

The Promises of God: Session 3

Isaiah 43:1-7

¹But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Background to Isaiah

For an in-depth background to Isaiah, see this link [Intro to Isaiah | Biblica - The International Bible Society](#)

The Book of Isaiah is one of the most important books of the Old Testament. While little is known of the personal life of the prophet, he is considered to be one of the greatest of them all.

The book is a collection of oracles, prophecies, and reports; but the common theme is the message of salvation. There was, according to these writings, no hope in anything that was made by people. The northern kingdom of Israel had been carried into captivity (722 B.C.), and the kingdom of Judah was in the middle of idolatry and evil. The kingdom of Assyria had dominated the Fertile Crescent and posed a major threat to both kingdoms; and the kingdom of Babylon was gaining power and would replace Assyria as the dominant threat. In view of the fast-changing international scene, the people of Israel would be concerned about their lot in life—what would become of the promises of God? How could the chosen people survive, let alone be a theocracy again? And must the remnant of the righteous also suffer with the nation that for all purposes was pagan?

Source: <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-introduction-study-book-isaiah>

- Note that there is some unresolved dispute as to whether the book of Isaiah was written by one person or more than one.

Personal reflection

- Are you passing through 'deep waters' or through 'the fire' today?
- Do you need to hear God's word of assurance that he is with you in these circumstances?
- In verse 1 exchange the words Jacob and Israel for your own name and read the passage again as a personal declaration to you. Hear God's words of love and comfort in your difficulties.

Some things to ponder for discussion:

- This passage was probably written between BCE 740 and BCE 686 – several hundred years before Christ was born. It was addressed to the Jewish people in exile. How does this affect our understanding as Christians nearly 3 000 years later?
- Isaiah says 'when' not 'if' – what does this infer about what we should expect in our lives?
- How do you know that you are precious to God?
- How do you assure others going through tough times of God's love for them?
- What can you do to assure God's love to those who do not believe?