

The Trial *Isaiah 43:8-13*

INTRO:

C. S. Lewis wrote an essay describing the difficulties of witnessing to modern people. In this essay he describes how arrogant unbelievers tend to put God on trial. Using the British court system's terminology he described it as putting God "in the dock." In other words, God is not the judge. We are. God is the defendant. Lewis wrote: "*The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defence for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock.*"

In **Isaiah 43**, we find God again using a trial setting to throw down a challenge to the follower of false gods to vindicate those gods. The trial demonstrates God's uniqueness, eternity, and power.

I. The Challenge Given (v. 8-9)

II. The Lord's Case (v. 10-11)

III. The Verdict (12-13)

I. The Challenge Given (v. 8-9)

"Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear and say, "It is truth."

A. The first group called to the challenge are Israelites. Israel always had a problem with idols. They decided they would rather follow idols and not the true and living God. So, the LORD's answer is to set up a confrontation, a challenge to see who is really God and who is not. The first group called to the challenge is Israel. **(v.8)**

"Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears."

These from Israel are uniquely described. These are those who are blind, but not because they do not have eyes. They are deaf, but it wasn't because they had no ears. These who belong by birth to the Israel of God, but who refuse their God and prefer idols, must hear and evaluate the challenge.

B. The second group called to the challenge are the idolatrous Gentile nations. **(v.9)**

"Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled."

These who are not Jewish, but who openly embrace these false gods also are called to the challenge.

C. God then throws down the challenge, ***“Who among them can declare this.”*** What other god can proclaim that Israel will be restored? Who can foretell the future and make it happen? Let these other gods show us the evidence of their prophecies. Can they show us former things that came to past? Can they produce witnesses to vindicate them? If not they must admit the truth.

II. The Lord’s Case (v.10-11)

A. What must they admit? Surely Israel must admit there were many incidents in their past when God predicted and carried out His promises. Let me cite two. Do you remember when God instructed them about how to take Jericho? He predicted if they marched around the city as God Himself directed when they shouted the walls would fall. Fall they did.

“You are My witnesses, says the LORD, And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.”

B. Given what the LORD has done in the history of Israel some important truth must be acknowledged. First, they had to admit the LORD He is God. Do you remember the conflict between the true and living God and Baal with Elijah? Elijah said to the 450 prophets of Baal; **(1 Kings 18:24)**

“Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”

They had to admit, the LORD is God!

C. Second, they had to admit He alone is God. **(v.10)**

“Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.”

Our Lord is not saying that gods are formed and come into existence. Rather, He asserted that there never was or never will be any god. He alone is the sovereign of the Universe.

D. Finally, they had to admit; **(v.11)**

“I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.”

They had to recognize that if they turned their back on the LORD there was nowhere else to turn. He alone could deliver from temporal difficulties and ultimately from sin itself.

III. The Verdict (12-13)

“I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses,’ Says the LORD, ‘that I am God. Indeed before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?’”

A. Our LORD makes three statements about Himself to sum up the verdict. First, our God prophesied their deliverance and then delivered them. He did this both in the past for Israel and will do the same in the future. He is going to name Cyrus, a king not yet born of a empire not yet created who would return them to the Promised Land.

B. Second, because of their experience, Israel is His witness that He alone is God. Yahweh alone is their Elohim, their all-powerful deliverer.

C. Finally, the LORD is the only eternal God who can deliver and can do what He wants and no one can stop Him. I love this statement; **(v.13)**

“Indeed before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?”

D. Now why is all of this important? Here you and I are with our basket of troubles and needs. Where are we going to turn? What are we going to do? It is like David and Goliath. How big is our God? Do we understand that He is the only God? Do we understand that there is no one else to seek, love, or serve?

In his commentary on **Psalm 6**, Dale Ralph Davis wrote:

“[David] is resting in Yahweh’s character, in the sort of God He had declared Himself to be. Sometimes this is your only stay in trouble—simply what God has said about Himself and about what He will do. Which suggests how massively important the doctrine of God is for the Christian Life.”