

Gracious God Redeems Those Called by His Name

Isaiah 43:1-7 (vv. 1, 7)

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. Historical Background

What's in a Name? Is there *power in naming* people and things? How *significant* is it when God changes your **Name**?

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, God shows us the **power** and **significance inherent in naming** someone and things. God **named** the first human beings as **Adam** and **Eve**. Understand when God *pronounced their names*, His Power, Will and Vision were also *transferred to them through the names He chose for them*. In Hebrew, **Adam** means “human,” “of earth.” This makes sense because **Adam** was “... formed from the dust of the ground” and he *became alive* because God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:4-7). **Eve** means, “to live” or “give life.” This makes sense because **Eve** came out of **Adam** “to live and give life” to their **offsprings**. *This is not accidental!* No! It is *intentional* in the fulfilment of *God's blessings and plan for them* to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. ...” (Genesis 1:26-28). So, we can see the **divine power and eternal significance in the Naming** of Adam and Eve at the time of Creation.

In Genesis chapter 2, God gave **Adam** *the power to name* all “living creatures,” that He brought to him. **Whatever Adam named them, that is what they became known as!** The four-legged animal that **brays** Adam called donkey; the four-legged animal with horns that **moos**, he named cow! The four-legged animal that **barks**, he called dog! The animal that **roars**, he called lion and so on! Notice Adam neither created the Earth, nor the animals, plants, etc. *He was only given the privilege and power to name them!*

B. Biblical Context

God changed Names. God *changed the names* of **Abram** and **Sarai** after they *proved their faith and obedience to His will and plan for their destiny*. **Abram** means “exalted father.” That is interesting because we know when God called him, he was *75 years old and childless!* **Sarai** means “princess” and she was *65, barren*. *But God came into their married life to radically change the trajectory of their destiny!* God *changed their names* after HE entered a **Covenant Relationship of Promise and Circumcision** with them (Genesis 17). God *changed* Abram's name to **Abraham** which means “**father of many nations**” and Sarai's name to **Sarah** which means “**mother of nations**.” By changing their names, God brought to life the promises embedded in their given names *multiplied*,

gloried and extended to eternity! Just think about how God's Promises (Genesis 12) became true and magnified to this day! For thousands of generations, including our own, the names of **Abraham and Sarah** are not only *known* by millions of people around the world, but also *reveal* the everlasting Power of God which keeps on transforming lives!

God also changed Jacob's name to Israel. The Hebrew meaning for **Jacob** is "to be behind," "to supplant," "to overreach." Jacob indeed was a "supplanter" and "overreached" when he *deceived* his brother **Essau** out of his birthright! He suffered the consequences of his *deceptive actions* when he had to flee and be the servant of his uncle Laban, be forced to work for 14 years as a shepherd to marry **Leah** and **Rachel**. **Those were hard years for Jacob, the deceiver!** But the LORD *changed* his **Name** because of **His Promises** to Abraham and Sarah which worked through the ups and downs, turns and struggles of his life! In God's Providential time, the LORD *changed* Jacob's name to **Israel** which in Hebrew means "one who **struggles, contends** or **strives** with God." Indeed, Jacob had *to struggle all night long* with an angel of the LORD and he persevered! The angel, as he left Jacob, not only **blessed him** and *changed his name* to **Israel**, but also "touched the socket of Jacob's hip," which left him limping for life as a reminder (Genesis 32:22-32). **Because of the divine encounter and name change, Israel's life and the trajectory of his destiny was radically changed! In the case of Jacob, as implied in his New Identity, the Name Change entailed "an all-night struggle, a blessing and limping!"** This is a lesson/sermon for another day!

Why is it important for us to know the **eternal significance of Name Changes**?

What does it mean to be a community of faith whom God refers as the "people called by My Name?" *There is nothing more significant and privileged than God claiming us as His own!* By claiming us as His own, God is giving us a new **Identity in Christ** which gives us **Citizenship** in heaven! Hallelujah! People of all nations and generations who share the ancestral line of Abraham and Sarah as God's people are *destined* for **Eternal Citizenship with the Lamb of God!** Hallelujah! *It all began with God changing names; with God giving Abram and Sarai new names!* For the Israelites, to be known as "the people of God" was extremely radical and extraordinarily significant! Similarly, for us to be known as the disciples of Jesus Christ is extremely radical and significant! **You and I have New Identity in Christ defined by our relationship with the Redeemer, The Savior!**

II. GRACIOUS GOD REDEEMS THOSE CALLED BY HIS NAME

1. v. 1. Fear Not, God has a claim on you by Name!

There are four words in verse 1 which *pronounce* **divine ownership**. Those words are "**created**," "**formed**," "**redeemed**" and "**mine**." God was *reminding* and *confirming* to the Israelites **whose** they are and *how* they became **who** they are. The people of God have *the propensity to forget* **where** they came from, **who** (**whose**) they are and **where** they are

supposed to go! I will call that **self-imposed amnesia!** From time to time, God had to *remind* the Israelites (and us) **whose we are for our own benefit!** In so many ways, the Bible reminds us that we are God's creation because we have *the propensity* to think and act as self-made! **Jacob** just didn't pop up out of thin air! His parents were **Isaac and Rebekah**. His grandparents were **Abraham and Sarah!** And it is God who *changed* Jacob's name to **Israel!** God spoke to the Israelites, *who had strayed away* only to find themselves in exile and under the Assyrian oppression, saying, "Fear not, for I have **redeemed** you; I have **summoned** by **name**; **you are mine.**" *What an affirming and encouraging words from God delivered with divine assurance!* Now, for those who don't believe in God, all of these affirming words don't mean anything! But these *divine words* were meant to **quicken the spirits** of those who believed in God's faithfulness and His promises! For those who didn't forget their **ancestral history**, the *divine words*, "**Fear not, for I have redeemed you**" *become alive in them* **awakening** their hope in God! *These divine words become* **spiritual medicines** which **revive** the down cast souls of the believers! *These* **divine words become alive** for those who believe in the **Sovereignty of God** no matter the where they lived, or how bad their circumstances were! Generation after the generation, these divine words have **sparked** hope, **reignited** faith and **spurred** spiritual resilience to those called **the Redeemed** identified by their Savior's **Holy Name!**

2. **vv. 2-3 (a).** No Harm Befalls You since I AM The LORD, Your God!

During the time of Prophet Isaiah, **Israel**, the Northern Kingdom, was totally defeated by the Assyrians; **Israel**, as a nation, has ceased to exist!!! The Israelites were deported to various parts of the Assyrian kingdom. It was at such a terrible time that God spoke to the Israelites who were totally engulfed with hopelessness, grief and destitution. In Isaiah 43, God gives **His Promises of Assurance and Deliverance!** What I like about this section is that God spells out in specific ways **the kinds of perils** they would face as well as how He would **protect** and **rescue** them! That is why Isaiah 43 is one of the most favorite scriptures of mine!

A. The Perils facing the Israelites (metaphoric and literal sense).

- a) **Waters/Rivers:** *stormy seas* and *flooded raging rivers* they must **literally cross** when God **summons** them from the various places the enemy had scattered them. Metaphorically, stormy waters represent social **turmoil**, economic **tsunamis** and financial **meltdowns** that can overwhelm, drown and overtake us! God says, none of these things can "**sweep over you**" since "**I will be with you.**" Hallelujah!
- b) **Fires:** political storms can *unleash* conflicts and wars which can **literally consume** people the same way **wildfire** *destroys* forests, wipes out properties, devastates communities and burns people to death! *Fires can erupt in all kinds of ways! Fire can also take different forms such as* **spiritual warfare that consumes** marriages, churches and families! God says, "**When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.**" Hallelujah!

No Harm Befalls you since I AM the LORD, Your God! Hallelujah!**B. The Awesome Power and Glorious Nature of The Savior.**

Neither the waters nor the fire can harm you because “**I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior** (v. 3a). So much Divine Glory, Majesty, Power, Holiness, Grace, Mercy and Love is packed in this verse! So much **Blessed Assurances** of God are packed in this verse! *There are no adequate words to express and explain such abundant and glorious blessings!*

- a) **The LORD**. This Title indicates **The Sovereignty of God**. The LORD is the Only Supreme Divine Power, Authority and Ruler over all that He Created.
- b) **The Holy One of Israel**. No one but **Only God is Holy!** Holiness, Righteousness and Truthfulness are three of the **Most Sacred Characteristics of His Divine Nature!** Holiness can be *ascribed* only to God because it *denotes* the **divine quality of His Essence** *in its utmost purity* – **the total absence** of *any form* evil, sin, and moral/ethical deficiency. That is why the subject of holiness is one of the major doctrines of the Bible.
- c) **The Savior**. No one but God is the Only **Savior**. Humanity cannot *save* itself from itself! If people were able to save people, poverty, conflicts and wars would have been absent! We *lack* the power, authority and moral integrity to eliminate hatred, jealousy, greed, selfishness, injustice and lies from *within* ourselves! **Only God can do it!** It is *impossible* for **a person** to *totally get rid of Sin*, and thereafter *acquire* qualities such as love, goodness, justice, and truth on his/her own to **save** himself or herself. Sinful people need **The Savior** to rescue them, restore them and empower them with His divine qualities for them to think right and do the right thing!

In Isaiah 43, God *identified* Himself as **The LORD**, the **Holy One of Israel, the Savior God** when He proclaimed His *Promises of Assurance* to the Israelites! God wanted them to *hear* His **Names** by which their ancestors knew Him. God did it to **jolt** their *deemed* memories, **awaken** their *weakened* spirits and **warm** their *cold* hearts by the divine power *inherent* in His Awesome Names! He identified Himself as *their* God, **The Savior! Even the dead shall rise at such pronouncements!**

3. vv. 3b-4. I will Pay Ransom to Save You because I love You!

God says to the Israelites, *two things* that **don't match** the *historical profile of their behavior pattern* (who have been unfaithful, disobedience, stubborn, ever complaining and grumbling people). God says,

- a) **“You are precious” and “honored” in My sight.** God says to the Israelites “**you are precious**” to me! In My sight, you are “**honored;**” that is, “**esteemed.**” What God was saying to them was that their “**worth**” to Him was “**more than their despicable behavior!**” Now, you and I will have *great difficulty* saying these things to people who *repeatedly* been hurtful, disrespectful, ungrateful, disloyal, ... abusive in so many ways to us for years! People may look down on us and think we don't amount to anything. But when God *looks* at us, He *sees*

how He made us and what He put in us! Always remember that we are *covered* by **the Blood of the Lamb** and the **Holy Spirit** *lives in us!* Hallelujah!

b) "Because I love you," I will pay "**ransom**" for your life.

Despite our unfaithful, disobedient and ungrateful behavior toward our Savior, God still is saying to us right now, "**I love you!**" Understand this beloved: When God *looks* at us, He *sees* us through the "divine lens of **redemption** in Christ!" Whereas the devil *sees* you and I through his hateful, evil eyes as someone to **devour**, God *sees* us through His *loving-kindness* **worthy** to be **ransomed!** Whereas Satan wants to *keep us in chains* so that he can be entertained by our suffering, God *sees* us as "**worthy**" of His Mercy, Grace and Love! God promised the Israelites that He would give "Egypt," "Cush" and "Seba" as "ransom" in exchange for their lives! That's how "precious" they were to God who **claimed** them as His own!

4. vv. 5-7. **I will Gather Your Scattered Children from all Corners!**

The Gracious, Merciful and Loving God promised the Israelites who were in exile scattered throughout the Assyrian empire at the time, that there will come a day when He would gather their children from all corners. God had Isaiah to prophecies saying the He will "**summon**" from the "north," "south," "east" and "west" the people He *called out* and *birthed* through Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Israel (Jacob) at divinely appointed time. This biblical motif is consistently repeated at significant times throughout the Bible. The Sovereign God exclusively says in verse 7, "everyone who is called by **My Name**, whom I created for My Glory, whom I formed and Made." I am glad for the word "**everyone**" in verse 7 because it includes us! I am so glad that the LORD assigned **Isaiah 43**, verses 1 through 7 for me to study and share it with you this morning! I am glad because there will be that divinely appointed time that our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ will come to "summon everyone" who is called by His Name out of the graves scattered all over the Earth! On that Glorious Day, the dead shall rise to meet Him up in sky! I thank God for the Word of God!

III. CONCLUSION

Beloved, Fear Not! The Sovereign God has a claim on your life!

Gracious God Redeems those who are Called by His Holy Name!

Our Lord Jesus Christ has already paid the Ransom for our lives!

Hallelujah!