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# GOD AND YOU

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STUDY NOTES FOR CARE GROUPS - (ISAIAH 43:1-21)

*The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, January 10, 2010, by Pastor Arnold Wong at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.*

*January 10, 2010*

## *Understanding the Context:*

The LORD promises to re-gather His undeserving nation and renew them. Israel is exhorted not to fear because God formed them and called them in the past; and because they are precious to Him they will be re-gathered from the whole earth.

The LORD then brings the people forth as a witness that He is God alone. Both this witness and the nations in general will recognize that the LORD is sovereign, and that He acts without any assistance, and that none can oppose Him.

For us as believers we should examine the promises of the New Covenant that await fulfillment. The Apostle Paul says that the whole world is groaning, waiting for the day of redemption. We need to have confidence that God will keep His Word and deliver us from the bondage of the world. Such hope casts out all fear.

## **1. BE CONFIDENT GOD HAS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS OWN, 43:1-7.**

### **... BASED ON WHO GOD IS, 1, 2**

Verses 1, 2 says that God is the Creator and the Redeemer and has laid the foundation of the Word of promise by affirming that this is the nation that God had formed.

The language is covenantal: ***"You are mine."*** We should ask the question ***"Why shouldn't we be afraid?"*** And the answer is that He calls us by name and we are His. And the wonderful thing is that, all of this is by His design. This is reassuring for no matter what trials we walk through we can be assured that God will take care of us because we are His.

### **... BASED ON HOW GOD REGARDS HIS OWN, 3-4**

This passage refers to a deliverance from bondage and so is essentially political, although this deliverance includes the fact that sin was the reason for the exile. So it is a physical-spiritual deliverance. The deliverance is because Israel is precious in God's sight. They are highly valued because they are the chosen people. And the main motive for the deliverance is "because I love you". And this is God's motive for delivering us.

### **... BASED ON HOW GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES, 5-7**

God keeping His promises is the basis for our comfort. God says that He will re-gather His people from all over the world. Not all of the exiled people went to Babylon—they were scattered. But as the Creator, God will speak to the north, south, east, and west, and the world will give up His people. Question to consider: *Why should we take comfort in this promise?*

Christ always did things that the Father might be glorified. Everything He does is for that purpose, for all glory given to Him will attract many more to the Kingdom. Likewise when we glorify the LORD, it is meant in part to draw people to His love. *How can we do this in our Christian walk?*

## 2. BE CONFIDENT GOD HAS A SPECIAL PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR HIS OWN, 8-13

... GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE A LIVING TESTIMONY THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD. 8-10

Discipline is a natural outflow of God's love. Discipline is a sign of how much God loves us. In Jeremiah 31:3 we hear God say, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love."* This is the kind of love that only God can give. Discuss how discipline can be carried out in a loving and caring way.

*"You are my witnesses."* Israel is here addressed as the chosen servant of the LORD. In view of what follows this makes great sense. But believers do not always like the idea of being chosen, nor do they like the idea of being servants. But if God is God, they must be both servants and chosen. If God was chosen by us and He is our servant, then He is not much of a God.

... GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE A LIVING TESTIMONY THAT THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD WHO IS POWERFUL. "I, EVEN I, AM THE LORD, THERE IS NO SAVIOR APART FROM ME."

No religion in the ancient or modern world made such claims to exclusivity and salvation. There is only one God; and there is only one Savior—Yahweh. This affirms that the LORD is the only true God, always has been, always will be. And He is completely sovereign. No one can deliver out of His hand, and no one can make Him change His plans.

One can only trust the LORD, certainly not rebel against Him. Deliverance comes from Him; judgment also comes from Him. He alone can save; no one can save from Him. Such knowledge of God must lead to faith.

## 3. BE CONFIDENT, BECAUSE GOD HAS SPECIAL WAYS OF DOING THINGS ON HIS OWN

... GOD DOES THINGS THE SAME.

Verse 14 begins with the double description of the LORD: the *Holy One of Israel* and their *Redeemer*. The LORD reminds the people of the first exodus out of bondage in Egypt. Now Israel should be reminded of that great deliverance that made them a nation in the first place. God is fully able to deliver His people from world powers.

... GOD DOES THINGS IN NEW AND GREATER WAYS.

After recalling the exodus, the LORD tells Israel not to remember. They should not dwell on the past, because God is going to do something new and wonderful. Live for the future.

An application could easily be made along the way here: many Christians live only in the past with their focus on what Christ did back there in their own conversion experience; this is fine, but they are not looking for the next event, the culmination of the covenant programme in the second coming! The events of Christ's first coming laid the foundation for what He will do at the second.

The LORD is going to bring a marvelous new deliverance through the desert. The theme is announced in verse 19 is: *"Behold, I am about to do a new thing."* The "new thing" will be a road through the wilderness. The imagery compares this return to streams in the desert.

We need to recognize that God wants to do a new thing in each of our lives. This could mean doing things we haven't done before.

The time to respond is now, **DO WE DARE?**

*Let us be thankful for what God has done.*

*Let us be alert to what God wants to do in our lives.*

*Let us be open to change*

And the basis for all of this is:

**"THIS PEOPLE I HAVE FORMED FOR MYSELF—THEY SHALL DECLARE MY PRAISE."**