

## **Session 15 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 43-44**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Isaiah 41-44 is considered by many commentators to be one long prophetic message.
- B. **Isaiah 41-42** highlights aspects of the Lord’s “Justice Masterplan”—it includes a great worldwide outpouring of the Spirit, judgment of the Antichrist’s empire, and both God’s discipline and the demonic persecution of both the Church and Israel—which will include some being imprisoned or martyred. God’s “Justice Masterplan” will result in a purified Church (Dan. 11:33-35; 12:10), a great harvest of souls (Rev. 7:9), Israel’s national salvation and millennial glory (Isa. 60-62; Rom. 11:26), and every sphere of society in every nation being filled with justice, love, and humility (Isa. 42:1-4; cf. Ps. 45:4).

***<sup>33</sup>And those of the people who understand [God’s end-time messengers] shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall [be martyred] by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering...<sup>35</sup>to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end... (Dan. 11:33-35)***

- C. Isaiah 43 declares God’s commitment to help Israel in context to her tragic situation described in 42:22-25. The Lord will pour out His Spirit on Israel and the Church as He disciplines both of them in the end times to wake them up to their glorious destiny as people in covenant with the Lord.

***<sup>22</sup>But this is a people robbed and plundered; all of them are snares in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses...<sup>23</sup>Who among you will give ear to this? ...<sup>24</sup>Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the LORD, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways...<sup>25</sup>Therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger...it has set him on fire all around, yet he did not know; and it burned him, yet he did not take it to heart. (Isa. 42:22-25)***

- D. Outline for Isaiah 43-44

43:1-4 The Lord will be with Israel in the fire  
43:5-7 The Lord will gather Israel from the nations  
43:8-15 The Lord is raising up His messengers  
43:16-21 The Lord’s power to deliver and transform  
43:22-28 The Lord is wearied by the lack of genuine worship  
44:1-5 The Lord will pour out His Spirit  
44:6-8 Who is like our God  
44:9-20 The folly of trusting in idols  
44:21-22 The call to remember and return to the Lord  
44:23 A hymn of praise to God  
44:24-28 The restoration of Jerusalem

- E. Isaiah 43-44 assure Israel that, if they will repent, the Lord will deliver them in the midst of the fire. Isaiah declared God’s promises of deliverance which were fulfilled in part when Israel returned from Babylonian exile (538 BC), but have their ultimate fulfillment at the end of the age.

## II. THE LORD WILL BE WITH ISRAEL IN THE FIRE (ISA. 43:1-4)

- A. The Lord is steadfast in His love and commitment to be with Israel in the fire of affliction (43:1-4).  
***1But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 2When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and 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. 3For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. 4Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life. (Isa. 43:1-4)***
- B. ***But now:*** This alerts us to Israel's affliction in being under divine discipline (42:25).
- C. ***The Lord who created Israel:*** God's promises and plan are based on the fact that He created, formed, redeemed, and named Israel (43:1). Thus, they may be confident that He will help them.
- D. ***O Jacob and O Israel:*** Jacob was a deceiver who wrestled with God, which resulted in being transformed and renamed Israel, which means "a prince with God" (Gen. 32:24-32). Sixteen times in Isaiah 40-49, Isaiah refers to the Jewish people as both "Jacob and Israel. The "Jacob character" of the nation will be transformed that they might enjoy the promises made to "Israel." (Isa. 41:8, 14; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12; 49:5, 6)
- E. ***Fear not*** (41:10, 14; 43:1): They were afraid because of the divine discipline in 42:22-25.
- F. ***I have redeemed you:*** God's love is far greater than Israel's great past sins and failures. God did not give up on them, but has plans to use them for His purpose. Even in Israel's end-time apostasy and crisis, it is still not too late to respond to God and receive grace.
- G. ***You are Mine:*** Even in their sin and failure, the Lord sees Israel as His beloved.
- H. ***Waters and fires:*** Flooding water and fire speak of times of affliction and testing.
- I. Isaiah highlighted three names or aspects of God's character to strengthen Israel in a time of testing.
1. ***The LORD your God:*** The God who established a covenant relationship with Israel
  2. ***The Holy One of Israel:*** The God of transcendent glory who is "wholly other than"
  3. ***Your Savior:*** The God who will save them from all their enemies—spiritual and physical
- J. ***I gave Egypt for your ransom:*** The Lord delivered Israel from some of Sennacherib's wrath by directing him to defeat the Egyptian army that included people from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba.
- K. ***I have loved you:*** God's people are dear and precious in God's sight in spite of their sin and failure.

### III. THE LORD WILL GATHER ISRAEL FROM THE NATIONS (ISA. 43:5-7)

- A. Israel is not to fear that their glorious kingdom purposes and promises are over due to the scattering of their people. He promises to bring them back to the land (11:11-12; 27:13; 49:12).

***5“Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; 6I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—7everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him...” (Isa. 43:5-7)***

- B. ***I will bring your descendants:*** The Lord will gather the Jewish people from the ends of the earth (41:9). The return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity was not from “the ends of the earth,” so it fulfills this prophecy partially; the ultimate fulfillment of it occurs when Jesus returns (5:26).

- C. ***I created for My glory:*** God’s purpose for His people is to experience and manifest His glory.

***22“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one... that the world may know that You have sent Me and loved them as You have loved Me. 24Father, I desire that they whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory...” (Jn. 17:22-24)***

### IV. LORD IS RAISING UP HIS MESSENGERS (ISA. 43:8-15)

- A. Isaiah called the nations to present their claim that their idols were powerful (43:8-9). The Lord challenged the nations to bring witnesses who could prove that their idols had a good plan for the nations that included determining world events and accurately predicting international events.

***8Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears. 9Let all the nations be gathered together...Who among them can declare this... (Isa. 43:8-9)***

- B. God called Israel to be His witnesses, so they must know, believe, and understand Him (43:10-13).

***10“You are My witnesses...that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He... 11I...am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior...12You are My witnesses...” (Isa. 43:10-12)***

- C. ***That you may know Me:*** Personal experience and knowledge of God and His plan of action is essential.

- D. ***Besides Me there is no savior:*** The Lord’s end-time plan will demonstrate to all the nations that He is the only Savior who can deliverer them from the Antichrist’s demonic darkness and oppression.

- E. The Lord will show His power and commitment to Israel by destroying Babylon (43:14-15). About 150 years before the Jewish people went into Babylonian captivity, the Lord openly promised to judge the mighty Babylonians for the sake of His people.

## V. THE LORD'S POWER TO DELIVER AND TRANSFORM (ISA. 43:16-21)

- A. The Lord's deliverance of Israel from Egypt including dividing the Red Sea is the *proof and model* of His power to deliver Israel from her enemies—Babylon, Rome, Nazism, and the Antichrist.
- <sup>16</sup>Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea...<sup>17</sup>Who brings forth the chariot and horse...  
<sup>18</sup>"Do not remember the former things...<sup>19</sup>Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth;  
shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.  
<sup>20</sup>The beast of the field will honor Me...because I give...rivers in the desert, to give drink..."*  
(Isa. 43:16-20)
- B. **Do not remember the former things:** Do not limit God to His miracles done in the Exodus (43:16-17). In the end times, Jesus will do new things—miracles that will far surpass anything seen in history. The book of Revelation describes miracles greater than those done in the days of Moses.
- C. **I will do a new thing:** The ultimate new thing is related to the full blessings of the new covenant including the transformation of nature and the nations in the Millennium (11:6-9; 41:18-20, etc.).
- D. **Shall you not know it:** Isaiah asked if they perceived what God declared about the time when He would deliver, save, and transform Israel and fill the earth with glory. The Lord is raising up messengers who will be faithful witnesses of His glory to be released in context to the Millennium.

## VI. BEING A FAITHFUL WITNESS FOR THE LORD

- A. The first designation of Jesus in the book of Revelation is as the "faithful witness" of the truth. Jesus stood firm on speaking the truth in His generation, thus understands the challenge to do this.
- <sup>5</sup>...from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness...and the ruler over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 1:5)*
- B. John referred himself as one who bore witness to the truths that he saw about the Lord's end-time plan (Rev 1:2, 9). The Lord will raise up two witnesses who will speak out boldly (Rev. 11:3-7).
- <sup>2</sup>John bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus, to all things that he saw...  
<sup>9</sup>John...was on Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus... (Rev 1:2, 9)*
- <sup>3</sup>And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days [3½ years] ...<sup>6</sup>These have power...to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. <sup>7</sup>When they finish their testimony, the beast [Antichrist]...will kill them. (Rev. 11:3-7)*
- C. A faithful witness of the truth must speak in a way that is biblical, clear, bold, tender, and humble.
- <sup>17</sup>And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with...[those] who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 12:17)*

## VII. THE LORD IS WEARIED BY THE LACK OF GENUINE WORSHIP (ISA. 43:22-28)

- A. The Lord spoke of His displeasure and judgment for Israel's sin and lack of worship (43:22-24). As a messenger for the Lord, Isaiah sought to convince Israel to confess their sins to God.

<sup>22</sup>***"But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; and you have been weary of Me, O Israel..."***

<sup>24</sup>***You have...burdened Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities."***  
(Isa. 43:22-24)

1. ***But you have not called on Me:*** The Israelites should have called on God with gratitude and love in light of 43:19-21.
2. ***You have wearied Me:*** What burdened God was for them to offer animal sacrifices to Him while refusing to turn from their sins. Their sacrifices were meaningless without a spirit of loving obedience and gratitude.

- B. The reason God gives such great promises is because of who He is (43:22-28). Salvation is by grace in spite of their sin (43:22-28). This gives the end-time Laodicean church hope.

<sup>25</sup>***"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. <sup>26</sup>Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted. <sup>27</sup>Your first father sinned, and your mediators [priests] have transgressed against Me. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary; I will give...Israel to reproaches."***  
(Isa. 43:25-28)

- C. ***Put Me in remembrance:*** God invited His people to correct Him if what He had said about their sin was not true. He asked Israel to remind Him of anything He had forgotten about their obedience.
- D. ***Your first father sinned*** (43:27): Israel's sin was traceable back to their first father Jacob (v. 22; cf. Deut. 26:5; Hos. 12:2-4). Israel had a long history for stubbornness.
- E. ***I will profane the princes of the sanctuary:*** The temple was desecrated by its princes or leaders.
- F. ***I will give Israel to reproaches:*** God used Babylon to discipline Israel for their rebellion to Him.

## VIII. THE LORD WILL POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT (ISA. 44:1-5)

- A. God proved His deity, covenant love, and promise by delivering the Jewish people from captivity in Babylon (43:25) and from the power and penalty of their sins (44:1-5).

<sup>1</sup>***Yet hear now, O Jacob...<sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD...who will help you: "Fear not, O Jacob My servant; and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. <sup>3</sup>...I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring...<sup>5</sup>One will say, 'I am the LORD's'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob;***

*another will write with his hand, 'The LORD's,' and name himself by the name of Israel." (Isa. 44:1-5)*

- B. **Hear now:** A call to pay close attention to a word of promise so that they will not fear (44:2).
- C. **Jeshurun:** The name *Jeshurun* was used in the place of *Israel*. It was a poetic name for Israel, used with affection, meaning, *My dear upright people* (Deut. 32:5; 33:5, 26). Even though Israel had sinned in grievous way, the Lord saw her through the eyes of her destiny in His grace—as upright.
- D. **I will pour My Spirit:** The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on Israel. The giving of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was only a down payment or partial fulfillment of the Old Testament promises for outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will empower people be faithful witnesses.

## IX. WHO IS LIKE OUR GOD (ISA. 44:6-8)

- A. God called Israel to be His witnesses or messengers (44:6-8). The Lord desired to strengthen His messengers by the revelation of Himself as King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts.
 

*“Thus says the LORD, the **King of Israel**, and his **Redeemer**, the **LORD of hosts**: ‘I am the First and I am the Last...<sup>7</sup>Who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me...<sup>8</sup>**Do not fear...have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses.”***  
(Isa. 44:6-8)
- B. **King of Israel** (41:21; 43:15): Jesus is openly received as King of kings when He returns (Rev 19:16). As king, He controls history, rules all nations including Israel, and establishes new laws and social institutions based on justice and righteousness in Israel and throughout the whole world.
- C. **His redeemer:** This title reveals God’s covenant relationship to Israel as Israel’s near kinsman.
- D. **The LORD of hosts:** “Host” speaks of “the armies of heaven.” As the divine Warrior, Jesus will fight for Israel.
- E. **The First and Last:** This title describes Jesus proclaiming His sovereignty over history (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13). All of history from the beginning to the end is under His leadership.
- F. **Do not fear:** Even though Israel was to experience hard times, God told them that He would help them through it and even use the trouble to give them a greater voice as witness of Him and His kingdom.
- G. Isaiah exposed the folly of trusting in idols (44:9-20).
- H. The Lord called them to remember and repent, and He promised not to forget them, but to blot out their sins (44:21-22). The call to “remember” is one of the most emphasized exhortations in the Scripture, with over 80 references. If we cease to remember, we will begin to neglect to engage in the things to which God called us, and then we will drift and find ourselves with a different perspective and changing priorities.

<sup>21</sup>**Remember these...for you are My servant...you will not be forgotten by Me!** <sup>22</sup>**I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions...Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.** (Isa. 44:21-22)