

## Isaiah 43-44 • The One True God

### Introduction

When Paul preached the Gospel at Berea they were commended in Scripture for “examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so”. (Acts 17:11) This should be noted by every Christian because we must keep in mind what “the Scriptures” meant at that time. As yet there was no New Testament, only the Old Testament. One of the things which this study confirms is how New Testament teachings are confirmed in the Old Testament, and that there are things in the Old Testament which are yet to be accomplished by God. In particular these chapters highlight the contrast between the daily efforts of a believer pursuing a relationship with Christ versus the non-believer pursuing their own efforts. It’s the comparison of what comes from pursuing false gods and religions versus a right relationship with the One True God.

<sup>1</sup>But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,

And He who formed you, O Israel,  
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are Mine!

<sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
And through the rivers, they will not overflow you.  
When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched,  
Nor will the flame burn you.

<sup>14</sup>Thus says the LORD your Redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel,

“For your sake I have sent to Babylon,  
And will bring them all down as fugitives,  
Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice.

<sup>15</sup>I am the Lord, your Holy One,  
The Creator of Israel, your King.”

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD,

Who makes a way through the sea  
And a path through the mighty waters,  
<sup>17</sup>Who brings forth the chariot and the horse,  
The army and the mighty man  
(They will lie down together and not rise again;  
They have been quenched and extinguished like a wick):

<sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God,  
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;  
I have given Egypt as your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in your place.

<sup>4</sup>Since you are precious in My sight,  
Since you are honored and I love you,  
I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life.

### [Read 43:1-2 & 14-17]

**Q: In v.1 & 15, what aspect of God does He remind His people of and why?**

A: He reminds them that He is “the Creator”. He does this in reference to His admonition “Do not fear” (v.1) and “For your sake” (v.13) to remind them that although present circumstances are difficult and overwhelming, God the Creator has a purpose.

**Q: What is the specific, present danger?**

A: The enemy (here identified as Babylon) who appears to be having success against God’s people.

**Q: How are the two main threats described? What terms are used to visualize the danger confronting them?**

A: Water (v.2 & 16) and fire (v.2 & 17). Throughout Scripture they represent not only the most potent forms of destruction, but the execution of God’s final judgment as when water destroyed the earth in Noah’s time and fire will destroy the earth at the end of time.

**Q: So what aspect of God’s grace is being offered to His people? What is He promising to do in spite of the circumstances?**

A: He will protect them.

- (v.2) “When you pass through the waters”
- (v.2) “When you walk through the fire”

**Q: Who is NOT protected?**

A: The enemy represented by Babylon.

**Application:** When it comes to Final Judgment, God’s people are protected but those rejecting Him experience the consequences. However, God’s people may be so close to the action that it requires faith that God will accomplish what He originally set out to do.

### [Read 43:3-4]

**Q: What aspect of God’s character does He remind His people of?**

A: “I am...the Holy One of Israel, your Savior”. (v.3)

**Q: What is God promising to do for His people?**

A: To ransom them by offering someone else in their place.

**Q: What aspect of God's grace is being offered to his people?**

A: He prefers them – they are chosen above all the other nations.

**Application:** For unbelievers Final Judgment is when God's wrath comes to full fruition;; for believers it is when the work of salvation is ultimately completed. Final judgment is a dual-edged sword accomplishing the ultimate end to which every person's life was naturally leading, whether to heaven or hell.

<sup>5</sup>Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring 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,  
And whom I have created for My glory,  
Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

<sup>8</sup>Bring out the people who are blind,  
even though they have eyes  
And the deaf, even though they have ears.  
<sup>9</sup>All the nations have gathered together  
So that the peoples may be assembled.  
Who among them can declare this  
And proclaim to us the former things?  
Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified,  
Or let them hear and say, "It is true.

<sup>10</sup>"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD,  
"And My servant whom I have chosen,  
So that you may know and believe Me  
And understand that I am He.  
Before Me there was no God formed,  
And there will be none after Me.  
<sup>11</sup>I, even I, am the LORD,  
And there is no savior besides Me.  
<sup>12</sup>It is I who have declared an saved and proclaimed,  
And there was no strange god among you;  
So you are My witnesses," declares the Lord,  
"And I am God.  
<sup>13</sup>Even from eternity I am He,  
And there is none who can deliver out of My hand;  
I act and who can reverse it?"

**[Read 43:5-9]**

**Q: What aspect of God's character does He remind His people of?**

A: He is ever present. "I am with you". (v.1)

**Q: What is God promising to do for His people?**

A: He will bring them back.

**Q: How do we know that this is not simply limited to a physical return to the land? How do we know that the physical return is accompanied by a spiritual return?**

A: In v.8 they are healed of blindness and deafness, an obvious reference to their spiritual condition.

**Q: What aspect of God's grace is being offered to His people?**

A: He gathers them.

**Application:** The physical return to the land of Israel is only significant when accompanied by a spiritual return to God in the process. God rescues His people not just from physical dangers, but even more so opens their eyes and ears to spiritual dangers.

**[Read 43:10-13 & 44:6-8]**

**Q: What aspect of God's character does He remind His people of?**

A: The repeated reference that there are no gods like Him is a reminder of His divinity.

**Q: What is it that God is reminding His people they should do?**

A: They should attest and testify to God's divinity:

- (v.11) "...there is no savior besides Me..."
- (v.12) "...there is none who can deliver out of My hand..."
- (v.6) "...there is no God besides Me..."

**Q: According to v.6-8, what is the basic message His people should testify to?**

A: That everything coming to full-term in this present age was foretold and planned by God from the outset of Creation.

**Q: What does God's grace accomplish in His people?**

A: He appoints them as special witnesses to attest that He alone is the One True God.

**Isaiah 43-44 • The One True God, Page 2 of 7**

<sup>6</sup>“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts;

‘I am the first and I am the last,  
And there is no God besides Me.

<sup>7</sup>Who is like Me? Let him proclaim  
and declare it;

Yes, let him recount it to Me in order,  
From the time that I established the  
ancient nation.

And let them declare to them the things  
that are coming

And the events that are going to take  
place.

<sup>8</sup>Do not tremble and do not be afraid;  
Have I not long since announced it to  
you and declared it?

And you are My witnesses.  
Is there any God besides Me,  
Or is there any other Rock?  
I know of none.”

<sup>18</sup>“Do not call to mind the former  
things,

Or ponder things of the past.

<sup>19</sup>Behold, I will do something new,  
Now it will spring forth;  
Will you not be aware of it?

I will even make a roadway in the  
wilderness,

Rivers in the desert.

<sup>20</sup>The beasts of the field will glorify  
Me,

The jackals and the ostriches,  
Because I have given waters in the  
wilderness

And rivers in the desert,  
To give drink to My chosen people.

<sup>21</sup>The people whom I formed for  
Myself

Will declare My praise.

<sup>1</sup>“But now listen, O Jacob, My servant,  
And Israel, whom I have chosen:

<sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD who made you  
And formed you from the womb, who  
will help you,

‘Do not fear, O Jacob My servant;  
And you Jeshurun whom I have  
chosen.

**Application:** *In the days leading up to Final Judgment God's people are supposed to be an even greater witness of Him than ever before.*

### **[Read 43:18-21]**

**Q: What aspect of God's character does He remind His people of?**

A: He is the future, another way of saying, “*I am the Alpha and the Omega*”. (Rev. 1:8)

**Point:** *Because God created what we have known and experienced up to now, we are assured that He will follow through with those things He has promised yet to come.*

**Q: What is it that God is reminding His people they should do?**

A: Not to dwell on the past (the old creation), but looking toward the future (the new creation).

**Q: To what time in history is God now referring? What period of time do we call this?**

A: The Millennial Reign.

**Q: What does God's grace accomplish for His people?**

A: He ushers in the Millennial Reign, preparing all things for His people as He calls them home.

**Application:** *Rather than return to “the good old days” or to some time when we think things were better or perfect, the healthy thing is to focus on the only time coming when God Himself makes everything good and perfect.*

### **[Read 44:1-5]**

**Q: What aspect of God's character does He remind His people of?**

A: Not simply that He has chosen them, but chosen them “*from the womb*”. (v.2)

*[Continued on the next page.]*

<sup>3</sup>For I will pour out water on the thirsty land  
And streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring  
And My blessing on your descendants;  
<sup>4</sup>And they will spring up among the grass  
Like poplars by streams of water.’  
<sup>5</sup>“This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’S’;  
And that one will call on the name of Jacob;  
And another will write on his hand,  
‘Belonging to the LORD,’  
And will name Israel’s name with honor.

<sup>21</sup>“Remember these things, O Jacob,  
And Israel, for you are My servant;  
I have formed you, you are My servant,  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me.  
<sup>22</sup>I have wiped out your transgressions  
like a thick cloud  
And your sins like a heavy mist.  
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”  
<sup>23</sup>Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done it!  
Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth;  
Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it;  
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob  
And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

<sup>24</sup>Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,  
and the one who formed you from the womb,  
“I, the LORD, am the maker of all things,  
Stretching out the heavens by Myself  
And spreading out the earth all alone,

<sup>25</sup>Causing the omens of boasters to fail,  
Making fools out of diviners,  
Causing wise men to draw back  
And turning their knowledge into foolishness,  
<sup>26</sup>Confirming the word of His servant  
And performing the purpose of His

**Q: Why does God call His people “Jeshurun”? What does this mean?**

A: Jeshurun is a symbolic name for Israel describing her ideal character. It literally means “upright one”. Although Jeshurun as a proper name appears in several places in the Bible, it is often translated as an adjective meaning “beloved”, a term of endearment not only for Israel as God’s bride, but a term associated in Scripture with Christ (Eph. 1:6) and the church (Col. 3:12, 1 Th. 1:4, 2 The. 2:3, Jude 1) which is also a bride of Christ.

**Q: What is it that God is reminding His people they should do?**

A: Not just to follow the rules of the Law, but to pursue a personal and faithful relationship with Him.

**Q: What does God’s grace accomplish for His people?**

A: He fills them with the Holy Spirit that they may attain faithfulness in this present life.

**Application:** *The context here is the calling of the Bridegroom for His perfect bride, that we are not simply chosen as a people but called into a very intimate and loving relationship like that of the ideal marriage. Our calling is rooted in obedience but extends into something much deeper and more personal.*

**[Read 44:21-24]**

**Q: What aspect of God’s character does He remind His people of?**

A: He is the Redeemer, someone who doesn’t simply forgive sins, but transforms them so they are able to enter into His very presence.

**Q: What is it that God is reminding His people they should do?**

A: “Remember” (v.21), “return” (v.22), and “shout for joy” (v.23). In other words, they are to live in the present as if the future promised by God has already arrived.

**Q: What does God’s grace accomplish for His people?**

A: He forgives and restores them.

**Application:** *Human psychology demands that a person deal with every aspect of their old life in order to cope with the present; biblical psychology demands that we bury the old life at the cross, live in the knowledge of full forgiveness, and live the present life in terms of the future one God has promised.*

**[Read 44:25-28]**

**Q: What aspect of God’s character does He remind His people of?**

A: His sovereignty. He is the one who causes (v.25) and confirms (v.26) everything in history to fulfill His will.

messengers.  
It is I who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited!'  
And of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built.'  
And I will raise up her ruins again.  
<sup>27</sup>It is I who says to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!'  
And I will make your rivers dry.  
<sup>28</sup>It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd!  
And he will perform all My desire.'  
And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,'  
And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"

<sup>22</sup>"Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob;  
But you have become weary of Me, O Israel.  
<sup>23</sup>You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings,  
Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.  
I have not burdened you with offerings,  
Nor wearied you with incense.  
<sup>24</sup>You have bought Me not sweet cane with money,  
Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices;  
Rather you have burdened Me with your sins,  
You have wearied Me with your iniquities.  
<sup>25</sup>"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake,  
And I will not remember your sins.  
<sup>26</sup>Put Me in remembrance, let us argue our case together;  
State your cause, that you may be proved right.  
<sup>27</sup>Your first forefather sinned,  
And your spokesmen have transgressed against Me.  
<sup>28</sup>So I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary,  
And I will consign Jacob to the ban

**Q: What is God specifically stating will be raised up and established?**

A: Jerusalem (v.24), Judah (v.24), and the temple (v.28). In other words, all the essential physical attributes which identify God's people.

**Q: Why is it significant that Cyrus is specifically mentioned by name in v.28?**

A: Cyrus is the future king of Persia who will conquer Babylon and mandate that the Jews return to Israel to rebuild both the temple and Jerusalem. This prediction came through Isaiah 150 years before Cyrus began to reign.

**Q: What is it that God is reminding His people they should do?**

A: Although the word isn't directly used here, the clear implication is that they should live by faith that because God did everything He said He would do in the past, He will most certainly bring about everything yet to come.

**Q: What does God's grace accomplish for His people?**

A: He follows up on spiritual restoration with physical restoration.

**Application:** Everything that God is doing in our lives today spiritually is an affirmation of what He is going to do for us physically not just through the Millennial Reign, but in the eternal life to come.

**[Read 43:22-28]**

**Q: The point of view has dramatically changed in these verses compared to those passages studied to this point. How has it changed?**

A: Whereas the previous sections were mostly focused on God's grace and the faithfulness of His working, this section is focused on God's people and their unfaithfulness in this world.

**Q: How are God's people characterized?**

A: As sinners who continually failed to develop a consistent, faithful relationship with God.

**Q: In these verses what confirms this is a correct interpretation of these verses?**

A: God begins by describing the offerings that were supposed to come from a faithful and loving people desiring to celebrate and consecrate a right relationship with Him. Instead, if He gets anything at all it's the sacrifices designed to address the issue of sin. "You have burdened Me with your sins...wearied Me with your iniquities" (v.24).

**Q: What will God's grace accomplish for His people?**

A: He will work on their behalf in spite of their sin.

**Application:** Being called by God is not enough, having a religious heritage is not enough, possessing God's methods and processes is not enough. Ultimately it is accomplished by the working of God's grace through a personal relationship by which we pursue a faithful and loving relationship in the same way the ultimate ideal bride seeks such a relationship with the bridegroom.

Isaiah 43-44 • The One True God, Page 5 of 7

and Israel to revilement.

## Summary to This Point

*The ultimate definition of “grace” is “undeserved favor”. In these chapters God makes the step-by-step case that none are worthy or deserving and ultimately every believer is the beneficiary of the working of His grace in them.*

*Now Isaiah contrasts the relationship between people seeking the One True God versus people pursuing false gods.*

<sup>9</sup>Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame. <sup>10</sup>Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit?

### [Read 44:9-10]

**Q: What are the key, repeated phrases which are very similar to each other?**

A: “Futile” (v.9) and “no profit” (v.9 & 10).

**Q: What is being described?**

A: The worthlessness of false idols.

**Point:** *Whereas God’s people may experience temporary hardship but will inherit a perfect life to come, those who make and worship them will derive no permanent benefit.*

<sup>11</sup>Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame.

### [Read 44:11]

**Q: What is the keyword in this verse?**

A: “Shame”.

**Q: How does “shame” come about?**

A: It comes at the end when one realizes that what they were doing was wrong, unfruitful, a failure, etc. In biblical terms it’s the logical end result of unfaithfulness.

**Point:** *Whereas Final Judgment will bring to completion the work of salvation in God’s people, for unbelievers it is experiencing God’s wrath for false worship.*

<sup>12</sup>The man shapes iron into a cutting tool and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary. <sup>13</sup>Another shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house. <sup>14</sup>Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. <sup>15</sup>Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down before it.

### [Read 44:12-17]

**Q: What are the key related phrases used throughout this passage?**

A: “Shapes”, “fashioning”, “hammers”, “works”, “makes”, “cuts”, “plants”, etc.

**Q: What are these all expressions of? What do they have in common?**

A: They are all expressions of the works of human hands. False idols don’t come from gods but are shaped by man into his own image.

**Point:** *This expresses the very nature of Satan who, since he wants to replace God, entices people to themselves act as God and create such things from their own imagination.*

**Q: What do the creators of false idols ultimately do with them?**

A: “... worships it...and falls down before it.” (v.15)

**Point:** *Whereas God’s people spend their time and resources pursuing a personal relationship with Him, unbelievers spend their time and resources pursuing their own desires and imagination. God’s people give up the old creation to be transformed into the new; unbelievers actually pursue the old creation by dedicating their lives to pursuing deeper variations of the old. Instead*

Isaiah 43-44 • The One True God, Page 6 of 7

half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." <sup>17</sup>But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god."

<sup>18</sup>They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend. <sup>19</sup>No one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat it. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!" <sup>20</sup>He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

*of being devoted the working of God's grace, they are devoted to their own workmanship.*

### **[Read 44:18-20]**

#### **Q: What are the key, related phrases in this passage?**

A: "They do not know", "nor do they understand", "they cannot see", "they cannot comprehend", "there is no knowledge or understanding".

#### **Q: What do they combine to describe?**

A: Deception. The end result of false worship/false religion is complete and total spiritual deception. "A deceived heart has turned him aside". (v.19)

**Point:** Whereas unbelievers are deceived into pursuing the things of this present life and dedicating their time and resources to false gods and pursuits, God's people live by faith seeing beyond the present circumstances and live in the shadow of the life to come.

### **Overall Application**

*Here is the contrast pursuing the true working of God versus the idols and false gods of this world. The working of God's grace in a believers life is:*

- God protects them.
- God prefers them.
- God gathers them.
- God appoints them as His witnesses.
- God ushers them into the Millennium.
- God fills them with the Holy Spirit.
- God forgives them.
- God ultimately physically restores what He spiritually restores.

*But the pursuits of a non-believer's life are:*

- The worthlessness of their false gods.
- The wrath of the One True God for their pursuit of false gods.
- The waste of their resources pursuing temporal things which never result in eternal things.
- Deception as they are fully given over to what they so earnestly pursue.

*Ultimately it's the contrast of a life which lives by faith in Christ in spite of the circumstances versus the daily pursuit of self.*