

## God Confirms His Relationship with Israel

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### Isaiah 43

In Isaiah 43 God confirms His relationship with Israel. Contrary to what some teach, God is not through with Israel (Rom. 11:1).

Isaiah 42 ended with God proclaiming His *chastisement* on Israel (42:22-25). “*But now,*” God reassures Israel of His *care* (43:1-7). God’s chastening and God’s care are not incompatible with His character (Rom. 11:22—“*Behold therefore the GOODNESS and SEVERITY of God...*”). God expresses both His *anger* (42:25) and His *affection* (43:1, 4).

“*But now*” is a transition between God’s anger upon sin (42:25) and His desire to redeem from sin (43:1).

- Compare how the phrase “***But now***” contrasts God’s ways of dealing with men (1 Kings 5:3-4; Psalm 119:67; Luke 16:25; Acts 17:30; Rom. 16:24-25; Eph. 2:12-13; 5:8; Col. 1:26; 1 Pet. 2:10).

### I. **God’s CARE for Israel** (vs. 1-7).

➡ Although God is speaking of Israel in verse one, the same things are true of Christians in the New Testament—

1. We are His creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10).
2. He has “*formed*” us in His image (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; Gal. 4:19).
3. He has “*redeemed*” us (Gal. 3:13). Redemption involves a purchase and transfer of ownership. What God redeems (purchases), He protects and take care of.
4. He has called us by His name (Eph. 3:15; James 2:7; Acts 11:26).
5. We belong to Him—“*Thou are mine.*” Three small words...Three single syllables—But what a powerful truth. As Israel needed to be reminded of their relationship with God, so do we. Do you suppose you belong to yourself? (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:19)

➡ **Therefore, we have no need to fear** (vs. 1, 5).

- A. God's **PROTECTION** of Israel (vs. 2-5)— God will continue to preserve His people as He took Israel through the Red Sea and the Jordan River, and protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace.
1. Water and fire are all under God's control. Hymn: *"God Leads His Dear Children Along"*
  2. v. 3b-4—God gave up other nations (Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba - cf. 2 Chronicles 14:9-13) to preserve Israel (cf. Prov. 21:18). Pharaoh and the firstborn of Egypt became a ransom for Israel's deliverance.

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The Ryrie Study Bible comments: "as a reward for releasing captive Israel, the Persians under Cambyses, son of Cyrus, were given Egypt and parts of Ethiopia and Seba."

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- B. God's **PROMISE** to Israel (vs. 5-6)—Jews are now returning to Palestine from all over the earth (Jer. 31:10).
- C. God's **PURPOSE** for Israel (v. 7). Israel was *created, formed, and made* for God's glory (cf. v. 21).
- The same is true of Christians. We are also called by His name and created to glorify God. God has created all things for His glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Rev. 4:11). What have you done to glorify God this week? Did the Lord get glory out of anything you've done this week?

## II. **God CALL to Israel** (vs. 8-21).

➡ v. 8— Idolaters are like idols—They can't see or hear.

- A. God's call for a **WITNESS** (vs. 8-9). *"WHO among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth THEIR witnesses..."* God is asking, "Who can give witness to show whether these things be so or not? If they cannot show that it is not so, then they must confess *"it is truth."*
1. The witness of Israel. The existence of Israel is one of greatest witnesses of God's faithfulness.

- Israel testifies to the eternal existence of God—God is the “*I am he*,” uncreated and unequaled (v. 10). Verse 10 refutes the J.W. doctrine that Jehovah God created another lesser god (Jesus Christ) after Him. Jesus is NOT a created god!
- Israel testifies to God’s ability to save (v. 11). Verses 10-13 is a great proof text for the deity of Christ. There is **one** God and **one** Savior—His name is Jesus (cf. Luke 2:11; Titus 1:3-4; 2:13; 3:4-6; 2 Pet. 1:1; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- Israel testifies to the trustworthiness of God. What God says He will do (v. 12). Verse 13—When God does something, no one can stop it. God’s work cannot be thwarted (cf Isaiah 14:27; Job 9:12)!
  - ➔ No false god or idol can make these claims.

2. The witness of New Testament believers—“*Ye are my witnesses...*” We are God’s subpoenaed witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 22:15). The job of a witness is to testify of what he/she knows. We are to testify of what we know about the Lord Jesus Christ!

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v. 14—Babylon did not rise to power until a century after Isaiah wrote this. God refers to Babylon’s “*cry in the ships*,” indicating a tribulation reference to Babylon’s shipmasters in Revelation 18:17-19.

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- B. God’s call to **REMEMBER** (vs. 16-18). God reminds Israel how He cared for them in the past and what He will do in the future.
  1. Second advent of Christ. (Context: “King” (v. 15); “...the sea... mighty waters...” (v. 16); extinction of enemies (v. 17); “...*new thing*” (v. 19); Provision of water for Israel to drink (v. 20).
    - “*a way... a path*” in the sea (v. 16). At the second advent, Christ will come down through the sea (“*the deep*”) that separates the second and third heaven. [This could also be a reference to God’s deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.]

- Verse 17 refers to the defeat of the armies of antichrist at the second advent.
2. God's "*new thing*" (vs. 18-20). God is saying, "Don't you remember what I did in the past? I'm about to do something new that I haven't done before" [In the millennium].
- The animal kingdom will honor God (v 20; Ps. 148:7—*Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.*). ["*Dragons*"—plural, are identified as serpents (snakes/lizards) in Deuteronomy 32:33 (cf. Isa. 34:13; 35:7; Job 30:29)].

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➡ It is possible that some "*dragons*" mentioned in the Bible may have been dinosaurs that are now extinct. The Creation Museum in Petersburg, KY has the following exhibits describing "*dragons*"—

Famed thirteenth-century explorer Marco Polo described *dragons* in the Far East: "In this province [Carijan] are found snakes and great serpents of such vast size as to strike fear into those who see them... Some of them are ten paces in length... The bigger ones are about ten palms in girth. They have two forelegs near the head, but for foot nothing but a claw... The head is very big, and the eyes are bigger than a great loaf of bread. The mouth is large enough to swallow a man whole, and is garnished with great [pointed] teeth." [Tyrannosaurus Rex? Velociraptor? —AH]

Ancient Roman historians wrote about *dragons* and treated them as real creatures. Cassius Dio (AD 150-235) tells of an encounter said to have taken place in the third century BC involving the Roman general Marcus Atilius Regulus, who served during the First Punic War. It is reported that his army battled a dragon: "A dragon suddenly crept up and settled behind the wall of the Roman army. The Romans killed it by order of Regulus, skinned it, and sent the hide to the Roman Senate. When the dragon was measured by order of the

Senate, it happened to be 120 feet long, and the thickness was fitting to be the length.” Several other Roman writers described this encounter near the Bagradas River, including Livy, Valerius Maximus, and Aulus Gellius.

➡ Ancient historians did not call these *dragons* “dinosaurs,” since that term was not coined until 1841.

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- v. 20— “...I gave waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to MY PEOPLE, my chosen.” Speaking of Israel in the tribulation (Rev. 12:6).
- v. 21—Description of God’s people (cf. vs. 1, 7; Ps. 102:18).

### III. God’s COMPLAINT against Israel (vs 22-25).

➡ In contrast to all God has done for Israel (vs. 3-4, 14, 18), Israel did nothing for God, except weary and taunt Him with their sins.

#### A. Israel’s FAILURES. (vs. 22-24). Things Israel has NOT done:

1. Not called on God—prayerlessness (v. 22). Too often, the only time some Christians call on God is when they are in trial.
2. Not given to God even the smallest of offerings (v. 23).
3. Not honored God with acceptable sacrifices (v. 23 cf. Mal. 1:6-8, 13; Prov. 3:9).
4. Not giving God anything “sweet” or cost them money (v. 24).
5. Not giving God their best (v. 24 cf. Gen. 4:4; Num. 18:12, 29). God deserves our best, the first-fruits, not our leftovers.

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➡ Sins of *omission* are as serious as sins of *commission* (James 4:17). Christ confronted Simon the Pharisee about his sins of omission (Luke 7:44-46)—

- “...thou gavest me NO WATER for my feet...”
  - “...thou gavest me NO KISS...”
  - “...My head with oil thou didst NOT ANOINT”
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#### B. Israel’s FATIGUE (vs. 23-25). Israel was “fed up” with God. Worship had become mechanical and tedious. They had enough of prayer... giving offerings... and honoring God in their sacrifices.

The things of God became monotonous and wearisome to Israel (as they can to a Christian). Malachi 3:14, “*Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance...*” (cf. Job 21:15; 34:9)

1. Israel felt God was too demanding and unbearable. Yet God said, “*I have NOT caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied they with incense.*” (cf. Jer. 7:21; Mic. 6:3). God did not *cause* Israel to serve Him or bring an offering—They were given a choice, but rebelled against God.
2. While Israel was weary of God, God was “*weary*” of their sins (v. 24b). We know that God is omnipotent and cannot literally grow weary (40:28; Mal. 2:17). **God is being sarcastic** — “*You didn’t bring Me anything sweet that cost you money nor offer Me what is best—That is, they kept what was sweet and best for themselves and gave God the leftovers (Mal. 1:13). Instead of you serving Me, you have made Me to serve you in spite of your sins and iniquities.*” (cf. 1:14; 7:13; Jer. 15:6).
  - ➡ It is possible for a Christian to grow weary of God (Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13; Heb. 12:3). I’ve noticed some who call themselves Christians get weary of attending church... preaching... praying... studying the Bible... giving offerings, visitation, service, etc. (Phil. 2:14). Serving God should be a *delight*, not a *drudgery!* (Ps. 100:2; Dt. 28:47).

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v. 25— In spite of Israel being weary of God. He blotted out their sins “*for MINE OWN sake...*” (cf. 48:9-11; Ezek. 36:22). Our sins are not forgiven because we deserve it. We are forgiven for the Lord’s sake (Eph. 4:32; 1 John 2:12).

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#### **IV. God’s CHALLENGE to Israel** (vs. 26-28).

- A. God challenges, “*Put me in remembrance...*” (v. 26). (See how the word “*remembrance*” is used in 2 Tim. 2:14—“*Of these things put them in remembrance...*”). God is challenging Israel to “remind” Him and declare if He’s been wrong about His complaint so they might be justified.

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[Joseph Parker]: God is challenging Israel, “Remind me if thou canst of thy merits; if I have forgotten aught, tell me what I have forgotten, if I am charging thee by mistake, correct my mistake.” The Lord has made a charge, and now He says, “Put me in remembrance, if I have forgotten anything: If thou hast had thy small cattle with thee, show me them.”

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- B. vs. 27-28— Israel’s “*first father*” is Abraham (51:2; Ezek 16:3). He sinned and lied about Sarah (Gen 12:13; 20:2, 13). From Abraham onward, his descendants kept on sinning in spite of God’s blessings. Therefore, their hardships are self-imposed due to their continued disobedience.

**SUMMATION** (v. 28): This is Israel’s present condition, but not their final condition.