

**God Summons and Gathers The Redeemed****Isaiah 43:1-13 (vv. 1, 4-6)**

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**I. Historical Background & Biblical Context****A. Historical Background**

*Seventy years!* That's how long the Israelites were exiled in Babylon. These years were more than just a span of time, for many it was an entire lifetime. A lifetime far away from their homeland, separated from the temple where they once worshiped, and cut off from the freedom they had once known as God's chosen people. It was a life spent in a foreign land, under a foreign rule, where foreign gods were worshipped, and different languages and customs were imposed on them. A life lived among people who were hostile and opposed to everything they believed and who rejected their identity, heritage, and God.

Far from home and seemingly even farther from hope, the Israelites struggled with more than just the physical exile, this was a deep spiritual crisis for them. Questions like *'Where is God in all of this?'*, *'Has He abandoned us'*, and *'How did we end up here?'* may have surfaced among them, and these questions have been answered all throughout Isaiah. Their reality was difficult to accept, but God had warned them. Generation by generation, something shifted in the hearts of God's people. The nation that should have been known for justice and compassion became a place of corruption and cruelty. Through the prophets, God called His people to repent - to turn away from idolatry and sin, return to Him with sincere hearts, and place their trust fully in Him. Yet those warnings were ignored and dismissed. Now, every warning had come to pass, and judgment came just as the prophets had foretold. Perhaps the most devastating consequence for those exiled was the overwhelming sense that God had fallen silent.

These words from Isaiah 43 were written for such a time as this to bring comfort and remind God's people of His promises of redeem and restore. For a people who felt abandoned, these words would revive their identity and remind them of who they are; they are still known by God, still called by name, and still His. These words would bring back the memory of a God who saves. The same God who parted the Red Sea, defeated Egypt, and formed a covenant with them. To a people living in shame and defeat, these promises would reawaken hope, not just that they would one day return to their land, but that God

Himself had not given up on them, physically and spiritually. That even in exile, they were still redeemed, still loved, and still part of God's plan.

## **B. Biblical Context**

God's redemptive plan stretches back centuries. It began at the Fall, and unfolded through His call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the formation of His covenant people, the exodus from Egypt, the wilderness journey, the conquest of Canaan, the era of judges and kings, the periods of exile and deliverance, and the messages of the prophets. This plan reached its fulfillment in the coming of Christ, continued through the birth of the Church, and remains in motion today. It is a plan that is still moving forward, advancing until the day Christ returns. So, the exile was not the end of the story. His plan was not over, and neither was His love.

In many ways, every believer has experienced a form of exile. Most often, it is felt through the consequences of sin, which create distance between us and God. Yet, God's presence and promises remain. His response has never been, and will never be, one of condemnation. Instead, it has been, and will always be, one of enduring love and gentle assurance that He still loves you.

## **II. Lesson: God Summons and Gathers The Redeemed (Isaiah 43:1-13)**

The title of this lesson tells us so much about what God is promising in these scriptures. God summons → He calls forth His People with authority, power, and intention. God gathers → He brings together all that have been scattered, broken, lost, and dispersed. And who does he summon and gather? The Redeemed → those who respond to His call in faith and who have been rescued, restored, and brought back into a relationship with Him.

This promise unfolds in this way:

### **A. God Summons (vs. 1)**

*"But now, this is what the Lord says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'" (NIV)*

God is now addressing His people with intention, purpose, and intimacy. Notice how He does not refer to them with general or casual names though. Instead, He calls them by the names *Jacob* and *Israel*. These were the names

God Himself gave - *Jacob* to the man He renamed *Israel*, and *Israel* to the descendants who became His covenant people. This now extends to us too, since we have been brought into the covenant through Jesus Christ. With these names, He reminds His people of the origin of their identity in Him to reaffirm the covenant He made long ago.

Next, God reveals three truths, giving the Israelites and us greater reasons to place our trust in Him, regardless of the challenges we face. The first truth is, **“I have redeemed you.”** This means that God has delivered His people from bondage, forgiven their sins, restored them, and brought them back into a relationship with Him. For the Israelites, their redemption was the promise of restoration from exile. For Christians, our redemption comes from being saved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which frees us and restores us to a right relationship with God. The second truth is **“I have summoned you by name.”** This means that we are known individually, valued uniquely, and called personally by God. The third truth is, **“You are mine.”** Despite the failures, shortcomings, and consequences, God reassures us that we still belong to him.

### **B. God’s Promise: I Will Be With You (vs. 2)**

God repeats the phrase “when you” three times in this verse: “*when you pass through the waters*”, “*when you pass through the rivers*” and “*when you walk through the fire*.” It is certain that we will face trials, hardships, and difficulties in life. For the Israelites, the mention of waters and rivers would have reminded them of how God delivered them in the past. Those returning from exile would face many challenges before, during, and even after their journey home. God’s promise is not to remove them, but that He will be present amid them. He is assuring His people that He will be with them in every trial to sustain and preserve them through it.

### **C. God Gathers (vs. 3-7)**

<sup>4</sup> “*Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give [people and nations] in exchange for you...*” <sup>5</sup> *I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.* <sup>6</sup> *I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth –* <sup>7</sup> *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*” (NIV)

God reveals the immense love and value He places on His people. He calls them *precious*, meaning deeply treasured; *honored*, regarded with great respect; and *beloved*, dearly and personally loved. It is not because of anything they have done, but simply because of who they are to Him. We are His chosen and he treasures us deeply; and there's nothing we can do about it.

Because of this, God will go as far as He will go to protect and redeem His people. God was willing to give up people and nations, specifically Egypt, Cush, and Seba, in exchange for the release and restoration of His People.

God promises to gather His people from every direction: east, west, north, and south. This promise has dual significance. For the exiled Israelites scattered across Babylon and beyond, this meant they would be brought back to their homeland. It also points to a future when Christ returns and God gathers all His people, those who are called by His name, from every corner of the earth.

#### **D. The Redeemed Are Witnesses (vs. 8-13)**

| <sup>12</sup>“*You are my witnesses*”, declares the Lord, “*that I am God...*” (NIV)

Once again, the nations are invited to present their case, yet none can rival the power of God, who alone foretells the future, saves His people, and fulfills every promise. Those whom He has redeemed are summoned and gathered as living witnesses to His truth. The proof that He alone is God and that there is no other Savior is found in their existence, redemption, and restoration.

### **III. Conclusion**

God summons and gathers the redeemed, not because of what we have done, but because of who we are to Him. If you have heard His voice and responded in faith, you are among the Redeemed: precious, honored, and dearly loved by the One who formed you, called you, and calls you His own.

Just as He called Israel back from exile, He continues to call His people today from every direction, every background, and every broken place into fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ.

As the redeemed, we are commissioned to be His witnesses. Our lives are living proof of His grace, love, faithfulness, and saving power. So let us take this lesson to heart: no matter how scattered, weary, or far we may feel: God still summons. He still gathers. He still redeems.