

The Remnant (Isaiah 42:10–43:28)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/2/2018)

Introduction

1. The Savior is introduced—“*Behold my servant*” who will bring “*justice to the nations,*” not just Israel, but also Gentiles (42:1–9).
 - a. As a consequence, “*new things*” in the New Covenant are introduced (v. 9); thus, the prophet exhorts the reader (v. 10).
 - b. The *zeal* of the Lord to fulfill His declared purpose is cause for much rejoicing and praise (v. 13).
- 2 Some commentators suggest that verse 13 refers to Christ’s second coming.
 - a. However, the theme of the prophet is to rebuke apostate Judah and Israel as the context clearly proves.
 - b. The New Covenant will, through Christ, overcome the rebellious nation and bring about the kingdom that Israel claimed for herself but threatened by her idolatry (Isaiah 42:14–17).
3. The restoration promised for Israel will not be total as seen in the fact that only Judah was restored from captivity.
 - a. Paul supports this view in Romans 11 in answer to the question, “*Has God rejected his people?*” (Romans 11:1), the anticipated response to his quoting Isaiah 65:2 (Romans 10:21).
 - b. In His grace God has chosen a *remnant* of Israel to save, leaving the rest to their hardness (Romans 11:5, 7).
 - c. In Isaiah 42:18–25 the Lord contrasts His true Servant with that of the blind servant-nation, Israel. The rebellious nation is also contrasted with their God of grace (v. 21).
 - d. This truth is contrasted with the gracious purpose of God to save a people for His name (Romans 5:20, 21).

I. The Only Redeemer (43:1–7)

1. A new greater Exodus promised
 - a. It was in Egypt that God created the nation of Israel; it is in the world that God creates a new people, the church, for His name (vv. 1–3).
 - b. The reference to waters, rivers, and fire allude to judgment (v. 2). The Lord is able to bring His people out of judgment through salvation and redemption. The waters of the flood, the Red Sea, and the Jordan, and the fire at Mount Sinai and the end of time all speak of judgment.

God gave His law (that condemns) to Israel at Sinai on tablets of stone, but in the New Covenant He puts His law into transformed hearts, enabling obedience by His grace and Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 14: 26, 27).
 - c. The reason God gives for redeeming His church is simply because He loves them (v. 4).

The reference to giving men in exchange for the life of people refers to judgment that comes on sinners in the process of saving His people. Remember the judgments that fell on Egypt before Pharaoh released Israel in the Exodus.

d. The process of building His people is revealed (vv. 5–7).

2 True witnesses

The dialogue shifts back to the unfaithful nation: “*Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!*” (v. 8).

a. All the nations are summoned to hear the charges (v. 9).

Are these rebels able to argue their case before Him successfully? If so, where are their witnesses who can prove their case that idols are able to save, forgive, and transform sinners?

b. Has Israel lived up to her calling as *servant* and *chosen* (vv. 10–13)?

Israel had witnessed God’s saving might. Before they fell into idolatry, they were challenged by what they should know. What they had seen ought to have led them to know, believe, and understand that Yahweh alone is God and Savior.

II. Sovereign Determination (43:14–28)

Here the Lord doubles down on His declared purpose to redeem a remnant, even from among this stubborn nation.

1. He is Israel’s King and has both authority and ability to fulfill His purposes (vv. 14–17).

Again, notice the Lord’s reference to His saving Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea and then destroying the Egyptian army. The return from Babylon is, in a sense, another Exodus and a prophetic precursor to the greatest Exodus, salvation in Jesus Christ.

2. He did not fail when the nation rebelled and turned to idols; rather, He established a new thing (vv. 18–21).

Israel’s response to the Lord’s revelation of His great love and grace was an apathetic yawn. The wild beasts showed more honor to the Lord than these Jews.

3. The Lord indicts the nation for their failure to bring proper worship to honor the Lord (vv. 22–24; Malachi 1:6, 7).

4. The gracious Lord, however, will judge His disobedient people and bring the old system and the nation to destruction (vv. 25–28).

What Can We Take Away?

1. Can you truly confess that you have experienced the grace of God in redemption as evidenced by a changed heart.

2. Is your worship of God flowing from a Spirit-filled heart brimming with gratitude and love for Christ?

3. Are your eyes and ears open to spiritual truth?

4. Are you living for His glory?