

# God's People

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 43:1-7  
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Reflected in me. We're like the moon, unless the sun be pleased to shine on us, we are but darkness.

If you would, take your Bibles and look with me in Isaiah 43 and my text is from verse 1 down to verse 7 and I'd like to talk with you in these moments about what it is to be one of God's people. I used this this past week talking to some associates and made reference to those that are the Lord's and they were not used to that terminology, even though they would consider themselves to be Christians. They're used to hearing the term "Christian" and as I talked with them, I explained because they both said, "What do you mean, those that are the Lord's?" There is this notion today among men that God is the Father of all and everybody else his creatures or brothers so they talk consistently and continually about the brotherhood of mankind. Well, we are all brothers in Adam, there is no question, but when it comes to this matter of being able to say, "I am the Lord's," what are the characteristics that we find in Scripture? Here in Isaiah 43, God himself makes that distinction. He says in verse 1,

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

What a stark contrast we have here beginning chapter 43 with what we ended in chapter 42. In Scripture, this is how the Lord has so often juxtaposed his word against the

backdrop of some dark and terrible scene, we'll see the Lord then shine light to give hope to those who are his.

We saw his warning in Isaiah 42:25, "Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger," and I see there being described what we might call today denominational religion. There is a lot of it. You know, is God pleased with every so-called church parking lot that is full because people attend a place of worship? Is that a sign of his blessing? We in the flesh tend to think, well, as you drive by, you see some carrying Bibles in with them under their arm and so you think that must be a good congregation. Not necessarily. Whether people carry Bibles in under their arms or not, we know that the word was read for years in the synagogues and yet the Scriptures say that there was a veil that was over the hearts of not only the people but the leaders leading them.

I'm thankful whenever the word is read. I've attended a few funeral services where that has been the only word, the fact that someone got up and actually opened and read a portion. Everything else was lost in the commentary. But I thank the Lord that he is able to use his word, but here was Israel in the day with its formalism, sacrifices and doing what appeared to be what God had commanded and yet it says that the Lord had "poured upon him the fury of his anger and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." How many people that are under the wrath of God and don't know it? To me, that's an indication even more of their depravity and their blindness and their lostness.

Now, if Christ paid their debt and they're still blind, they're not under God's wrath, Christ bore it and he must bring them and that is really this message of hope here that we see in chapter 43 lest there be any that despair and think that, "Well, God has written everybody off." He ought to, there's no question, but the truth is he hasn't. There is a remnant Paul wrote about in Romans 11 according to the election of grace. That God himself has purposed to save and that he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem and now, in time, is calling out.

I believe that's what we have described here in these verses that I have just read for you when he says, "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not." As Brother Lane said, there is a notion that God loves everybody but there is a reason why the Lord addresses this particular word to Jacob and to Israel. They were representative of that people that the Lord had chosen out of all nations. Just like any of us that are the Lord's, we know that it wasn't by our choosing but that the Lord was pleased to choose us out. The Lord was pleased to separate us out and therefore we are his creation. Just like it says here, "I have created thee. I have formed thee."

Notice, "I have redeemed thee and I have called thee." That's the complete work of salvation. If he has chosen you and set you out, he has redeemed you. He redeemed you when the Lord Jesus Christ lay down his life there at Calvary and paid your sin debt. And if he has not yet called you, he will. You see, that's my confidence wherever I preach this Gospel. I don't worry about people that get upset and mad, in fact, I in some way rejoice

when they do because it means they heard something. I worry more about people that sit in indifference and don't hear the difference and assume that you're saying the same thing as any other preacher, just saying it a different way. I've had people say that and I think, "You haven't heard a thing." This is not a different approach to the same truth. God is the God of salvation.

How great does the mercy and grace of the Lord shine forth in this particular portion when we see the Lord making this statement without condition upon Israel or condition upon Jacob? In fact, the name Jacob is a reminder of who they are. "O Jacob," supplanter is what that means. Even though many among these were stubborn, obstinate, rebellious, incorrigible, yet they never ceased to be the objects of his love and his care and his purpose to save them. If any of us here are the Lord's and the Lord has so taught us, we know just how obstinate and rebellious and blind and wretched our own hearts are and yet if we have been brought to know him, to trust him, to rest in his mercies and grace and his promises in Christ, we have to say, "It was not of me. It was all of him. All of him."

What I see here is God's goodness that takes occasion from man's badness and to appear all the more glorious in his goodness. You wonder sometimes why did the Lord allow you to run as hard and as long as you did before he stopped you if he has arrested your heart. Well, it's that against the backdrop of all of that evil you might know and understand that the only reason that he ever saved you was for his name's sake. For his goodness' sake.

If you go and look over in Romans 5:20, what I'm sharing with you here is the testimony of those that are God's people. This is their testimony. This is how they are identified in this world. It's not that we are better than anybody else. We have the same nature. I have to take my arm and put it around the worst of sinners and tell them, "But for the grace of God, there go I." But here in Romans 5, you can see it says, verse 20, "Moreover the law entered," why? "That the offence might abound." But notice, "where sin abounded," the more the light of the law shone upon the sinner, the more the sin was exposed but where sin abounded, notice, "grace did much more abound." If sin were not as evil as it is before a holy God, then grace would be nothing but when we talk about God being merciful and gracious, it must be that he is merciful and gracious to the chief of sinners.

That's why Christ said he didn't come to call the righteous, the self-righteous. Grace means nothing to a self-righteous person. They sort of see grace as a little helper, as a crutch to help them along, "Yeah, we all stumble once in a while." You hear people talk like that. "Aren't we all sinners?" They kind of give the old jig-jog. "You know, we're all sinners," shrug their shoulder. That's not one that has been taught of the Lord. When one who has been taught of the Lord hears the word "Jacob," they know exactly what he means. Not a righteous person but a sinner. And yet you say, "Well, why Jacob?" In many ways you look at his life, it was worse than Esau's on the outward and yet Scripture says, "Jacob have I loved. Esau have I hated."

When we come before the Lord, one that has been taught of the Lord realizes that mercy has triumphed in judgment, not at the expense of judgment but through judgment. The reason why the Lord Jesus Christ came, lived and died and coming back here to Isaiah 43:1, the reason why that word "redeemed" just jumps off the page to one who's the Lord's is that they understand that had God not purposed that my sin be put to the account of Christ and his righteousness put to my account, judgment would have triumphed over mercy. God can never show mercy to a sinner at the expense of his judgment. Never, and never lower his standard. Never did, never will. So it's as though here the sun breaks out of a thick dark cloud on an over-cloudy day and shines the brighter with such a pleasant surprise. We've all seen that. Such is the grace of God. Such is the expression of his favor here toward an otherwise rebellious people.

Now, that's pretty much the sum of it but let's come here and see how this breaks down. The first thing we see is the foundation of God's care. There is a foundation. Paul wrote to Timothy speaking of the foundation of God being sure and that is, "The Lord knows those that are his." Salvation is not a lottery. It's not Russian Roulette, let's spin and see who gets saved today. It's all based upon the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ but the foundation is upon God's character himself, his faithfulness.

When he says here, "But now thus saith the LORD," that's the foundation. If we have any question as to how it is God would be pleased to save a sinner such as I am or you are, then let's see the foundation upon which that salvation is built. It's built on the very character of God. Every attribute of God is revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and also his work. Everything the Lord did. When Christ said, "The Father works til now and I work," what he's talking about that absolute satisfaction that was necessary to every one of God's attributes in order for God to show mercy to sinners.

You see, this is where religion, Christendom today has it wrong. At the hub, they've got the love of God and then the spokes that go out, they try to explain his mercy and his grace based on that love. Well, that's fine but you've got to deal with every attribute. Love does not satisfy wrath. You cannot explain how God can be a loving God and still send people to hell if he loves everybody as they say he does. But take love out of there and put holiness. There is the foundation. You put holiness there, it answers to every one of God's attributes. It even explains his wrath but it also explains his mercy because mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed one another. So in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, holiness was answered and therefore enables God to manifest that love for every one for whom Christ died because the debt has been paid.

That's the foundation and what we see here when he says in verse 1, "that created thee and formed thee," it's just to say that if we're the Lord's we are his workmanship. His workmanship. So-called free will has no place with regard to the salvation of sinners. It's a theory. It's a deadly theory that many hold to that somehow their will had something to do with God saving them. I don't see that here in verse 1. "I have created thee. I have formed thee. Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine."

This parallels what you see over in Ephesians 2:10. You see, this is the foundation. Those that are God's people are his workmanship. In Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." If I have any faith, it's not of me, it's of God. I'm his workmanship. If I have any repentance from dead works even to turn unto the true and living God, that's the result of me being his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

So that's the foundation. It's God's doing and any that would say otherwise show their ignorance of even bearing the name of Christ because those that the Lord has taught will give him all the glory but secondly, this foundation as we see in this verse, is based upon the fact that his people are of his purchase. They are of his appointment, we are his workmanship, but of his purchase. It says there, "I have redeemed thee." You know, historically, typically, Israel was redeemed out of Egypt with a high hand. It didn't have a thing to do with Israel. The Lord made certain of that because when he brought them out, he took them right to the Red Sea with mountains on every side to see before them and the army of Egypt bearing down behind them to where if God had so ordered, they would have been destroyed all of them right there. But what did Moses tell them? "Stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord."

But they were redeemed typically through that Passover lamb. It wasn't just that God decreed that they go out, they would not go out until that lamb had shed his blood and God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." They endured the same judgment as the land of Egypt because that death angel passed over every house, every household. You say, "Why was Israel spared?" God said, "When I see the blood." It's not when you see it, he said, "When I see it." And I believe he was forward looking. In his forbearance, he used Israel as a type but in his forbearance, he was forward looking to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ when he would not only pass over but he would remit. You see, there was a forbearing of God until Christ laid down his life, the Old Testament calls it the atonement, the covering, through those animal sacrifices, but our redemption, that even of his people there in the Old Testament, took place at one time, in one place, and that was in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you this: if God so cared for his people that he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to lay down his life for them and if you're one of those, is there anything that you can think of that would ever cause him to cast you off? You see, my salvation isn't dependent upon how I behave and who I am, it's based upon how Christ lived and how Christ paid the debt and God's satisfaction with his Son. But you can see how conditional we become in our thinking so many times because we fall because we're fallen creatures and how often in our minds we go back to those old fig leaves and pick them up again thinking something I do is going to make this better again with God. Such folly. The Lord, if we're his people, we're his workmanship, we are the people of his purchase and nothing is going to undo that. Nothing.

Woe be unto us to think that we are ever in a state other than needing his blood as our representative before a holy God. One old writer said, "The time that you think that you're the closest to the throne of God's grace because of something in you that you feel

like, I've got it right, is actually the time that you're the furthest." How again and again we need to be drawn in our hearts to own our sin continually before a holy God but to know that our acceptance, being accepted in the Beloved, is based upon that work of redemption. If he took care of Israel as a type, how much more will he take care of those that he has actually redeemed with the blood of his Son.

Thirdly, I would have you consider here, again, the foundation being God and his faithfulness of just how peculiar his people are. Peculiar. That word means "particular." We are peculiar, you know, when you look at us and think, "Why would God ever save someone like me?" I'm not even looking at you, I'm looking at myself. I know that I'm nothing and yet it pleased God to save one like me but it is a particular people. Notice he says in verse 1 of chapter 43, "I have called thee by thy name. I have called thee by thy name." This, again, is the foundation of our salvation, not only that we're his workmanship, that he has purchased us, but that he knows us. It's not so much me knowing him. If my salvation were dependent upon how much I really know of God and know of Christ, he'd have to cast me into hell.

My salvation is wholly based upon him knowing me. He knows me throughly. Throughly. People fussing today about going through these x-ray machines because they feel like it exposes them to another man or somebody back there, "Raise your arms. Turn around." They can tell what kind of underwear you've got on or don't have on and people are upset. We don't want other people knowing us. That's just something about ourselves, but before God, the Scripture says that all things are open and naked before him with whom we have to do. I'm thankful it is because my assurance and my foundation is that he not only knows me but he's been pleased to call me by my name and say, "Thou art mine." Not for anything in me but for everything in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's his work to do. That's the sure foundation that knowing me. Christ said, "I know my sheep." Knowing me. How many times in religion people try to cover what they are. They come in and sit down as something other than they are. But as we come before a holy God, we come knowing that he knows us. But if I have come to his Son, it's because he's called me. Called me by name just like Christ said to Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth." Some say, "Well, if he just said come forth, all the dead would have come forth," but, "Lazarus, come forth." That was addressed specifically to him and that's what we see here.

If you go over to Romans 8, this is the golden chain of salvation, someone has called it, and there is not a weak link in it. If we had anything to do with it, there would be a weak link. But this is the foundation upon which this salvation rests, it's in who God is and what his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has accomplished. You can see beginning in verse 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Here he spoke of, "I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine." It doesn't say that all things work together for good for everybody. There are many for whom it will not work together for good. They'll live their lives and die under God's condemnation and face an eternal separation from God.

But here it says, "all things work together for good to them that love God." You say, "Well, who are they that love God?" Well, "to them who are the called according to his purpose." If he has called you by name, then it's because he has loved you and we love him because he first loved us. So that order is important.

But read on, "For whom he did foreknow," there again it's not just foreknowing how you would act, that's how religion likes to put it, "Well, he knew ahead of time that you would believe." Really, a Jacob? What would there be in a Jacob that would cause a Jacob to believe? What is there in a dead depraved sinner that would ever cause that one to take the first step? No, when it says, "whom he did foreknow," whom he did foreknow. He knew beforehand those upon whom he had set his love. That's what it is to foreknow, it's to love.

"He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." How are those that are the Lord's people conformed to the image of his Son? Well, he redeemed them. Again, it has everything to do with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't just do it by decree, he decreed that we should be conformed to the image of his Son but when were his people conformed to the image of his Son? When he died because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. Having accomplished perfectly that salvation, bearing the sin of his people, there remained nothing but righteousness to impute that Christ might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Here it is, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called," here's the word that I want you to see in relationship to chapter 43 and verse 1, "I have called thee by thy name." To give them a name and that here in verse 30 is in reference to our election. We were named in that Lamb's book of life. We were called, Ken. Called, Lane. Called, any that are in that Lamb's book of life.

"And whom he called," in other words, whom he named, "them he also justified." When did he justify them? Well, when he laid down his life. Until then, he dealt with them in his forbearance.

But also, "whom he justified," there at the cross, "them he also glorified." I know there are some that say, "Well, we're still not glorified." Oh yeah, we are, because the Scriptures say when Christ rose from the grave, his Father glorified him and he ascended on high and is seated in the heavenlies, seated upon the throne. He sat down having purged our sin and when he was glorified, everyone was glorified in him. That's what this Scripture is talking about here.

"What shall we then say," verse 31, "to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" That word "can" is a good word. It means they can't. There is nothing that can be against any one of the Lord's.

Do you see that foundation upon which this salvation rests? A sure foundation? As I said earlier, not a lottery. Not a hope-so. Not a Russian Roulette, see what comes out, spin the

wheel. But a sure salvation by a sure Savior for a particular people for whom he laid down his life. Again, watch out for conditional thinking because this old flesh, that's the first thing it's going to do is it's going to make you think that when you fall – you will, okay – this I've got to do something about because perhaps it wasn't covered under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you ever thought that way? Maybe not said it? Well, you thought it by your actions. "I'd better start straightening up," as if that's going to fix it. No, when the Spirit shows you your sin, what it does is cause you to bow on your face before him and to realize that, yes, even this, the Lord paid for. He paid the debt. It wasn't a surprise to God. It might have been a surprise to you because you've got such a self-righteous view of yourself that you thought, "I could never do that," and when you did it and you smelled your own do-do which Paul calls dung, all of a sudden you realized, "Do you know what? I am exactly what the Lord says I am, nothing but a pile of dung were it not for the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ paying my debt."

Do you see how quickly we read over even a verse like Isaiah 43? "Let's get on. We know that." There are people not attending here because they say it's the same old, same old. Do you know what this sinner needs? The same old, same old, because apart from the work of Christ, apart from God being that workman saving this poor sinner and Christ having paid the debt which will be my theme throughout all eternity, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and have called me by my name and told me, Thou art mine," there is no hope. There is no hope.

For me, this is a glorious message. If I get to where I can't preach it, I want someone to whisper it in my ear and tell me the old, old story because that's the only hope that anybody ever has and that's on a sure foundation, dear friends. A sure foundation of God, his word, his faithfulness, his Son. Where could you ever hope to have better? I pray the Lord will bring this home to our hearts and cause us to rest in this one who is everything, the Lord Jesus Christ. I appreciate your attention.