

Several more chapters must be read, however, before the answer will be found.

Isaiah 43

Some of the great themes of chapter 42 are repeated in chapter 43. The reference to God's judgment on Israel with which chapter 42 ended is expanded at the end of 43 with a pathetic statement of His disappointment over the sin of His beloved people who have turned away from Him. Surely there is no more pathetic passage in the Scriptures than Isaiah 43:22-24.

The chapter begins in sharp contrast to the end of the preceding chapter, with a rapid transition to the theme of comfort and deliverance. Despite Israel's sin and failure, God is going to deliver her. When she passes through the waters, He will be with her. It will be impossible for the flames to destroy her because God will protect her. In verse 3, He declares that He will give Egypt for her ransom and Ethiopia and Seba for her. These lands were later conquered by Cyrus and are here represented as given by the Lord to Cyrus as a reward for releasing Israel. We shall find further reference to this same idea in 45:14.

The theme of God's love for Israel and the certainty that He will regather and deliver them is continued in verses 4-7.

In verse 8, the theme of the vanity of idols recurs. All the nations are called upon to appear before the Lord and to attempt to show that their false gods have either knowledge or power. In contrast God declares in verse 10 that the Israelites are His witnesses. They are His servant whom He has chosen; in spite of everything that has happened Israel is to be the medium through which His world-wide work will be accomplished.

Verses 11 and 12 repeat the thought that God is the only possible savior. Verses 14-17 stress the deliverance from Babylon which God will bring about. In verses 18-21 He declares that even His great deeds of old will be surpassed by the new wonderful acts which He will perform and that this people which He formed for Himself will yet show forth His praise.