

SET FREE THROUGH THE REDEEMER, THE LORD YOUR GOD: A STUDY OF REDEMPTION ISAIAH 43:01–21

Introduction

People can be kidnapped to be sold as slaves, for sexual pleasure, for building up a workforce, for revenge or for a host of other reasons. When a ransom is demanded for the release of the kidnapped person, the cost is usually huge.

The enormous price God paid to ransom His people is the subject of the present Scripture. In the previous chapter, Isaiah said that the people of his day were continuing in their sin and refusing to turn back to the LORD. As a result, God's anger burned against them (42:23-25). Now we would expect God's hand of judgment to immediately fall upon the Israelites. We would expect Him to abandon and destroy them. But the very opposite is true. God is longsuffering and not willing that any person should perish and be doomed to eternal separation from Him. With a broken heart over the people's failure, the Lord reached out to ransom them from both their sins and their enemies. Remember that Isaiah had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jewish people. But he had also predicted that the Persians would miraculously free God's people from their Babylonian captivity (41:1-20). Furthermore, the Lord would set them free from all the enslavements and bondages of this life through the coming of God's very special Servant, the Messiah (42:1-25). Now God declares that His people can be set free through the wonderful redemption provided by the Lord. This is, *Set Free Through the Redeemer, the Lord Your God: A Study of Redemption*, 43:1-28.

- I. The source of redemption: the LORD (v. 1).
- II. The promises of the Redeemer (vv. 2-21).
- III. The failure of God's people to live like the redeemed (vv. 22-28).

I. *Isaiah 43:01 The Source of Redemption*

The source of redemption is the LORD Himself. Despite Israel's continued sin and rejection of Him, the LORD still loved His people. He still reached out in mercy and goodness to them. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Looking ahead to the terrible hardships His people would face, the Lord wanted them to know that He would not forsake them. He would reach out to rescue them. Remember that Isaiah was predicting the Babylonian captivity, which still lay ahead for the Jews. The LORD promises to be with His people, even in the midst of such a terrifying experience as enslavement and exile. This verse is one of the great promises in the Holy Bible:

1. In the midst of their awful affliction, the people needed to remember a significant fact: the LORD Himself had created and formed them into the nation of Israel. The words *created* and *formed* are the same words used to describe the creation of man and woman (Gen. 1:1; 2:7). Thus, Israel is as much a creation of the Lord as the human race is. God has a distinctive purpose for each, a purpose that must be fulfilled, just as His Word states. Although the Israelites would be exiled and scattered throughout the Babylonian Empire, those who trusted the LORD could rest assured that He would not forget them. They were still His chosen people, created by His own hand. True, due to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people, Israel's future as a nation looked very bleak. Nothing less than extinction was staring Israel in the face. (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah*, Vol. I. Grand Rapids. Michigan: Baker Book House, 1968, p 78).
2. But note how God encouraged His people: He told them two things they needed to remember. First, He had redeemed them. In the very midst of their hardship, they could know that God would redeem them again. Their deliverance from the Babylonian captivity was as good as done. The day would come when they would be set free from their bondage and sufferings. Centuries earlier, the LORD had delivered His people from Egyptian bondage. Now He was promising to deliver them from their captivity in Babylon. But the LORD wanted His people to know a second fact: He knew every one of them personally and called each by name. They were His people, and He was very concerned about them. They were bound to Him in a unique way, for He had a very special purpose for them. Remember that when Israel or the Jews are being discussed, their relationship to the LORD was based upon God's purpose for them, a threefold purpose that blessed the entire world:
 - => They were the people through whom God would send His Son, the promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world.
 - => They were the people through whom God would send His Word, the Holy Bible, to the world.
 - => They were the people God chose to be His witnesses to the world that He is the only living and true God.

Thought 1. The source of redemption is the Lord Himself. Only the Lord can save us from the enslavement of sin, death and hell. Being enslaved to sin means that we cannot keep from sinning. All of us sin because we have inherited a depraved nature from our parents (Rom. 5:12). Consequently, we cannot keep from sinning. We cannot live a perfect or righteous life. And since we have inherited a corruptible nature from our parents, we are also enslaved by death. From the day we are born, we are ever progressing to that inevitable day when our bodies will return to dust. But because God loves us, He has provided redemption for us. Jesus Christ paid the ransom for us by giving His life for us. We are redeemed by the shed blood of Christ. This is exactly what God's Holy Word says:

Rom 3:23-24 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

1 Cor 1:30 *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

Col 1:14 *In whom [Christ] we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Titus 2:13-14 *While we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 9:12-14 *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Rev 5:9 *And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”*

II. Isaiah 43:02–21 Promise of the Redeemer

The Redeemer’s promises to Israel are now spelled out. Think how these promises have been fulfilled since the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has come. Although these promises were fulfilled to some degree in the lives of true believers in ancient Israel, they were completely fulfilled when the Messiah came to earth to pay the redemption price for the salvation of the human race. Note how applicable all of these promises are to believers down through history:

1. The LORD promises to be with His people as they pass through all the deep waters and fiery trials of life (v. 2). When trials and hardships threaten to engulf believers, they will not drown. The LORD will be with them to strengthen and uphold them. When fiery persecutions threaten to overwhelm believers, the flames will not burn them, for the Lord’s presence and power will protect them. This promise was literally fulfilled

when the LORD protected Shadrach, Meshcach and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:25-27). No matter how deep the trial or hardship and no matter how fiery the oppression or persecution, the LORD promises to be with His people.

Mat 18:20 *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

Mat 28:20 *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Gen. 28:15 *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*

Exo 33:14 *The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

Deu 20:1 *When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.*

Psa 41:10 *But may you have mercy on me, LORD; raise me up, that I may repay them.*

2. The LORD promises to ransom His people and set them free from all their oppressors (vv. 3-4). Note that the weight of the LORD’s promise rests solely on His own shoulders. He reinforces His promise by using three different titles for Himself:

=> “your God” guarantees this promise

=> “the Holy One of Israel” guarantees this promise

=> “your Saviour” guarantees this promise

God’s people can rest assured that He will ransom them. He will set them free from all who oppress them. In fact, all who tyrannize God’s people will themselves be the ransom paid to free His people. Three nations in particular are mentioned, but the truth applies to all the nations of earth. When Egypt, Cush (Ethiopia), or Seba oppressed Israel, the Lord sacrificed (doomed) these nations. Instead of allowing them to continue subjecting His people, He destroyed them. God gave up three oppressors rather than give up His people. The point is striking, a clear warning to any person or nation that persecutes God’s people. They will not succeed. Either immediately or one day in the future, God will execute judgment against them. He will “give them up” to suffer the very oppression and cruelty they inflicted upon His people. God will always ransom His people from their oppressors. And the ransom price for those who are enemies of God and His people is very high: they will pay with their very own lives. Note why God does such a remarkable thing for His people: they are precious to Him and He loves them.

Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

2 Tim 4:18 The LORD will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Deu 7:8 But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Psa 40:17 Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer: O my God, do not delay.

Psa 91:3 Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.

Jer 1:8 “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

Zec 2:8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says, “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you — for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye.”

Zec 9:16 The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown.

Mal 3:17 “On the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his own son who serves him.”

3. The LORD promises to gather His people from the ends of the earth and return them to the promised land (vv. 5-9). This is a clear reference to the Israelites being set free from their captivity in Babylon and returning to Jerusalem. But it is also applicable to any of God’s people who are living in exile from their true home. And it applies particularly to the restoration of Israel in the latter days of human history (see notes, Rom. 11:25-36). Note that the LORD calls Israel His sons and daughters (v. 6). Of course, God’s children are those who truly believe and follow Him. After the Persians released the Jews from Babylonian captivity, only a few Jews truly believed the promises of God and chose to return to the promised land. The vast majority chose to remain in Babylon with all its pleasures and possessions (see notes, Ezr. 1:1-2:70; 8:1-20). Note that God once again reminds His people that He has created them for His glory.

Longing for each of His chosen people to trust Him as Redeemer, the LORD summons all unbelieving Jews — the spiritually blind and deaf — to see and hear His promises. No greater promises could be given; consequently, the spiritually blind and deaf should

believe them (v. 8). Clearly, God longs for unbelieving nations to believe also, for He issues a summons for them to assemble before Him (v. 9). He challenges them to acknowledge that He has foretold the restoration of Israel. At the same time, if they are unwilling to believe in Him, He challenges them to prove that their so-called gods are true. To do this, they will have to be able to predict future events like the regathering of Israel. Any god should care enough for his people to do what the LORD is doing — preparing His people for the terrifying trials and hardships that are coming upon them in the future.

Thought 1. What is said of the Israelites is applicable to all true believers.

1) All genuine believers are sons and daughters of God, created for His glory.

John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

2 Cor 6:17-18 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.*

Gal 4:4-6 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”*

Hos 11:1 *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”*

2) All genuine believers are re-created by the Spirit of God, made into new people.

Rom 6:4 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Rom 7:6 *But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Gal 6:15 *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.*

Eph 2:10 *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Eph 2:15 *By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

4. The LORD has appointed His people to be His special witnesses and servants (vv. 10-13). Verse 10 is one of the most significant verses in all of Scripture. It spells out exactly why God chooses and saves His people day by day. Three purposes are listed:

=> that His people might *know Him* — know Him personally and intimately as they walk through life

=> that His people might *believe Him* — entrust all to Him, believe every word that proceeds out of His mouth and stand upon the promises of God

=> that His people might *understand Him* — grasp, comprehend, appreciate, esteem and value Him for all He is within His majestic glory and person

As His witnesses and servants, believers are to know that the LORD is the only living and true God and that He alone is the Saviour of the world. Apart from Him, there is no Saviour. No person can be saved without trusting and following Him and Him alone (v. 11). Saving His people from the Babylonian captivity, the LORD proves that He is the only living and true God and the Saviour of the human race. He, not some false god, is the One who will save His people from their captivity. Since He alone is God and there is no other Saviour, His people are to bear strong testimony to four facts:

=> that He has revealed the truth about Himself both to Israel and to the other nations of the world

=> that He is the Saviour of the human race who alone has saved and redeemed those who truly believe and follow Him

=> that He alone is the living and true God

=> that He alone possesses eternal power and that judgment rests with Him

Mark 16:15 *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

Acts 2:4 *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Acts 4:20 *For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

Acts 5:20-21 *“Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.” At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin – the full assembly of the elders of Israel – and sent to the jail for the apostles.*

Acts 5:32 *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”*

Acts 22:14-15 *“Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you [Paul], to know his will, and see the Righteous One, and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.’”*

Acts 28:19-20 *“But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar - not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”*

2 Cor 4:13 *It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.*

Titus 2:15 *These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.*

Psa 66:16 *Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.*

Isa 63:7 *I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us - yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.*

Jer 20:9 *But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.*

Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.*

5. No one can stop or reverse the works God does among His people on earth. The LORD will ultimately defeat all enemies who oppress His people (vv. 14-17). He guarantees the deliverance of His people because He is their Redeemer, the Holy One. By declaring Himself the *Holy One*, God indicates that redeeming His people from their

enemies is the righteous and ethical thing to do. And since He is the Redeemer, He must guarantee that His people will be delivered. His holy perfection demands that He do what is right. Thus, His people can rest assured that He will take action on their behalf. They will be delivered from Babylon, and their oppressors will be defeated. Again note why: because He is the LORD, the Holy One, Israel's Creator, their king (v. 15). His judgment of Babylon is sure. He will utterly destroy them as surely as He destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Exo. 14:26-28).

Thought 1. In dealing with His people, the LORD always does the righteous thing. When His people are oppressed, the ethical action is always to deliver them from their persecutors. In righteousness, He condemns their oppressors, dooming them to utter defeat and judgment. Through His awesome power, God promises His people victory over all their enemies.

Rom 8:35, 37-39 *Who shall separate us from the love [compassion] of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2 Cor 2:14 *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

2 Cor 10:3-5 *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Eph 6:10-13 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

1 Tim 1:18-19 *Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith, and a good conscience. Some have rejected these so have shipwrecked their faith.*

1 Tim 6:11-12 *But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take*

hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Tim 2:3-4 *Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer.*

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

1 Pet 5:8-10 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

Psa 44:5 *Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

6. The LORD will do greater things than ever before for His people; He will perform a *new thing* on their behalf (vv. 18-21). What is this *new thing*? He will guide and provide for them as never before. Although the cruel Babylonians will hold them in captivity, God will work through the nations of the world to restore His people to the promised land (a symbol of heaven) (vv. 5-6). Nations from the four corners of the earth will help Israel return to the land God promised them. And when they return, God will take care of them and provide for all their necessities (v. 20). Of course, water is the most essential need in a desert region. As scarce as water is, God promises to provide so much water that even the wild animals will have enough to drink. Note why God promises to guide and provide for His people: so they would bear strong witness to Him and praise His name before the entire world (v. 21).

Thought 1. The LORD promises to guide us day by day as we walk through life. No matter how difficult the path, if we believe and follow Him, He promises to guide us. Listen to His wonderful promises:

Luke 1:78-79 *Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun [Christ] will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.*

John 16:13 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

Deu 32:11-12 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft. The LORD alone led him; no foreign god with him.

Psa 23:1-6 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psa 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psa 48:14 For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

Psa 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Psa 139:9-10 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Isa 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

Isa 42:16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

Thought 2. Another great promise of the LORD is that He will provide for our needs. He will look after and take care of true believers who follow Him. All believers will have the necessities to sustain life until the day the LORD is ready to take them to heaven.

Mat 6:33 “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

Deu 30:8-9 *You will again obey the LORD, and follow all his commands I am giving you today. Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors.*

Psa 68:19 *Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens.*

Psa 132:15 *I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor I will satisfy with food.*

Mal 3:10 *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” ■*