

Isaiah 43:1-7

"The Responsibility Of The Redeemed"

* We serve an *overwhelmingly* gracious God. Who could measure the *immeasurable* amount of grace that God dispenses upon our lives? ☺ God's grace is necessary in *literally* each facet, every feature... there's not so much as a single nuance of my life that's not in *need* of God's grace. Every second of every day! & That's just me *personally*! When you combine the need of all of us *collectively*, it's staggering! But God delights (in fact looks for the opportunity) to dispense His inexhaustible supply of grace upon our lives... Of all the grace that our lives demand *collectively*, it doesn't amount to so much as a thimble full dipped from the endless ocean of the grace of God. ☺ *

Last week concluded in consideration of the *discipline* of God. *Even* in His discipline His grace is *for* us, seeking to *lead us* to repentance. God was saying to the children of Israel, "Look around! I've let your entire lives burn to the ground! Because you're My *people* yet you won't walk in My *ways* nor render obedience to My *word*!" Yet for all the pain & anguish that came upon them, we read, "He did not know; it burned him, yet he did not take it to heart." It makes me wonder how many times God seeks to get our attention, to turn us back to Him... Yet we don't know (we walk around oblivious to it), we don't take it to heart... I'm so glad, we serve a gracious God. Notice.

Vs 1

Don't you just love the *richness* of the Word of God? There's obviously a lot we could build *from* or focus *on* right here in this very 1st Vs. One thing I want you to take note of (having made our way [& continuing to make our way] through these chapters) is the tremendous emphasis upon *creation*. Have you picked up on that? – * It's almost as if God knew that the time would come when the truth of *creation* would come under attack... ☺ So, He repeats the fact that He's our Creator again & again. That He created the heavens & stretched them out. He spread forth the earth & all that comes from it. Then He said, "Let Us make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness." – (Of course, we could point out the counsel of the Triune God speaking there but that's not the principle we're developing right now). "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."¹ Created, created, created, created...

Now, why camp on this? Because it's going to build into another principle that's yet to reveal itself in this chapter & that is this. There is a *purpose* for which you were created!

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Ge 1:27]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Listen, *Creation equals purpose*. If you build/create something, you do so w/a *purpose* in mind. If something just evolves through chance & a series of random processes over the course of billions of years, there *is no* purpose. – It’s one of the questions that plagues the mind of mankind today. – “What is my purpose?” “What’s the point?” “Why am I here?” God wants you to know that you *have a purpose*, He’s *created* you!

Btw, let me say this as long as we’re on the subject. There is a unique claim, a special claim that God has upon us *because* He is our Creator. But when people forget that God has created them, or reject the truth of being God’s creation, they fail in the most basic obligation they have to God... Listen, when you *create* something, you *own* it. It *belongs* to you! If you have the raw materials, & w/those materials you build a guitar, it’s *your guitar!* I can’t just happen by & say, “Wow, that’s a nice guitar, it’s mine now!” It doesn’t work that way. You built it, it’s yours to do w/as you please! Humanity, by right belongs to God! – *

Then we see the command again, “Fear not.” & God gives Israel (& us by way of application) the reason *why* they weren’t to fear (we’ve made mention of it the last couple of weeks). It wasn’t because they had some unique ability to be courageous tucked deep inside them that if they just focused hard enough, they could rouse it into fruition. **God doesn’t tell us to dig deep & see what we can do. He says, “I want you to rest confidently in what I’ve *already done* for you.” He says, “For I have *redeemed* you; I have *called you by your name*; you are *Mine*.” If that’s not underlined, highlighted, circled... or somehow distinguished in your Bible, make it so! God says, “Don’t get locked on your circumstances *presently*. I want to draw your focus beyond that to the work which I’ve accomplished for you *eternally*.”**

God says, “For I have *redeemed* you.” The word “redeem” speaking of a purchase price that’s been paid. Concerning our context, He’s probably pointing them back to the Exodus. The Passover lamb whose blood would be shed to spare them from certain death & see to it that they were set free from the chains & bondage of Egypt... For you & me, we realize it’s ultimate fulfillment in the shedding of the blood of J.C. (the Lamb of God) Who would shed *His* blood to spare us *eternal* death & deliver us from the chains & bondage of sin...

* Now, don’t miss this. Israel *had*; (& you & I *have* by way of application) a “*double obligation*” (if you’ll allow the term) to God! We’re obligated to Him as our Creator, & we’re obligated to Him as our *Redeemer*.

God created us... Therefore (by right) He owned us, we were His. Yes, or yes?

But then, of our own volition we voluntarily sold *ourselves* into the slave market of sin. Then God comes along & out of His great love w/which He loved *us*, He *bought us back!* You might say we're twice owned. He not only *created* us, (after we enslaved ourselves) He *paid* the purchase price to set us free!

He says, "I have called you by your name; you are Mine." * What a wonderful answer to fear. You belong to the Lord! That means He takes responsibility for you! It's His to provide, protect, guide, correct & care for us. So, in the words of the apostle Paul, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"² & Having begun a good work in you, He's not going to leave it undone. He'll be faithful to complete it until the day of J.C.

Now, I want you to see this & then we'll move on. * When God says, "I have called you by name..." There's something deeply personal about that. Be careful that you don't toss this into the, "Of course God knows my name, He knows everything" file. – "God knows my name." Is manifestly/distinctly different than, "God is omniscient." "God is omniscient" is theological. "God calls me by name" is deeply personal. It speaks of relationship.

When God says, "You are Mine." Though it's true that He's created me *individually* & redeemed me *legally*. When He says, "You are Mine" it speaks of His love *for me*, His relationship *with me personally*. Think of me saying to my wife, "I am yours, & you are mine..." You are the bride of Christ, it's a love relationship in view. *

Vs 2-4

Do you see the love simply pouring out from this passage? Because God knows you, because you are His (& again, we realize the strict interpretation belongs to Israel, but surely there's application here for you & me). Because we are His responsibility, He's not going to leave us alone when we suffer life's difficulties, when we pass through overwhelming tragedies.

In the NT we read it like this, * "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"³ Quick question (not a trick question) what does the word "never" mean? It means "never". Therefore, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;" Btw, let's not overlook this word, "When". It's not "if". – In this life, tough times, seemingly insurmountable situations *will* find you. They won't be fun; they won't feel like a great time to grow spiritually (though we know that God uses them [often] in that capacity).

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 8:31). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Heb 13:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You'll have questions, you'll wonder "why", the full gamut of emotions will come flooding in. God says, "I will be with you." – "When you pass through the rivers, they shall not overflow you."

These obstacles that are *besetting*, problems that are *overwhelming*. & We need to understand that these "deep waters" are something we're going to have to "pass through". In 1970, Simon & Garfunkel wrote a famous song, "Bridge over troubled waters." It's a wonderful song that speaks of taking your place in the midst of your pain. Holding you up so you don't have to bear it... Sounds great, but don't let it confuse your biblical hermeneutics 😊. Or somehow play into the way you think *God* relates to us. God never said He'd be our bridge *over* troubled waters... He said when you *pass through* the waters, I will be with you. God stands *with* us, adds strength *to* us. How many times have we been up against what (for us) seems to be an insurmountable, uncrossable ocean of trouble, tragedy or turmoil? But God has seen us safely to the other side. *

We'll see it referred to later on in Vs 16 as well (next time) but this would probably call to mind for the ancient Israelite the crossing of the Red Sea, then the subsequent crossing of the Jordan river. How that God was w/them, was faithful *to* them & brought them safely through to the other side.

He continues, "When you walk through the fire you shall not be burned. Nor shall the flame scorch you." From one extreme to the other. Waters on the one hand, fire on the other. One that overwhelms the other of which consumes... & If the reference to the waters, points to their *past*. The picture of the fire makes *me* think of their *future*. For at least a few of them.

Leave the book of Isaiah & let's fast forward in time to **Daniel Ch 3**. In Daniel Ch 3 we find the nation of Babylon at the peak, the pinnacle of its existence as it pertains to being a world power (really, they were the super power of the world at that time). The king of Babylon (at this time) was named Nebuchadnezzar.

& Basically, what decided was that he was so great, he'd have a giant image of gold crafted (presumably in his own likeness though we can't be certain). & It was set up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon (90' tall, 9' wide). & The command went out, any time the people heard the horn blast & the music begin to play, didn't matter who you were, what nation you represent, what language you speak... you're to fall down & worship this image that the king set up...

That's exactly what happened. Because if you didn't, you'd be thrown into a furnace of fire.

(Sounds like a reasonable way to motivate people 😊). But there were 3 Hebrew boys who just couldn't bring themselves to bow the knee. To make matters worse they were in the king's cabinet. He'd promoted them (along w/Daniel) to oversee some of the affairs of the province... So the king says, "Listen, boys. I'm gonna trust that you didn't understand exactly what it was that we expected from you. So, I'm going to give you another chance. When you hear the trumpet blast, the music begin, just take a knee, worship the image & all will be well. Sound good?" He said, "But if you don't, you're going to be cast *immediately* into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" Look at Vs 16

Vs 16-25

They went in the fire in bondage, but in the midst of the fire they were made free. They were "loose, walking (unharmd) in the midst of the fire;"

Vs 26-27

The only thing the fire burnt was the ropes that had bound them. Why? Because they weren't alone in the fire. God was with them... Does that mean that if God is w/you, it's always going to turn out like that? Of course not. Some have gone through the fire straight into the presence of the Lord. Either way, He's w/you.

Now, turning our attention back to the passage at hand, this is a promise to the nation of Israel. God is preparing them for the fact that they're going to go into Babylonian captivity. They're going to go through deep waters, fiery trials. But God was assuring them that they wouldn't be overcome or consumed. Or to understand that another way, God is promising the preservation of the nation.

* Family. This is something you can rest assured of in your heart. God has entered into a covenant w/the nation of Israel. They turned their backs on Him (through their rejection of J.C.). But God *has not* turned His back on *them*. Are there ramifications to be meted out due to their rejection of Christ? Yes. But don't be deceived God *has not* cast them away. In fact, He *promises* their preservation. *

Paul addresses this very thing in Romans Ch 11. He acknowledges the history of Israel, & what was going on presently (in his day). He said, "It's true, Israel has been consistently disobedient, rebellious & stiff-necked ." & He says, "I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (If God had cast away the Jews, Paul wouldn't be writing to them) *God has not*

cast away His people whom He foreknew."⁴ He goes on to say, "Look, if God has accomplished so much through the *failure* of Israel (in the spreading of the gospel, the salvation of the nations), imagine what their *fullness* would accomplish!" & The book of Rev goes on to detail some of that when He turns the nation of Israel back to Himself & uses 144,000 to evangelize the world!

*Listen, as far as people groups are concerned. There's not a single people group in the history of the world that has faced the kind of opposition, efforts & attempts of genocide, assimilation & total elimination (one way or another) as the Jews. They've all failed. Why? Because God has promised, "When you pass through the waters, I will be w/you, & through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."

Today, Israel is at war. You're hearing calls for the eradication & elimination of their entire nation. This mantra that sounds so noble concerning a pro-Palestinian position, "From the river to the sea. Palestine will be free." I try to convince myself that most Americans don't truly understand what that means because it's such an incredibly evil war cry! (Map). What it means is that every Jew from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea (Which if you look on the Map is the entire nation of Israel) is to be eradicated/eliminated. It's a genocidal war cry! & People stand & shout it out as if it's a good thing... But God says, "It's never going to happen. The waters won't overflow you, the fires won't burn you, because I am with you..."

In fact, in Zephaniah Ch 2 the word of God says this, "For *Gaza shall be forsaken, And Ashkelon* (just north of Gaza) *desolate;*"⁵ I'm not saying that we're going to see that fulfilled during this conflict, but what I am telling you is that Israel won't lose, Gaza (however) ultimately will. & It's not because Israel is so great, it's because God made them a promise & God is not a man that He should lie. *

& I love the image of, "when you *walk* through the fire." If you're walking, that's not a posture of panic or fear, it's confidence. Yea, though I *walk* through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; (why) for *You* are with me... Look at Vs 4 (read).

You see? It's not that Israel was so great. It's not that we're so cool. It's because you are precious in the sight of God, because He loves you, you have been honored.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 11:1-2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Zep 2:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The reasons for God's favor don't lie w/in us, they lie w/in Him. He loves you, you are precious in His sight. For God so *loved* you, He gave His only begotten Son *for* you.

Back in Vs 3 where He says, "I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia & Seba in your place." After Cyrus released the Jews, he conquered these regions. God is saying, "I gave him those nations (as a payment of sorts) for his release of your nation." "I will give men for you, & people for your life." Again, for you & me, Jn 3:16 comes into view. (You could also write down Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Vs 5-7

Again, Vs 5-6 were a promise to bring the people back from Babylon. It was fulfilled in an even greater way in 1948 when Israel was once again established as a nation & it'll be ultimately fulfilled during the millennial reign of Christ.

Ok. In Vs 1 I told you that you were created for a purpose. * If you evolved you serve no purpose, ultimately. (You're just here by means of random chance & natural selection). But if you were created it means Your Creator had a purpose for creating you. Here it is. God says, "Everyone who is called by *My name*, ... I have *created* for *My glory*." When you live your life for the glory of God, you will find meaning & fulfillment. When you serve *yourself* it's emptiness, frustration & exhaustion.

So live your life for the glory of God! Serve Him, honor Him. *Faithfulness* will lead to *fruitfulness* & what did Jesus say? "*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit;*"⁶ If you are in Christ Jesus, your role, your responsibility is to glorify God in your life. Paul put it this way, "*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*"⁷*

I don't know how else to say it... So we're just going to bow our hearts & ask God to help us do it!

Prayer Points:

Father, we just want to pray right to the point & ask You to help us, to strengthen us, to empower & embolden us to lead our lives for Your glory. We thank You for Your promise to be with us. We thank You for Your unfailing *love* for us. That You have redeemed us, ransomed us, called us by our name. Now may we honor You & glorify You in how we reflect You to a hurt & dying world.

The purchase price of your redemption has been paid through the blood of J.C. Forgiveness is found through faith in Him. Believe on J.C. today & be saved.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 15:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 6:19-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.