious. Therefore, Isaiah said God was punishing them and pouring out His anger. As Isaiah 43 begins, God wants to encourage those He has under discipline. He reminds them that He created them as a people and as a nation; therefore, they should not fear His discipline, for He has redeemed or ransomed them. He knows their name and He claims them as His own. When believers come under the discipline of God, this verse can encourage them.

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.

While undergoing punishment for their sins, some of the Jews would suffer while crossing rivers on their way to exile in Babylon. Others, such as Daniel's three friends, who righteously obeyed God, might be cast into a furnace. In every situation, God promised to be with His people, as He was with Daniel's friends in the fire. When we trust in God, no matter what we may be suffering or the reason for our suffering, God will be with us; we will not be overwhelmed; we will not be consumed, but receive the gift of eternal life through faith in His Son, Jesus.

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

Though individual Jews might be cast into prison or be killed in war, if they trusted God they would be saved from eternal death and punishment. The LORD would also save Israel as a nation. He brought them back from exile in Babylon as He promised, and He upheld His holiness, righteousness, and justice through their punishment, which eventually led to their restoration as a nation. God restored the nation

of Israel again in 1948. He only gave as ransom those nations that He had to punish for their sins, and after the Messiah, Jesus, was born and ministered, many from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba came to saving faith in God.

4 Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

God loves His people from every nation and race, and not the Israelites only, but all who trust in Him and the Messiah that God promised to send. Believers are precious in the sight of God, and He honors us when He calls us His people. The nations in the Promised Land that rejected God and turned to idols and their detestable practices God destroyed and replaced with the Israelites when He led them into the land through Joshua.

5 Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you;

Wherever we go, wherever we are sent, if we are a part of God's people, God is with us. God will gather His people from the east and the west. He will gather them from places of exile and slavery. We can be assured that we are God's people when we bow before God and accept the way of salvation that God has

freely provided for us, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, sent by the Father to save His people from their sins and the consequences, death.

6 I will say to the north, “Give them up,” and to the south, “Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth —

Those who have enslaved God’s people must free them at His command. They cannot defy Almighty God. Evil forces may try to destroy God’s people physically and/or spiritually or keep them in bondage, but no matter what they try or how far away from God they think they are when they persecute His people, God will bring His people back to Him. We see even today how God is bringing Jews from all over the world back to Jerusalem. Eventually, God will complete this task.

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

We can choose to identify ourselves with the true God. Christians are called by the name of God’s only Son, Jesus the Christ, the anointed One, the Messiah. When we become Christians, we glorify and honor God – we proclaim the greatness of God and His love, mercy, justice, and righteousness. He created us to be His people, to be called by His name, so many more

would come to believe in Him and glorify Him with their lives of obedience.

Isaiah 43:11-12

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

The name God gave Moses was “I Am.” The name “I Am” is translated “LORD” in many of our English translations in the attempt to be true to the Holy name of God, which the Jews refused to pronounce due to their respect for God’s name. There is no other savior from sin and death than the LORD. To save us from sin, God the Father sent God the Son into the world (see John 3:16-17). There is no other savior from sin that God, who saves us daily by guiding us through the Holy Spirit, our Counselor, who indwells us.

12 I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord.

When the Israelites repented of their sins and rebellion against God, they turned from worshiping the idols of their neighbors. They tore down the altars of these false gods and destroyed their visible representations carved in wood or cast in gold or silver. Then, God saved them from their oppressors. Then, God saved them from famine and foreign

armies. Then, they followed godly leaders who taught them how to walk according to God's law.

Five Questions for Discussion

1. Why did God want Isaiah to assure His people that they should not fear the suffering that they were undergoing or about to undergo as punishment for their sins? How might we be encouraged by Isaiah 43:1? How might we use that verse to encourage other believers?
2. In these verses, in what ways does God tell the Jews that He is their savior? What are some of the ways God has been the savior of His people?
3. In what ways can believers be assured that they are precious to God and honored and loved by God? In what ways does God honor His people?
4. What does God say He will do so believers do not need to be afraid?
5. In Isaiah 43:12, God said through Isaiah, "I declared and saved and proclaimed." Why are all three of these actions of God important? As God's witnesses, what should we do?

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