

Wednesday, February 21, 2024 • Read Isaiah 43:22–44:23

Questions from the Scripture text: Despite God having saved them so marvelously before (43:16–17), what hasn't Jacob done (v22a)? And how has Israel treated the Lord (v22b)? How have they not related to the Lord (v23a–24b)? How have they related to Him instead (v24c–d)? But what does the Lord do for Israel (v25)? What does He command them to do in v26? Who did what in v27a? And who else did what (v27b)? What will happen to which people in v28a? And to what [corporate] people in v28b–c? To whom does YHWH now speak in 44:1? What does He call them in v1a, 2c? What has He done for them (v1b, 2d)? And what else (v2a)? And how does He describe it in v2b? What will He do for them? What does He call them in v2c? What does He say that He will pour in v3a–b? And what in v3c–d (cf. Eze 36:24–28)? Upon whom, specifically? With what effect (v4)? For what sort of life is this a metaphor (v5)? What is YHWH to Israel in v6a? And what in v6b? What does He display about Himself in this way (v6b–d, 8d–f; cf. 41:4; Rev 1:8, 1:17, 22:13)? What can no one else do (v7)? What must Israel not do (v8a)? Because of what (v8b–c)? But what have some done instead (v9–11)? To what effect? By what strength are idols made (v12a–c)? What happens to that strength (v12d–e)? What does the craftsman have to do to it (v13a–d)? To fit what pattern (v13e–f)? Where does he have to go to get the material (v14a–c)? But even then what does it need (v14d)? But what will the rest of it be used for (v15a)? To do what (v15b)? And what else (v15c)? So, what is some of it used for (v15d–e, 17)? And how does the rest of the use in v16 show the ridiculousness of this? How could they do something so foolish (v18)? What can't they even see or think (v19–20)? What does the Lord command them in v21a? Who are they (v21b)? What has He done for them (v21c)? What does He refuse to do (v21d)? What has He done (v22a)? How many were there (v22a–b)? What does He now tell them to do (v22c)? Why? Now who receive commands in v23a–d? What are they to do? Why? To what does all the creation respond in this way (v23e–f)?

From what do we most need to be redeemed? Isaiah 43:22–44:23 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these thirty verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **it is from our sin that we most need redemption.**

In last week's portion (42:18–43:21), the Lord declared Himself as Redeemer (next of kin who saves us because we have no hope in ourselves or otherwise) from Babylon (43:14), Who is doing a new and greater work (43:18–19) than He had done even in the Exodus (43:16–17). But now this section describes an even greater redemption: redemption from their sin!

Helpless religiosity, 43:22–24. In the original of v22–23b, the emphasis repeatedly lies upon "Me." It wasn't genuinely unto the Lord that they were offering all of their worship. They viewed His worship as slavery (v23c, ironically, since He literally brought them out of slavery) and wearisome (v23d). But the reality is that they have treated the Lord as a slave (v24c uses the same verb as v23c). They heap their sins and iniquities upon Him, Who has attached Himself to them.

Surprising, sure help, 43:25–44:5. v25 is very abrupt in the original. There is no logical connection given in the text. The Lord saves according to His own pleasure ("for My own sake"), and here He interrupts their continual stream of sin to blot it out. Their case (v26) is dire. From their first father (v27a), through everyone in between (v27b), they have been sinners. And even now, those who are in leadership among the holy people (v28a) have brought themselves—and the nation, together with them (v28)—under guilt and curse.

So, Israel needs to be able to trace a line of help and hope back to someone other than their ancestors or up to someone other than their leaders. That someone is the Lord! He brought Jacob into that greatest freedom: slavery to God (v1a, 2c). He chose Israel for Himself (v1b, v2d). He has given them a new ancestry, not fathering them in the way from v27, but making and forming them as the people of His help (v2a–b).

Best of all is this name "Jeshurun" (v2d), which means something like "beloved little righteous one." They have received no righteousness from their human fathers, but the Lord has committed Himself to making them His righteous darlings! This He does by pouring Himself out, His Spirit giving them a nature that is directly contrary to their own (v3a–b, cf. Eze 36:24–28) and initiating a new covenant line of hope for the same pouring of the same Spirit (v3c–d) like the pouring of the water in the metaphor in v3a–b.

The spring shoots and flowers that the poured-out Spirit produces (v4) is a spiritual life and love unto God that is described here in rich, romantic poetry (v5). May His Spirit cause such knowledge of belonging to Him and being loved by Him to bloom in your own heart, dear reader!

No other help, 44:6–8. Our affection for the Lord should foster a jealous exclusivity for knowing Him alone as God, loving Him alone as God. The gushing affection of v5 flows into His identifying Himself as our Redeemer in v6, our kinsman who saves us because we have no hope in ourselves or otherwise. He shows Himself YHWH, the First and the Last, by saving us when no one else could. Idols cannot predict history (v7), because history has been planned for the display of the Lord as this Redeemer.

Therefore, one great object of His saving us is that we would testify (v8c) to what He has declared to us (v8b) by saving us (v8e): that He alone is God (v8d, f). If we are going to testify to our hope (v8c, cf. 1Pet 3:15), then that must begin by living in that hope (v8a). Dear Christian, live in hope, not fear. Living in fear forgets that one of God's great purposes in saving you has been that you would be able to testify that the reason for your hope is the Lord Who saved you to display Himself as the only true God!

The folly of any other help, 44:9–20. Resting our hope upon anything other than the Lord isn't just treachery against the Lord Who has so loved us (cf. v1–8); it is folly that can do nothing to save us (v9–10). Manmade hope is crippled by being limited to man's own knowledge and ability (v11–13). And manmade hope is further crippled by being limited to being made out of created things (v14–17). The ridiculousness of resting our hope upon anything other than YHWH is brutally satirized here, climaxing with v17: a man pleading for salvation from the leftovers of his cooking fuel and heating fuel!

If we can come up with it or make it, we must not put our hope in it. If anything has increased by an "evolution" into modern man, it is this very idolatry. Never has man placed more of his confidence in what he thinks he knows or what he thinks he can do. This spurns the love of God from earlier in the chapter, and makes us into the worst butts yet of the v9–17 joke.

Why can't men see the folly of this (v18a, 19–20)? Because God has righteously given them over to a dysfunctional mind for disregarding their Creator (v18b–c, cf. Rom 1:18–28).

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, 44:21–23. So, how does the Lord's Spirit deliver us from this treachery and folly? By making us to "remember" (v21). The way that He addresses them again, in v21, directs their remembrance back to v1–5. And the language of v22 directs their remembrance back to 43:25 (and 43:18–28 as a whole). The Lord is His people's Redeemer! So, let them turn to Him as Redeemer (v22c), for the time is coming when the whole creation will praise the Redeemer of Jacob and Israel (v23). Remember your Redeemer, and return to Him with rejoicing!

How do you seek to avoid worshiping God thoughtlessly or heartlessly? But what is your hope for this? In what situations are you tempted to fear? How does remembering how and why you were saved combat the fear? When do you have opportunity to bear witness of your Hope?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how often we have been in the middle of worship actions, but we have not been mindful of You. Truly, You have loved us and saved us in sovereign grace. But we have been forgetful of how we belong to You and are beloved by You. In Your mercy, forgive our treacherous hearts. We often find ourselves resting our hope upon things that we have come up or that we have done. At those times, we are fools like those who ask their remaining heating fuel to deliver them. In Your mercy, forgive our foolish hearts. Grant that Your Spirit, Whom You have poured like water on thirsty ground, would bake our hearts to blossom with love and praise that remembers You, our Redeemer in Jesus Christ, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 43 verse 22. Through 44 verse 23. These are God's words. But you have not called upon me. Oh, Jacob. And you have been weary of me.

Hello Israel. You have not brought me. The sheet for your offering burnt offerings. Nor have, you honored me with your sacrifices. Have not caused you to serve with grain offerings, nor worried you with incense. You have bought me, no sweet cane with money. Nor have you satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices.

But you have burdened me with your sins. You have worried me. Wearing me with your iniquities. I even I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake I will not remember your sins. Put me in remembrance, let us contend together. Stay State your case that you may be acquitted.

Your first father, sinned and your mediators have transgressed against me. Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary. I will give Jacob to the curse and Israel to approaches yet. Here now. Oh, Jacob. My servant in Israel. They might have chosen thus, as Yahweh, who made you. Informed, you from the womb who will help you?

Fear not. Oh, Jacob my servant and you yes sir. Might have chosen. Dry will pour water on him. Who is thirsty. And floods in the dry ground. I will pour my spirit. On your descendants and my blessing on your Offspring. They will spring up among the grass like Willows.

By the water courses. One will say, I am your face. Another will call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write with his hand Yahweh's. And name himself. By the name of Israel. Thus says, Yahweh the king of Israel and his Redeemer. Y'all for your hosts. I am the first and I am the last beside me.

There is no God who can Proclaim as I do. Then let him declare it and set it in order for me. Since I appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming and shall come, let them show these to do to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid.

Have I not told you from that time and declared it. You are my Witnesses as there a God besides me. Indeed, there is no other Rock. I know. Not one. Those who make an image, all of them are useless and they're precious things shall not profit. They are their own Witnesses.

There they neither see nor know that they may be ashamed. Who would form a God or mold an image that profits him nothing. Surely all his companions would be ashamed and the workmen they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up yet. They shall fear.

They shall be ashamed together. The blacksmith with the tongs Works. One in the coals Fashions, it with hammers, works it with the strength of his arms. Even so he is hungry and his strength fails. He drinks. No water and is faint. The Craftsman stretches out, his rule marks, one out with chalk, Fashions it with the plane, he marks it out with the compass and makes it like, The figure of a man.

According to the beauty of a man. That it may remain in the house. He cuts down Cedars for himself and takes the Cyprus and the Oak. He secures it for himself among the Trees of the forest. He plants a pine and the rain nourishes it. Then it shall be for a man to burn.

For, he will take some of it and warm himself. Yes, he Kindles it and bakes spread indeed. He makes a God and worships it. He makes it a carved image and falls down to it. He burns half of it in the fire with this F. He eats meat, he roasts a roast and is satisfied.

He even warms himself and says, ah, I am warm and I have seen the fire. And the rest of it, he makes into a God this carved image. He falls down before it and worships it and prays to it and says deliver me for you are my God. They do not know or understand.

For he has shut their eyes so that they cannot see. In their hearts so that they cannot understand. And no one considers in his heart. Nor is there knowledge or understanding to say? I have burned half of it in the fire. Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals.

I have roasted meat and eaten it. And shall I make the rest of it? An Abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood? He feeds on ashes. A deceived heart has turned him aside, and he cannot deliver his soul nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Remember these o Jacob and Ezreal. For you are my servant. Oh Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. I have blotted out like a thick, Cloud your transgressions. And like a cloud, your sins, return to me. For I have redeemed, you Sing O heavens for Yahweh, has done it.

Shout you lower parts of the earth break forth into singing you mountains of forests and every tree in it. For y'all, they has redeemed Jacob. And glorified himself. In Ezreal. So, for the reading of gods inspired and And then,

Israel. By adding to the worship of God. Should have known that. It was not actually to God. That they were offering the worship, even that he had commanded. We see. That if you're breaking the second, commandment if Worshiping in the wrong way. Then you're also breaking the first commandment, you're worshiping the wrong.

God. So, we have that extended section. Instructing Israel in verses 9 to 20. Of chapter 44, but first He addresses them in chapter 43 and verses 22 through 24. About worship that he had commanded. Calling upon God. Offering burnt offerings sacrifices grain offerings incense. The fat of the sacrifices.

Verse 24. All of those components at least. Are parts of the worship that God had commanded. But in these verses in the original language that to me, Um, is emphatic. Uh, upon me, you have not called a Jacob Of of me, you have been weary To me. You did not bring the sheep for your burnt offerings.

To me. You did me. You did not honor with your sacrifices. And so forth. It.

When we offer God, what we want and worship, we're offering them the way. Uh, the way we want to. It becomes clear that we are giving. Uh, what the Apostle Paul calls will worship. Worshiping according to our own will. And then, even when we do pray, Or here preaching.

Or take the supper. Or sing the Bible. If we're doing it according to our, will you then even those things aren't being done? Unto the Lord. And they were treating, the things that God had commanded as slavery. He says, I have not caused you to and the word is slave with grain offerings.

But then in verse 24, he says you have enslaved. The word that's translated burdened there is the same verb As up. And what we just read in verse 23, you have enslaved me with your sins. You're treating me as your slave. You've come to the slave quarters. Where the person?

Uh, who's supposed to take your sins away serves you? You say here slave, take away my sins. You load them up on him. Carries them away. And so, they had this. Uh, mechanical view of the Lord's worship. That was a drudgery. Uh, to And so, it was really. Uh, religiosity that could not help them religiosity.

That was not the true worship of God. And therefore, it could be no help to But then we have a very surprising transition from 24 to 25, and that is that there's no transition. Ordinarily, most of the time. Uh, in Hebrew, the next sentence is going to start with some sort of connecting particle.

Even just a little valve for an end. Uh, but verse 25 makes a an interruption a clean break. Or suddenly, he says, I even, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake. Not for their sake, not for anything, good in them. Certainly not for uh, their fathers who he is about to remind them of all.

Centers. And so, he says, I will blot out your transgressions for my own sake. I will not remember your sins. And then, Uh, he calls them to court to put me in remembrance, let us contend together. State your case that you may be acquitted. Well we already know what the verdict is going to be because the judge has decided that they're going to be forgiven.

But the case that they begin by stating is not very good. Your first father, sinned. Your mediators. Um, Those who have. Uh, gone between Who have been the representatives? Between them and God. Um, have transgressed against me. Uh, so From the beginning, whether this is from Adam or Abraham or Jacob from the beginning, You are sinners and The best that you have had the ones who are the interpretation of Israel to me.

They have all been Sinners. Therefore he says I will profane the princes of sanctuary. I'll give Jacob to the curse in Israel. To reproach us. Israel are not going to be according to their fathers that are according to their mediators anymore. This is one of the themes of the book of Isaiah That there is going to be.

A shoot. That becomes a new route. Uh, we had some 33 chapters or so ago. 32 chapters ago. That the shoot from the stump of death, Jesse. Is going to be the root of David and he's going to make a new start and that's the language with which it continues.

Now in chapter 44, yet here now o Jacob my servant Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says, Yahweh who made you and formed you From the womb to help you. Who will help you, she says Rather than being in yourself and in your fathers, I am gonna make you in me in the picture.

Uh, Uh, verse 2, especially Is of the Lord with A righteous baby. Fiernato Jacob, my servant and you yahsharon? The UN ending there or the ending. In the original is an affectionate diminutive. Um, The kind of thing you put on. The end of a word to say that they're your little darling.

Uh, the root is yashar. Upright. And so because their, their first, father, sinned. And their media is their transgressed against them. They need Uh, they need a new atom, they need to come from a new line. They need to be identified, uh, with him and made right in him.

Um, And so, Um, my darling straight one. Or my darling upright one. You might have chosen. Uh, and the Lord is going to To do this. By giving. Uh, giving people Life by his Spirit. And we know that. Some more of the details of this is that by the life of the spirit, they're going to believe into Christ and be counted righteous.

Uh, on account of Christ's righteousness. And then, Those who are counted righteous. Will by Christ's life and righteousness, even in them. Uh, respond rightly to God but here Uh, it's described as God, giving people spiritual birth. By the pouring out of his Spirit. For, I will pour water on him.

Who is thirsty and floods on the dry ground. Uh, I will pour my spirit on your descendants. And my blessing on your Offspring and what is going to be the effect. Of his pouring out his Spirit on them. Like Willows by the water courses. One will say sorry, they will spring up among the grass like Willows above by the water courses.

So there's these uh, these shoots of life that come Up from what was dry. Cracked ground. Uh, one will say, I am your face, another will call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write with his hand. He always. The name and name himself by the name of Israel.

The spirit will train their hearts. To know God as their own God. To know Yahweh, as their own God, to know, themselves as belonging to him. And so, even the idea of baptism into the name and the Lord giving us His name. Father, Son, and Holy spirit. Harkens back to this.

Uh, very similar in the connection. Uh, between The water and the spirit. Uh, Ezekiel 36.

Where he says? Uh, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness from all your Idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take the Heart of Stone out of your flesh and give you a heart to flesh.

I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. And you will keep my judgments. And do. And so Israel has no hope to be righteous unless They come to have the righteousness of another. They're already guilty in their first father. How can they, how can they be righteous?

Well God will give them a new first. Father God will give them a new root. God will give them life to believe into and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And he will be the servant, the new Israel. And the true Israel will not be the ones who are descended from.

Jacob, never have been the ones. Who descended from Jacob. To Israel always have been the ones. Who have believed into Jesus. And he is going to even rearrange his church that way. Uh here then is the surprising help for those who have no help from their religion and to no help in themselves.

And there is no other help versus six or eight. Say Thus, as Yahweh King of Israel and his Redeemer. Has near Kinsmen who is able to deliver him when he can't deliver himself and there other aren't anyone else near enough? Or Uh, with this the combination of being near enough and Powerful enough to deliver him.

Yeah, we've had this idea of the Redeemer now, several times in Leviticus that shows this, and perhaps you remember in the Book of Ruth, Uh, where Boaz is the Redeemer? The one who is the right combination of, uh, ability and willingness and And nearness. The one who gives the spiritual life here.

Um, by his spirit is the Redeemer. So, thus says, Yahweh king of Israel and his Redeemer. Yahwe of hosts. I am the first and I am the last beside me. There is no God several times. Now, in the book of Isaiah, the idea of, uh, being able to Tell what was from of old, or what will come at the end.

Are the challenge for who is the true God? And he says those things here But now he says them. Uh, in connection especially to Who was chosen to be redeemed and who will have been redeemed when the Lord has done, Uh and so God gives the whole scope of all of the history of everything.

Now, in terms of his Redemption, And the first thing was that he, he chose to redeem. And the last thing is that he will have finished redeeming. And all in between, there is no other Redeemer. Or in the words of the last of verse 8, there is no other Rock.

And he'll be worshiped forever. For you have redeemed, Us by your blood and made us Kings and Priests to. Our God, the song and Revelation, hearkens back here to Isaiah 44 among other places. Uh, praising God. As displaying himself as the only true God. The only God who is By his Redemption.

And so certainly, we may Rejoice Uh has given us to know this of him and redeemed us and praise him for those things and we mustn't. Set Our Hope upon or find our help in Anything, or anyone else the lest we put them in in a place? Uh, that God, especially uses to display himself as God Alone.

Which makes verses 9 through. Not just tragic and ridiculous. As we can see them. Um, But also, so, Uh, horrible. That. That they would worship God in this way. With these images that they mold images. Uh, cannot overcome the one who makes them. Or cannot surpass the one who makes them.

Yeah, anything we come up with Uh, Is going to be dependent upon us. Uh, we can't depend upon it. We can't be delivered. Uh, buy. Uh, The blacksmith that's taking too long. He misses a meal and he starts running out of steam. The Craftsman's trying to come up with.

Uh, the highest thing that he can think of to make an image of, but The highest thing he can think of is, man. And so he makes it according to the beauty of a man. And not only cannot, can it not surpass? Is it limited by? The one who's making it.

It's also limited by the materials, he's making it out of In this case, The, the Cedars and the Cypress and the Oak, and the pine. Uh, and even for producing it. He depends on. Uh, it depends on God. Uh, to provide the rain, to nourish it. So that it grows if if God doesn't give rain and dies as a shoot, And once it's grown, He burns up a bunch of it because he can't afford.

Uh, to waste the fuel. So he's got cooking fuel for his fire and he's got heating fuel to keep himself warm. And then, the last little part of it, he He crafts it and then he bows down before and he says deliver me for you are my God. The Lord.

Righteously having given him over. Uh, to to his Folly so that he can't even realize. Uh, or ask himself the question, why am I worshiping a block of wood? Uh, and man of course, still today comes up with all sorts of things. That are limited by our ability that are limited by our ideas and our imagination that cannot deliver us that will perish with us.

And, Uh, because we have suppressed the truth and unrighteousness. And neither glorified God nor given thanks. He gives us over to a Dysfunctional mind. That we can't even. Uh, ask ourselves properly, why am I trusting in things that cannot deliver. Uh, and so he Comes at the end of our portion in verse 21.

He says, remember these Uh, which is remember these things. So Jacob And, Reminds us of the section in verse 44, when he says For you are my servant. I formed you, you are my servant. You didn't inform me. I formed you. But also the Salvation that is under that language at the beginning of voting for and then back into 43.

He's also telling them to remember I have blotted out like a thick Cloud your transgressions, Michael Claudgersons. Return to me, for I have redeemed, you Uh, and then Concluding with that, reminder of what. The heavens and the Earth with all creation. Will sing when God's work is done. He who is the first and who is the last and shows that he is the only God by being the Redeemer.

This the new heavens and the new Earth. Uh, Will recognize and respond to saying go heavens, free always has done it. Shout you lower parts of the earth break forth into singing you mountains of forest and every tree in it. And, What are they responding to how has God shown himself to be the one true God, who made the heavens and the Earth?

And to verse 23 for Yahweh, has redeemed, Jacob, And glorified himself and Israel. This is how He shows himself to be God. By redeeming his people. So, let us not. To ourselves or anything that we can do or any man can do. Or any created thing whatsoever. To be our help.

But may the spirit give us. Uh, this heart that is described in verse 5. To see that it's the Lord who has given us life. It's the Lord who's given us spiritual life. And we be those who really here in verse 5 in very romantic language. Um, see the lord's name.

Um, upon ourselves and As it were infatuated with him. Uh, saying I am Yahweh's writing on ourselves, not literally, it's not encouraging tattoos here. Sorry, writing with RN, not on our hand, riding with our hand yahweh's. So Um, and that would not be inappropriate at all.

You know, taking notes in worship and the Lord reminds you again, and you just I belong to Jesus. Uh, and Uh, what a wonderful. Ministry of the spirit to to spread abroad to pour out in our hearts. The love of God. That we can see that while we were still centers.

Christ died for us. This is how he demonstrated his love. And we see that here also, In Isaiah 43 and 44, the Lord grant to us. That we would live with that active, awareness of that that the spirit gives to us Let's pray.

Our gracious God in our heavenly father, we thank you. That you are Our Redeemer. In your son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By your spirit. Who convinces us. Continues to bring home to our hearts. That we are yours. That you are the one who Formed us in the womb and called us, your little Darlings and Who gave us?

Faith to believe into Christ that we might indeed be United to him. And adopted by you in him. So we pray that you'd help us to live today with that. Realization with that awareness. Forgive us and help us. We pray Deliver Us from Our idolatry and the stupidity and the Folly of it.

And also, how It really spurns you and rejects you. Don't let us do that. We pray. Oh God.

We pray as we go to our day. And strengthen our. Uh, heads and straighten the weak knees and Give us peace with one another and the Holiness. That we will need in order to see For, we ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.