

God has a great plan for your life. It's not because of who you are, but because of who He is and the destiny He has given you. The previous passage in Isaiah ended with God describing how He had judged the people, taking them into the fire, and yet they still did not take it to heart. We are often too hardhearted to see what God is doing. But the overall message of *this* portion of the book of Isaiah is of comfort to the captives, to point to a hope and a future. This chapter begins by declaring that even though they don't respond to God's discipline, He still calls them, as He does all believers, His own people. <sup>1</sup> *But now thus says the LORD, 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.* Isaiah 43:1

God identifies Himself as YHWH, their Creator. He again calls them by both names, (Jacob) "one who deceives" and (Israel) "one who prevails with God." (Genesis 32:28) It speaks of the duplicitous nature of man (Galatians 5:17). We are so prone to selfishness and yet by God's grace we are capable of godliness, of being who we were created to be.

I've been reading *The Light and the Glory* by Peter Marshall. The Puritan pilgrims were no different from ancient Israel. They would have such dedication to one another and the cause of Christ, and yet in one generation they would exhibit such greed and dismissal of the need for God and fellowship. It is a cycle consistently repeated throughout human history.

Even though we fail so miserably to show the gratitude we should for all God blesses us with, He has still redeemed us and called us by name. That is why we need not fear. He will not forsake us, even though we so often fall short of His glory and operate in the Jacob nature instead of the Israel nature. As I read this passage it occurred to me that the redemption God is speaking of is judgment. We'll see that in the next verses. They were redeemed from Egypt by judgment on the gods that Egyptians worshiped. We are redeemed from sin by the judgment of that sin falling on Christ on the cross (Galatians 3:13).

Calling us by name is a wonderful and repeated message in Scripture (1 Samuel 3:7). It is true of nations and individuals. It is right for us to invite people to put their own name in John 3:16. He knows your name. He gave you your name. And He has a new name for those who will overcome by His grace (Revelation 2:17). Because of that redemption and personal relationship of calling us His own, by name, we have no need to fear anything. Are you redeemed? Have you answered when He called your name?

<sup>2</sup> *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.* Isaiah 43:2 The nation of Judah would have thought of

**Commented [PW1]: Genesis 32:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

**Commented [PW2]: Galatians 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

**Commented [PW3]: Galatians 3:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

**Commented [PW4]: 1 Samuel 3:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

**Commented [PW5]: John 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**Commented [PW6]: Revelation 2:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

their captivity as they read this, but also of God's deliverance through the Red Sea (Exodus 14:22) and crossing the Jordan at flood stage (Joshua 3:17) when they had entered the Promised Land. Though Daniel's companions had not yet faced the fiery furnace, this passage was written to the people of that future time. They surely thought of this verse. God is speaking of calamity and danger. Whatever we go through, He promises to be with us. We won't lose everything because our treasure is in heaven (Matthew 6:20-21). Your body may drown or burn but God will be with you and your soul will suffer no loss.

We know at times this is fulfilled literally, and we know there are times when it is figurative of God delivering us spiritually. We have testimonies of the saints who have died with confidence of God being with them as they were burned at the stake or faced painful loss of loved ones. God's grace is sufficient to see us through whatever we face. As the three facing the furnace said, "Our God is able to deliver us, but if not, we still won't bow!" (Daniel 3:16-18)

If you read the book, *Killing Christians* by Tom Doyle, you know that God is doing the same today. He can deliver you from a blood thirsty mob, or He can be with you in death as a testimony. I recently heard a testimony from YWAM leaders in the Middle East. An ISIS jihadi wanted to speak to them. Would you meet with a jihadi? They did, and he told of his past pleasure in killing Christians. Then one believer told him that he was going to give him his Bible before he was martyred. The jihadi took the Bible and began to read it. He had dreams of Jesus asking him why he was killing God's servants. Shortly after, his pleasure in murder turned to disgust. He needed to know who this man in white who appeared in his dreams was. Was He the Jesus in the Bible? The jihadi became a child of God! Some are delivered and some go home to glory, but either way, we are redeemed and God is with us.

*<sup>3</sup> 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.* Isaiah 43:3 Here is the connection with the deliverance from Egypt. If God would deal with an entire nation to free His people, is He not capable of dealing with your situation? Do you think ISIS is a surprise to God? **Do you think whatever you are going through is out of the reach of God? His hand is not short that it cannot save** (Numbers 11:23). God delights in taking the worst and turning them into His saints. Nothing is too hard for God!

He is our Savior. The word used here implies deliverance and freedom. We were captives of sin and destined for judgment but we have a Savior, a liberator. We don't have to live in selfishness and destructive passions.

*<sup>4</sup> 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.* Isaiah 43:4 This is spoken to the captives, but it is also spoken to you. For God so loved you, you were so precious in His eyes, so honored, so loved, that He gave His only Son. As the Apostle Paul wrote, <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him*

**Commented [PW7]: Exodus 14:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

**Commented [PW8]: Joshua 3:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

**Commented [PW9]: Matthew 6:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Commented [PW10]: Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

<sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

<sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

**Commented [PW11]: Numbers 11:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."

*graciously give us all things?* Romans 8:32 He gave His only begotten Son in exchange for your life! That is how precious we are to Him. I know it is hard to believe. It is hard to accept that kind of love. But it is true. He came for you. What a shame it would be if you do not receive that great a love (Romans 8:39)!

Our hearts long for this great a love, but when it is presented to us we draw back in fear. That is because we are afraid we may get so caught up in it that we lose ourselves. Jesus said that won't happen. Instead, you will find your life (Matthew 10:39). You will lay aside the old deceptive pleasures you once valued because of this all-encompassing love, but that will be because you see He is more than worth your all.

Fellow believers, I want you to hear this and let it sink into your heart. **Jesus sees the finished product, the beautiful bride that He is making out of us.** We see that in the analogy with Rebecca (Genesis 24:16), in the Song of Songs (Song of Songs 6:4-5), and in the Revelation (Revelation 21:2). The love your heart longs for, the love you've sought all your life, is a reality in Jesus who loves you so much. He sees you as beautiful, precious, and honored. Meditate on that and I guarantee you that you will love Him more.

*<sup>5</sup> Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. <sup>6</sup> 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,* Isaiah 43:5-6 Once again God tells the captives they have no reason to fear because He is with them. God said that to numerous individuals in Scripture (Genesis 26:24; Exodus 3:12; Deuteronomy 31:23). He says it to us. He promised to make His home in the one who believes and places his or her trust in Jesus (John 14:23). I want you to think for a moment just what it is that you fear. Have you identified something? Loss of income? Financial collapse? Illness? Death of a loved one? Is Jesus with you (Hebrews 13:5-6)? Then why are you afraid? It amounts to us not trusting that He can see us through whatever we fear.

The Jews feared they would not return to their Promised Land. God said He would do it and He did it. God is always faithful to His Word (Titus 1:2). But that was only a partial fulfillment. He did it more exactly according to the wording of this passage about 65 years ago, and the return continues to this day.

*<sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*" Isaiah 43:7 This was prophesied to Israel, but again we see wording that is more encompassing. Who was created for God's glory? Who did God form and make? Everyone! But only believers are called by His name. If you have taken the label "Christian" then you should be living for the glory of God. People ask why God created us in the first place. It is for His glory. How glorious is God? He is so glorious that He could take a wretches like you and me and transform us into the bride of Christ with His likeness in all we say and do. The work is not done, but that will be the conclusion of what He has started (Philippians 3:21).

**Commented [PW12]: Romans 8:39 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [PW13]: Matthew 10:39 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

**Commented [PW14]: Genesis 24:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.

**Commented [PW15]: Song of Songs 6:4-5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners.

<sup>5</sup> Turn away your eyes from me, for they overwhelm me— Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

**Commented [PW16]: Revelation 21:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**Commented [PW17]: Genesis 26:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."

**Commented [PW18]: Exodus 3:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

**Commented [PW19]: Deuteronomy 31:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> And the LORD commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them. I will be with you."

**Commented [PW20]: John 14:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

**Commented [PW21]: Hebrews 13:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

<sup>6</sup> So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

**Commented [PW22]: Titus 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began

**Commented [PW23]: Philippians 3:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

<sup>8</sup> *Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!* <sup>9</sup> *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.* Isaiah 43:8-9 God is revealing the immediate and distant future. Now we can look back and see it was true. He brought back His servant, Israel, who was deaf and blind to the things of God.

The nations can't look back on their gods and say, "See this was predicted in detail and it came to pass." God is declaring that prophecy is proof that He is God of all. None can compare. It is an open invitation throughout time. He alone inhabits eternity and knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).

<sup>10</sup> *"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.* Isaiah 43:10 We can read this two ways. The people of Judah are God's witness and they are His servant, His chosen ones. OR we could read it as saying that the people of Judah are His witnesses, and so is His Servant, the Suffering Servant, His chosen One. The Jews are witnesses to the world through the Word delivered to them and God's dealing with them. The Servant is the One who will help the witnesses know and believe that "I am He!"

It is Jesus who convinces us that God is real and loves us, that He is the I Am. Twenty-two times in John's gospel Jesus declared, "I am He!" Jesus said to know and believe Him is to be saved (John 17:3; 11:26). It is the only way to know the Father. He is the One who convinces us that there is but one true God. His miraculous life and words convince us. The way He lived out this passage should convince us.

Jesus demonstration of this passage is recorded in John 6. Notice in this Isaiah passage YHWH tells them not to fear. When they pass through the waters He will be with them. In verse 3 He tells them He is their Savior. In verse 5, He says, "Do not fear, for I am with you." And in verse 10 He declares, "I am He!"

Listen as I read each of those expressions in the account in John 6:16-20. <sup>16</sup> *When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup> The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.*

<sup>20</sup> *But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."* Or we could translate it, "I am He! Do not be afraid." (YLT) Do you see the parallel? As they passed through the water He was with them. He is their Savior. He tells them not to fear. Why? I am He! We might add that this Isaiah passage seems to refer to the crossing of the Red Sea in which it was a dark night with a strong wind blowing, just as in this passage, John 6.

<sup>11</sup> *I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.* Isaiah 43:11 And to this the Apostles agree. <sup>12</sup> *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name*

**Commented [PW24]: Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'

**Commented [PW25]: John 17:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

**Commented [PW26]: John 11:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

*under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" Acts 4:12 YHWH and Jesus are one (John 10:30). It is so obvious in Scripture that we wonder how the cult of Jehovah's Witness could continue.

**Commented [PW27]: John 10:30 (ESV)**  
<sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."

Man looks for salvation in others and in things because we know God's love demands a total surrender (Mathew 10:38). Anything or anyone other than Jesus who claims to offer you salvation from your fallen nature, from God's justice upon sin, is a liar and can never deliver. Jesus is our only hope. Thank God He loves us so!

**Commented [PW28]: Matthew 10:38 (ESV)**  
<sup>38</sup> And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

*<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?"* Isaiah 43:12-13 Look throughout the history of man. Only God can miraculously save, whether from the flood in Noah's day, or from the fire that fell on Sodom. He delivered a nation from Egypt and gave them victory over nations (Psalm 60:6-8).

**Commented [PW29]: Psalm 60:6-8 (ESV)**  
<sup>6</sup> God has spoken in his holiness: "With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth.  
<sup>7</sup> Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet; Judah is my scepter.  
<sup>8</sup> Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my shoe; over Philistia I shout in triumph."

He has saved us as well. Remember the day you brought your sins to the cross and knew you were forgiven, made right with God, an heir of eternal life. And so we are His witnesses as well. That is why He gave us the Holy Spirit, to have the power to be a witness by the transformed life that is ours in Jesus (Acts 1:8).

**Commented [PW30]: Acts 1:8 (ESV)**  
<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Again God declares, "I am He!" What He decides is what will happen. You can't escape Him. You can't change His course. He has determined all things. He alone has all power and authority.

In our day there are so many deceptions. So many claim to be god. So many claim another god. Put them up alongside these claims of the one true God and you will see they are nothing compared to Him who alone can save. They are nothing compared to Him who inhabits eternity and knows the end from the beginning. He alone has delivered, does deliver, and will deliver us in the future.

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King."* Isaiah 43:14-15 God is promising that even though He brings Babylon to punish them for their idolatry and turn them back to Him, He will destroy Babylon like He destroyed Egypt. How is that possible? Is God so great that He can plan the details of the future and raise up and bring down mighty nations? He already has (Daniel 2:21). He did just as He promised for He is the Creator. He is the Holy One, our King. I hope you know Him as your King.

**Commented [PW31]: Daniel 2:21 (ESV)**  
<sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

#### Questions

- 1 Why does the chapter start, "But now"?
- 2 Why should we not fear?
- 3 What is the promise of verse 2?
- 4 Why did the jihadi convert?
- 5 Who is precious, honored, and loved?

- 6 How do you know He means you?
- 7 Why did God make you?
- 8 How can we know YHWH alone is God?
- 9 What is the relationship with John 6?
- 10 What is the significance of "I Am He!"?