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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Isaiah 43.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Isaiah 43.

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### Topics.

- The LORD the Holy One of Israel will not be burned in the flame.
- For my glory I will bring my sons and daughters from the end of the earth.
- Bring out those who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!
- I am the LORD besides me there is no saviour I declared and save I am God.
- The LORD for Israel's sake sent to Babylon to bring them down as fugitives.
- I am Israel's creator and King who destroyed army and chariots in the sea.
- I am doing a new thing for my people; yet they wearied me with their sin.
- You sinned against me therefore I will deliver Jacob to destruction.
- A brief overview of the history of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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Israel's the LORD'S servant

### **The LORD the Holy One of Israel will not be Burned in the Flame.**

Isaiah 43:1-4 ----- <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. <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. <sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give (gave in KJV) Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. <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.

**I am the LORD your God:** (v3) the LORD was not only the true God and Holy in Himself, but he was the God who had entered into solemn covenant with Israel and their Saviour in time of trouble that would protect and defend them. Therefore they should call to mind past experiences of His goodness, to encourage their faith in Him. The LORD the God, the Holy One of Israel says of Israel: -

- He created and formed them.
- He has redeemed and called them by name.
- He will be with them.
- They are his and He is their Saviour.
- They are precious in His eyes, honoured and He loves them.

Therefore they should not fear when they pass through the waters and rivers because they will not be consumed. Waters and rivers in this context signify hostile nations and specifically Babylon.

**Cush and Seba:** (v3) Seba was the name of a people descended from Cush (Gen 10:7) the oldest son of Ham, one of the sons of Noah, and the name of the country which they occupied in southern Arabia (mostly Saudia Arabia), Nimrod is said to be a son or descendant of Cush. Seba. It was conquered by Cambyses, the successor of Cyrus, and by him called Meroe, after his sister. Meroe was a province of Ethiopia surrounded by the two branches of the Nile River and was distinguished for its wealth and commerce.

**I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you:** (v3) the word ransom comes from the Hebrew word (*kopher*) it means to cover, to ransom, to buy back with money, to make right, to condone, to placate, cancel, disannul, forgive and pardon. To make an atonement, to purge and cleanse to be merciful, pacify, put away, put off and make reconciliation. It carries the idea of exchanging one thing for another and of releasing, delivering, restoring and liberating and of setting an individual or nation free by buying them back with money or in some other way (i.e., exchanging one life for another). Since the Lord Jesus Christ is the only man that can ransom another back in the sense of cleansing them from sin, the word ransom here means to deliver liberate and set free from and enemy.

The word ransom and exchange in the LORD'S statement, "I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you," (v3) carry the same idea in that to save Israel others had to be put to death. It could be likened to a family that is being held hostage or being abused by a violent hostile and murderous man, for the father to save his family he is forced to kill the abuser. In this scenario it could be said of the father, he exchanged the hostile man's life to save his family, or he took the hostile man's life to ransom his family.

It is in this sense that God gave Egypt Cush and Seba as a ransom for Israel's life and in exchange for them. God had brought ruin on Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba nations more mighty and numerous than Israel was in order to save them therefore they should have confidence that He will likewise deliver them from their captivity in Babylon.

The exact historical facts, times and dates concerning Egypt Cush and Seba is difficult to work out, because much of the historical detail remain obscure and lacking in specific detail and for this reason it is best to take the passage in a more general sense in that God often saved His people at the expense of other nations that He had to devote to destruction to save His people and in this sense exchanged the lives of those devoted to destruction for the lives of His people.

The LORD would sacrifice mighty heathen nations, when the safety of Israel required it. In this way God had abundantly testified that Israel was precious and beloved in His sight and therefore they should have confidence that He will not forsake them as a nation or allow their nation to perish from the earth, but will at the appointed time deliver them from their oppressors and their Babylonian captors. God, giving up corrupt and oppressive nations to destruction in order to save His people, was a proof of his love for them, how much greater is the demonstration of His love when He gives his own Holy Son to the lingering pains of a suffering death on a cross in order that His people may be redeemed.

### **For My Glory I will bring My Sons and Daughters from the End of the Earth.**

Isaiah 43:5-7 ----- <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, <sup>7</sup>everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Because of the many Assyrian and Babylonian invasions upon the land and cities of Israel (the ten tribes) in Samaria and upon the land and cities of Judah and Jerusalem (the two tribes) and the Babylonian captivity the people of Israel had not only been scattered amongst many foreign nations, but their farms, vineyards and lands all were laying waste and their cities including Jerusalem were in ruin. Had Israel not been God's people it is almost certain they would not exist as a nation on earth today, but they were His covenant people and He had promised to save them.

The people of Israel were in captivity for seventy years so much of the older generation would have died while in captivity, it is certain they would have feared that their nation would have ceased to exist from amongst the nations of the world. Here the LORD through Isaiah is reinforcing His promise telling His people that they should not fear that their nation will be annihilated from the earth, because He will gather their sons and daughters from the east, the west, the north and the south even from the uttermost parts of the earth.

This gathering occurred when the LORD used Cyrus (King of Persia) who He called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon. Cyrus gave written permission allowing Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed.

However verse seven says, "God will gather everyone who is called by His name, whom He has created for His glory, whom He formed and made," which means that this prophecy contains within the language a far greater and more glorious fulfilment which will take place when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather the faithful to himself in eternal glory and everlasting happiness.

### **Bring out those who are Blind, yet have Eyes, who are Deaf, yet have Ears!**

Isaiah 43:8-10 ----- <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. <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.

The purpose of these verses is to show the superiority of God over all idols. The blind and deaf in this context primarily refer to the idolatrous Gentile nations but it can also embrace the Israelites that had turned to worship idols and seek their counsel.

The call is for the idolatrous people to assemble and bring forth their false gods that have eyes, but cannot see and ears that cannot hear and show what miraculous wonders their idols have brought about in the past and will bring about in the future which of course they cannot do; proofing the foolishness and vanity of believing in idols.

- Set forth your (idolatrous nations) case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. <sup>22</sup>Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. <sup>23</sup>Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified. <sup>24</sup>Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you. (Isaiah 41:21-24).
- Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" <sup>3</sup>Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. <sup>4</sup>Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. <sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. <sup>6</sup>They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. (Psalm 115:2-6).

None of the pagan nations or their idols and gods had been able to predict future events and therefore they could not deliver or save. In contrast to this the LORD had often foretold of future events that were fulfilled and was fully able to deliver and save His own people and there was an abundant evidence of these two truths.

The LORD is saying if the nations idols and gods cannot predict future events and what is to come to pass and cannot show any evidence of miraculous signs and wonders or proofs that they are true gods then, let the people confess that what the LORD says through His prophets is truth and acknowledge that He is the only true God.

**You are my witnesses, declares the LORD:** (v10) though the idolatrous nations could produce no proof that their so called gods had any power to do anything there was abundant evidence that Israel's God did and because of this He is calling His people to witness for Him, that He has given them many plain demonstrations of His foreknowledge of future events so that all nation would know and understand that He was the true God. This same principal applies even today, all who belong to the global body of Christ are called to testify of the goodness of God and their salvation in Christ so that the unsaved may know and understand the love and grace of God in Christ and the way of salvation and the path to eternal life.

**Before me no God was formed:** (v10) the idols and gods of the Gentile nations had no existence before God and have no power to eternally exist. In fact once those who believe in them choose not to believe that particular idol or god ceases to exist. In contrast to this the LORD God of Israel continues eternally regardless of mankind's belief in Him or lack of it. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the invisible immortal Holy Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life.

In contrast to the destructible idols and gods created by man's belief in them the God of Israel is eternal. The LORD calls these idols made by the hands of man, "formed gods," to show the foolishness and vanity of those who believe in them. The LORD is highlighting these truths so that His people (especially those who had turned to idols) may know and believe that He is the LORD their God and by believing trust that He is able to deliver them from their seventy year captivity in Babylon.

**I am the LORD besides Me there is No Saviour I Declared and Save I am God.**

Isaiah 43:11-12 ----- <sup>11</sup>I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. <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.

The expression, "strange gods," refers to the idols and pagan gods the Gentile nations believed in that much of Israel had turned to. Here the LORD is saying that before His people rebelled and turned to idols and pagan gods He through His prophets proclaimed many future things concerning them that came to pass and is calling them to reflect upon these past events that came to pass so that they would know that He is God and that there is no other. No faithful Christian today doubts that Jesus is their Saviour, but much of traditional Christianity uses these prophetic words of Isaiah, "I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour," (v11) to support the theory Jesus is God, because God Himself says He is the Saviour and there is no other. But this is to misunderstand the Scriptures.

**God the Father is the Saviour:** in that He is the Holy Supreme Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life who before the foundation of the world planned and purposed in His eternal mind to send His Son into the world at the appointed time to be the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. God in His eternal foreknowledge foreordained that Jesus would be the central figure and focus of His plan of salvation and in this way He is the Saviour of mankind because He was the one who planned and brought to pass the way of mankind's salvation.

**Jesus Christ is the Saviour:** the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God is also the Saviour because he was the central figure in God's eternal foreordained plan of salvation. He fulfilled God's plan of mankind's salvation, in that he was obedient to the will of His Father and became the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. It is through his blood that believers are redeemed and able to receive divine favor from his Holy Supreme Almighty Father and in this manner both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are the Saviours of mankind.

Had God not planned, purposed and brought to pass the ways of salvation mankind would be left doomed to death. Likewise had Jesus not surrendered his life to the will of His heavenly Father God's plan of salvation would be left bankrupt. Supporting this is the following two facts, firstly, when God said, "He was the only Saviour," Jesus had not yet been born and secondly, God said, "There shall be no god formed after Him." (v10)

**Words of comfort and encouragement:** since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity)

In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**The LORD for Israel's sake Sent to Babylon to bring them Down as Fugitives.**

Isaiah 43:13-14 ----- <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?" <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.

The LORD here is telling His people the following four things: -

1. No one can deliver any individual or nation from His hand.
2. No one can hinder His work or turn Him away from what He determines to do.
3. He is the LORD, their Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.
4. For their benefit He is sending them into Babylon as fugitives.

The Babylonians had many ships and an enormously successful shipping trade that made them a mighty and prosperous Empire amongst the nations. The statement, "the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice," is simply added to highlight that God is taking the people of Israel into captivity into a most powerful nations.

In these verses the LORD is saying that because of Israel's rebellion, idol worship and gross wickedness He is not only bringing Babylon against them, but will also allow the armies of Babylon to take them into captivity and that no individual, nation, idol or god will be able to stop this coming to pass.

For further information concerning this period of time see the title, "A brief Overview of the History of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon," at the end of this study.

## **I am Israel's Creator and King who destroyed Army and Chariots in the Sea.**

Isaiah 43:15-17 ----- <sup>15</sup>I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." <sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, <sup>17</sup>who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:

Throughout this chapter the LORD is constantly calling upon His people to reflect upon the many past wonders and miracles that He had performed so that they would understand that He is the LORD their God and turn from their idols and pagan gods and return to Him.

The statement, "I am the LORD who makes a way in the sea," is an allusion to the Israelites crossing the Red Sea in the time of Moses and God destroying the Egyptians and their chariots in it, while the statement, "I am the LORD who makes a path in the mighty waters," is an allusion to God holding the waters of the River Jordan back while Israel crossed it and entered the Promised Land (Joshua 3:16). Since no other god people believed in had done such a thing for their nations these two major historical events proved beyond doubt the following three things: -

1. The LORD was the God of Israel.
2. He loved them.
3. They were His chosen people.

God reminds Israel of these three things and of the wonders that He has done for them so that they might trust in Him and not in idols and pagan gods.

## **I am doing a New thing for My People; yet they Wearied Me with their Sin.**

Isaiah 43:18-24 ----- <sup>18</sup>"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. <sup>19</sup>Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. <sup>20</sup>The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, <sup>21</sup>the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise. <sup>22</sup>"Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel! <sup>23</sup>You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense. <sup>24</sup>You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities.

Though the new thing that God is to bring to pass is one event it has two parts, the horrific beginning and the glorious end.

**The horrific beginning of this new thing:** the LORD throughout this chapter has been highlighting all the wonders He did to deliver His people from their enemies. Now he is telling them not to consider these things because He is going to do a new thing, and it is even in the process of coming to pass, but they do not perceive it.

This new thing is something that God has not done for His people before. It refers to God using Nebuchadnezzar the secular king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring to ruin Jerusalem and take its inhabitants into captivity for seventy years. This theory is supported by verse twenty eight which says, "The LORD will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling."

**The glorious end of the new thing:** will be when God leads and shepherds the captives of Israel out from their seventy year Babylonian captivity through the wilderness and barren desert to Jerusalem. This idea is supported by the fact that the focus of the following chapter is upon God promising to redeem His people Israel back to Himself and the entire focus of chapter forty-five is upon God taking Cyrus (who He calls His anointed) by the right hand to subdue kings and nations



and going before Him to bring to ruin exalted nations and fortresses for the benefit of His chosen people Israel (however contained within the prophetic language is a very clear reference to the Lord Jesus Christ). Isaiah is prophetically describing the care that God will show in protecting His people when He leads them safely to their homeland as He did when He safely lead Israel through the wilderness between the Red Sea and Canaan, and supplied rivers of water.

The new thing is the fact that God not only used Cyrus a secular king as His anointed shepherd and took Him by hand, to conquer the Empire of Babylon and set God's people free, but Cyrus also gave Israel written permission to rebuild the Temple of God. Concerning Cyrus the LORD says: -

- I am the LORD, who says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose," saying of Jerusalem, "She shall be built," and of the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." (Isaiah 44:28).
- Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing. <sup>23</sup>"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up." (2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-3).

Never before has God used a secular king to bring about such enormous blessing upon His people, it is in this way that this life changing event for Israel as a nation was a new thing. Though at this time there were very little signs of these events appearing, by the inspiration of God Isaiah sees them germinating, and he calls on the people to set their faith upon God and trust Him to bring this deliverance to pass.

The expression, "now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? (v19) means though the armies of Cyrus and their deliverance is like a seed hidden in the ground it is certain to spring up as grass does from the earth and bud forth like a flourishing flower which is a beautiful image of the gradual silent growth of events certain to come to pass according to God's sovereign will. Concerning this growth Jesus said: -

- The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup>He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. <sup>28</sup>The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. (Mark 4:26-28).

It is in this way that God's eternal and foreordained plans for Israel and for His global kingdom being established in Christ at this present time will come to pass.

**Wild beasts, jackals and ostriches will honour me:** (v20) Israel's deliverance from Babylon looked utterly impossible to all who looked upon them and because of this the wildlife is pictured as giving God honour to highlight the amazing event and wonder that the spectacle of Israel marching with triumphant joy back to their beloved city Jerusalem was before all who looked upon them.

**I give water and rivers in the wilderness:** (v20) carries the idea of God shepherding, guiding, protecting and providing for Israel as they travelled with their families through the wilderness and barren deserts to their homeland. God brought Israel back to their beloved city Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah multitudes from Babylon, Egypt and the surrounding nations that they had been scattered amongst returned to Jerusalem with their families and established their homes in their own land, rebuilt the temple of God and established their true faith. Once again the people of Israel became one nation faithful to one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

**The new thing:** the return to Zion is believed by some to be the first time in human history where a people exiled from their homeland by the force of a foreign ruler had returned to their native soil to re-establish their own joint national home and thereby further encourage the concept of a distinct national identity for the Jewish people.

**You Sinned against Me therefore I will deliver Jacob to Destruction.**

Isaiah 43:25-28 ----- <sup>25</sup>"I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. <sup>26</sup>Put me in remembrance; let us argue (plead in KJV) together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right (be justified in KJV). <sup>27</sup>Your first father sinned, and your mediators (teachers in KJV) transgressed against me. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling (reproaches in KJV).

The LORD tells Israel He is the one who has power to blot out their sin and then challenges them to stand before Him and prove to Him why He should blot out their transgressions. Basically God is saying, "OK guys I am about to judge you, present your case and prove that you should be justified and that I am wrong." He then points out to them that even their first father and mediators (teachers in KJV) sinned against Him.

It could be likened to an earthly judge saying to a guilty man, I am willing to allow you to prove to me your innocence, but before you do keep in mind I have a ton of evidence proving your guilt and an abundance of witness to testify against you.

**Your first father sinned:** (v27) amongst commentators there is a mixture of thoughts concerning who the expression, "Your first father sinned," may apply to following are the most common: -

**To Adam:** who was the common father of all nations from who all have inherited a sinful and corrupt nature, however Adam was the father of the whole human race and the Jews never boasted or gloried in him as the founder of their nation, but rather referred to Abraham as their father.

**To Abraham:** because the Israelites all descended from him and all Jews boasted and glorified him as the founder and father of their nation in whom they trusted and he is often called their father as the following verses show: -

- Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. (Josh 24:2)
- Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. (Isaiah 51:2).
- Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. (Matt. 3:9).
- They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" (John 8:33).
- They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did." (John 8:39).

Based upon these Scriptures Abraham could be called the first father of the Israelites and it is true that though he was a good and faithful man he was a sinful man as we all are.

**To their forefathers collectively:** since their ancestors and their descendants the high priests and all priests collectively; the religious ministers; the kings, princes and rulers from Adam onward have been sinners and the generation immediately prior to the captivity have followed in their steps it is supposed by some to embrace as a collective whole all past generations of Israel.

**To Jacob:** who is a far better fit is Jacob for the following reasons: -

1. He cheated Esau out of his birthright by deceiving his dying father Isaac and taking away the blessing that was rightfully his. (Gen. 27:36) (The entire chapter tells the full story).
2. From Jacob came the twelve sons of Israel and from them came the twelve tribes of Israel who became the nation of Israel. (Gen. 35:22-25).
3. God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:26-28) and because of this the nation of Israel is often referred to as the house of Jacob and the people of Israel are often referred to as the children of Jacob.
4. Jacob in a vision saw the LORD standing above a ladder that angels were ascending and descending on and the LORD said: -
  - I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. <sup>14</sup>Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Genesis 28:10-22)

Though Adam, Abraham and the generations of Israel collectively can apply Jacob it the much better fit.

**God's judgment:** there is no doubt that Israel's teachers counsellors, interpreters, mediators, priests and prophets immediately prior to the Babylonian captivity who should have been the expounders of God's word and His will and guides to the people and intercessors for them where instead, prideful, self-willed and corrupt idol worshippers. Instead of leading the nation into victory and prosperity they lead the people into sin and, idol worship and because of this God will judge them wicked and guilty and punish them accordingly.

He used Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as His servant, (Jer. 25:9) to bring about this judgment. The armies of Babylon burned the city of Jerusalem, pillaged all the gold, silver and sacred vessels from the temple and took the inhabitants of Jerusalem into captivity for seventy years. For further information concerning this see the title: "A brief Overview of the History of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon," at the end of this study.

**Overview;** prior to the Babylonian captivity Israel had turned from God (v22-24) they were full of pride and arrogance; they had turned to idols and pagan worship; they embraced the practise of sacrificing children to the god Moloch and they oppressed the poor for their own gain and did not care for those in need. The LORD is trying to draw Israel back to Himself and have them put their trust in Him. He begins to comfort Israel by telling them, He created them and that they are His and therefore they should not fear.

Like any father the LORD does not want to punish His children, but if they continue to rebel against His word and in their gross wickedness they force Him to bring His judgment upon them. This is why the LORD in this chapter is attempting through the prophet Isaiah to convince the idolatrous Israelites that they are His and He will protect them if they forsake their wickedness and return to Him.

God's protection, blessing and favour only applies to those who remain faithful to the LORD we know this because in (verses 22-24) God says He will destroy Israel because they have wearied Him with their iniquities and sins.

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### **A brief Overview of the History of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon.**

God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12).

The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them. But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them.

The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14). The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.).

Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

**Now here is the good news:** while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again)

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed.

Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

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End.