

WHOM SHALL I FOLLOW Sunday School- December 26, 2010

Unifying Topic: I WILL BE WITH YOU

Lesson Text

I. God's Redemptive Grace (Isaiah 43:1-7)

II. God Our Lord And Savior (Isaiah 43:11-12)

The Main Thought: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (Isaiah 43:2 KJV)

Unifying Principle: Many people feel oppressed and look for a leader to deliver them. How are people to know whom to follow? In Isaiah 43, God promises deliverance even greater than the Exodus.

Lesson Aim: To teach how God is our Sovereign Lord who lovingly redeems and saves us, who providentially chooses us for His service, and who compassionately protects and comforts us when we go through trials.

Life aim: To help students appreciate how God creates, redeems, saves, and protects us.

43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

43:6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God

HISTORY:

In CHAPTER 42, God calls them servants whom He upholds as His elect. He had also rebuked them for their willing blindness, and asked that even after He delivered them, would they even listen to Him? It ends with God's sorrow over the spiritual decay of His people.

LESSON:

Isaiah 43:1-7 God's Redemptive Grace

43:1 In spite of Israel's deliberate sin against the Lord and their rejection of Him as their rightful King, God reminds the Jews that **He** created them; that **He** knows them; that they are **His**. With all these truths in mind, they are told not to fear, even in view of the Babylonian Captivity they would be facing in another hundred years. Why is that?- for He has redeemed them. He not only called them by name but, designated them as His own peculiar people. God is saying, He will show them mercy, bring them back from captivity, and restore them. Then the world would know that God had done this because "*thou art mine.*"

43:2 The reference to waters, rivers, and fire may be both spiritual and physical. When you pass through...- going through rivers of difficulty will either cause you to drown or force you to grow stronger. If you go in your own strength, you are more likely to drown. If you invite the Lord to go with you, He will protect you, and He will be with you. The waters, rivers or even fire will not overcome you, you won't be burned up nor will the flames consume you.

43:3 "*For I am the Lord thy God the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour*" - This verse continues the statement of the reasons why God would protect them. He was the God who had entered into solemn Covenant with them, holy in Himself, the sanctifier of them, their Saviour in time of trouble, and Who would therefore protect and defend them.

"*I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee*" - God sacrificed the Egyptians instead of the Israelites; He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, and saved Israel His firstborn; He drowned the Egyptians in the Red sea, when the Israelites passed safely through it. Thus Egypt stood, instead of Israel, as a kind of "*ransom.*" Therefore, the

argument is, that if He had suffered Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba to be desolated and ruined instead of them, in order to affect their deliverance, they had nothing to fear from Babylon or any other hostile nation. Meaning, He would affect their deliverance even at the expense of the overthrow of the most mighty kingdoms.

43:4 Another reason why God would defend and deliver them: ¹"*Since thou wast precious in my sight... Thou hast been honorable*: They were precious from all eternity; however though, they became dishonourable in themselves, through the fall of Adam, and their own transgressions, and are dishonourable in the esteem of men, yet honourable in the esteem of God and Christ; they appear to be so, by their birth, by regeneration, being born of God; by their marriage to the Son of God, the Lord of the whole earth; and He still says ... *I have loved thee...* He says *I will give... men*" (meaning people--other nations for thee). Others will die on their behalf. The Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, were given for the people of Israel, that is, their enemies should be destroyed, and they should be spared and saved because of the Lord's salvation unto them.

43:5-6 Isaiah is speaking primarily of Israel's return from Babylon, and he reiterates God's Words again, "*Fear not: for I am with thee.*" The Lord will reverse the dispersion of His people and will recall them from the east... west... north... south. Again, the purpose of God in creation is related to His purpose in redemption. Also, spiritually, it is the gathering in of God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, which were scattered abroad throughout the world, called the "*seed*" of the church, because born to her, and brought up in her, and of which she consists; and therefore she herself is said to be gathered, converts being brought in from all quarters.

Give up, do not retain those that belong to the Lord –sons and daughters - such of whom the Lord had predestinated to the adoption of children, and had taken into His family, and whom He regenerated by His Spirit and grace; of either sex; to whom He beareth the strongest love and affection as a parent to His children; and of whom He takes the utmost care, so that not one shall be lost. For God have many sons and daughters from the farthest corners of the earth.

43:7 To be called by the name of anyone is synonymous with being regarded as their son, since a son bears the name of his father. Therefore, all who were regarded as the children of God; and the promise is, that all such should be re-gathered to their own land are called by His name. Why? - Because He "*created, formed, and made them.*" He says: "*for my glory.*" All of which are expressive of the power and grace of God. In order to show forth God's glory, it shall be shown in their recovery and salvation. God's redemptive grace will defend and protect.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON:

43:8 The setting of this section is a court scene to determine the veracity of the claims of the Lord. Witnesses are called on both sides of the case to see what the evidence will be. From the use of the terms for "*blindness*" and "*deafness*", we would conclude that verse 8 is a call for the disobedient and sinful nation to witness God's gracious provision. But even in that condition Israel had had the opportunity to see and hear what God was doing, and so would qualify as witnesses to the power of God. In fact, their witness would be more effective, for they were surprised by what God had done.

43:9 This verse challenges the other nations to speak out if they or their gods were able to do what the Lord could do—foretell this deliverance as He had done. Do they have the ability to achieve His purpose in history? Powerful acts can be attributed to deities or kings; but predicting them is quite another matter. God is on one side; all other powers, on the other. Who in truth is the sovereign Lord? These witnesses will have to step forward and give their credentials, or finally admit the truth of the Lord's claims.

43:10 The Jews are God's witnesses and His servants whom He had chosen and now the Gentiles also have this place as chosen. As chosen witnesses, that we may know, believe, and understand that God is "**The God**." To be witnesses and servants means that we have a relationship with Him. Our lives were created to know, believe, and understand that we must tell others of His goodness and of His mighty acts; worship and depend upon Him for our very lives.

BACK TO THE LESSON

Isaiah 43:11-12 God Our Lord And Savior

43:11 Jehovah, the self-existing, eternal, and Immutable Being makes it known... ²The repetition of the pronoun 'I'

¹ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=043&verse=004>

² <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/18517/eVerseID/18517/RTD/barnes>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>

makes it forceful. There was no other who had the attributes which the name involved; there was, therefore, no other God. There is no one who can deliver from oppression, and captivity, and exile, such as the Jews suffered in Babylon. There is no one but He who can save from sin, and from hell. All salvation, therefore, must come from God; and if we obtain deliverance from temporal ills, or from eternal death, we must seek it from Him. There is no Savior besides Him and Him alone! But notice, He has proved Himself over and over again. **"There is no Savior besides Him!"**

43:12 ³God had declared by His prophets, long before the Messiah came, that He would send Him; that He should come and save His people by His obedience, sufferings, and death; accordingly He was to come. The Lord had wrought out salvation by Him, as He had declared He would; and this He had shown, published, and made known by the everlasting Gospel, preached among all nations." It is said, when they came out of Egypt, that the Lord alone did lead, and there was no strange god with them. It is well known unto you, being published in the Gospel that He alone saves. Therefore, they were witnesses of all that happened and well able to show forth that there was no other god that saved them; it was God alone!

SUMMARY:

This is another prophesy of salvation that announces God's personal relationship with Israel. God's favor and good-will to His people speak abundant comfort to all believers. God formed Israel and all who are redeemed meaning ransomed with the blood of His Son, and set them apart for Himself. Those who are called by God's name are truly His! Though they went as through fire and water, yet, while they had God with them, they need fear no evil. Because God promised to be with the people and He did not let them down. The waters did not overwhelm them nor did the fire consume them. Thus, when God gave Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba as a ransom for Israel, it meant that His people were delivered from destruction and these other countries were destroyed instead. They are so precious in His sight that His sons and daughters will be brought out from the east, west, north and south. The faithful are encouraged and were to be assembled from every corner of the earth. God knows His people by name, just as He knows the names of all the stars that give Him glory. He ends with the same note in verse 1: *God created and formed them and called them by name*. God's redemptive grace shall follow us all the days of our lives.

This part of the lesson talks about God being our Lord and Savior. God states that next to Him there is no god/ no savior, but Him. He is denouncing Israel for turning to idols. It is in this context, when Israel is looking to the false gods for deliverance, that God says I have showed you that there is no savior for Israel besides Me. He reminds them of when He delivered them from Egypt, and when they dwelt in the wilderness. (Hosea 13:5) Now, they have seemed to have forgotten their God who delivered them. (Hosea 13:6). The point is: none of those idol-gods could save Israel; He was their only God and Savior that they witnessed. He is the **I Am God!** God is the one who is the ultimate author of salvation: "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Truth is in Him, there is nothing false about Him; His Word is Truth; He produces change in our lives and we witness that change. When God sent His Son to be the ransom for us, we received eternal life; a newness of life and it will be eternal not temporary. God declares that He is God. His proof is in what He has done, what He is doing and what He says He will do. He has the plan; He's showed us the plan, now all we have to do is follow the plan and receive all He has promised, **He is with us!**

⁴There is no other savior. If anyone should be able to witness that only God is the true savior, surely His people should be able to bear witness. Notice in verse 11 that God is a jealous God. He demands absolute allegiance. No matter what we say, our behavior shows what is really in our hearts. When God says turn one way and the world says to turn another way. We can tell who is most important, by which way we turn, if we turn at all. Notice in vs. 12 that if no one else should be able to be a witness of how great God is and how worthless the false gods are, those who belong to God and have been richly blessed by Him should be at the front of the line.

APPLICATION:

Let's work on following the only true God while being active witnesses about the goodness of the Lord.

³ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=043&verse=012>

⁴ <http://www.christian-living-site.com/support-files/iwillbewithyou12-26-10.pdf>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>