

God's Divine Redemption, Protection & Provision

Sometimes it seems to us like that the word of God is not effective and precious especially when we are in danger. I remember when Saddam Hussein and his troops invaded Kuwait and the Allied forces were sent to defend Kuwait against the military assault of Saddam Hussein. (At the time, I was still in Africa, preparing to come to the United States. I remember, there were prayer vigils in many churches all over the world. Many people who had not been to church for decades began to attend church services and prayer meetings. Those who probably had not fasted before began to fast. Right now, there is another ominous cloud that hangs over our heads. Since the outbreak of the Corona Virus disease there are fears and concerns everywhere around the world. The believers all over the world are awake more than ever before now calling on God.

My question is this: What causes people to live independent of God until trouble comes into their lives? This question is not for unbelievers only, but Christians as well. Why do you ignore or reject God's control of your life, until you hit rock bottom? Why do you ignore the teachings of the word of God until disaster comes?

The people of Israel in the Old Testament were no different. You would think that since their fathers had seen the miracles and the power of God, they would be obedient to God, but that was not the case. They were like many Christians today. When everything is going well with them, you don't see them in the house of God. You don't see them in prayer meetings, Bible study, and Sunday school. But when trouble or calamity strikes, they behave like they are angels.

This text that we are dealing with is a case in point when the kings and the people have disobeyed God. God had warned them through His prophets including the prophet Isaiah, but they did not pay heed to the word of God. God who sees the future from the present prophesied through Isaiah that the rebellion of the kings and the people would end them in captivity. Now they are tired of idol worship. Many of the older generations would die in captivity. King

Nebuchadnezzar would kill many of the false prophets who would promise them instant deliverance. Remember that in their rebellion against God, the prophet Jeremiah warned them that unless they repent and turn to God, they would go into captivity for seventy years. They did not repent so true to God's word, they went into captivity.

Redemption, Protection and Provision are all promises of God in Isaiah 43

Isaiah **43:1-7**; "But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called *you* by your name;
You *are* Mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.

³For I *am* the Lord your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I gave Egypt for your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
⁴Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life.
⁵Fear not, for I *am* with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east,
And gather you from the west;
⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth—
⁷Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

THE THREE MAJOR THINGS THAT GOD HAS PROMISED FROM THIS CHAPTER

1) DIVINE REDEMPTION (Isaiah 43 Verse 1)

In verse 1, the text reads: "But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel." There is something significant in this verse that I don't want you to miss. God is the Creator of Jacob. He is also the One who formed Israel. God is the Creator of the universe. Today, some have formulated other human theories to reject the fact that God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. There is what is called The Big Bang Theory. There is another called Evolutionary Theory, purported by Charles Darwin. This theory says that humans evolved from highly developed animals such as monkeys and chimpanzees. This is what is being taught in schools here in the United States. That is why our children are in trouble; that is why many children are more confused today. That is why some of them are taking their own lives. If a child is made to believe that he/she originated from a monkey, do you realize the psychological damage it would do to his/her image? In effect, the child thinks there is no purpose in life for him/her. There is no hope for him/her. But these theories are from people whose knowledge and intellect are distorted or skewed. God says, "I created you, O Jacob." The word "Creator" used here is the same word whose verb form is used in Genesis 1:1, 27, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. So, God created man in His own image". The word formed is also the same used in the formation of Eve after God had taken one of Adam's ribs. Therefore, I want to submit to you that you are not in this world by accident. You did not evolve from a monkey or chimpanzee. You were created providentially by God. You were fearfully and wonderfully made. You are a masterpiece from the divine Creator. You are no accident. This passage is also a case against abortion. Abortion is not the plan of God. Abortion is an invention of man to determine who ought to live and who have to die. God is the one who forms the fetus in the womb. It is not formed by accident. God has a purpose for that tiny, helpless, defenseless baby in the womb. God said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Before I formed you in

the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

If you could recall, it was through God’s promise to Abraham that Jacob came into being. When Abraham was born, he was called Abram. When God established a covenant and an everlasting relationship with him, he became Abraham. When Jacob was born, he was named Jacob, meaning a trickster, a deceiver, and a foot grabber. Every person born into this world has a Jacob in him/her. We have a deceitful spirit in us because we are the offspring of Adam. We have a sinful nature. But when we are saved, we are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We become the new Israel, the spiritual Israel. After Jacob prevailed with the Angel of God, his name changed from Jacob, the trickster to Israel, meaning for you have struggled with God. God said to Jacob, I have made you a new person. I have removed the dross from your heart. I have made you My own. I have formed you, O Jacob. The word formed is the same used for a potter who forms a pot with clay. This reminds me of Jeremiah 18, when God sent Jeremiah to the potter’s house. There, Jeremiah learned an object lesson that applied to the condition of Israel at that time. As the potter remolds a ruined pot, so can God the Divine Potter form you again whose life has been ruined by sin. No matter how sinful you are God is prepared to transform your life and make you a new person from the inside out.

God tells Israel, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you!”

Do you have a personal saving experience with Jesus Christ? Are you a child of God through Jesus Christ? Then no matter how difficult your circumstance is, no matter how insurmountable your mountains seem, God is saying to you, I have redeemed you. He says again, I have called you by name. Do you know that God knows your name; and He calls you by name? All the people that God saves and uses, He calls them by name. God called Adam by name (Genesis 3:9); God called Noah by name (Gen. 7:1); God called Abraham by name (Genesis 22:15); God called Sarah by name (Gen. 18:13). God called Moses by name (Exodus 3:4); God called Samuel by name (1 Samuel 3:6); God called Jeremiah by name (Jeremiah 18:1). Jesus called Zacchaeus by name (Luke 19:5); The exalted Christ called Saul by name (Acts 9:4). God knows your name. Then He says, you are Mine! Israel belongs to God. If you are a true Christian, you are a child of God. You belong to God. You are God’s property. God was reminding the people of Judah of His irrevocable covenant with Abraham. If God does not forget His covenant with Abraham, what about His covenant with us through the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ? Do you have a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ

2) DIVINE PROTECTION (Isaiah 43 Verses 2-7)

The LORD says, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you. In the second verse, I would like you to underscore the word when in your Bible. God did not say if you pass through the waters. The word if is conditional, but the word when is unconditional. In other words, you will pass through the waters; it is just a matter of time. The waters and the fire are metaphors for problems, difficulties, and pain in life. Contrary to contemporary health and wealth gospel, you will have trouble as a believer in Christ. You will face hardships and headaches, but the LORD has promised to be with you through it all. You see, the Christian life on this side of the world is like a rose flower with a thorn in it. God has not promised us

comfort and ease in the Christian life. God has not promised us immunity from difficulties and hardships. He has promised us of His presence. He has promised to walk with us hand in hand in times of trouble. Sometimes. **You see, the safety of a Christian is not the absence of danger, but the presence of God in time of danger.** Jesus said, these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

This is the caution: God is not saying that you should deliberately pass through the waters and the rivers. You are not to take this literally. In the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego it was their obedience to God that landed them in the fiery furnace. They did not set up the fire themselves. Their enemies set up the fire because they wanted to get rid of them. God preserved their lives and they were not burned. God walked with them in the fire and their hair was not singed. However, during the second, third, fourth, and sixteenth centuries A. D. there were Christians who were burned at the stake. They died as martyrs because of their faith in Christ. God sometimes delivers His people from physical suffering like the case of Daniel and the other three. However, sometimes God does not deliver His children but provides the strength for His children to endure physical suffering or persecution. When John the Baptist was arrested and jailed, God did not intervene, and he lost his head. We have seen and heard of people who have taken everything literally and killed people in the name of the Lord.

Another thing is this; God does not always open paths in advance of our coming. He does not promise help before help is needed. He does not remove obstacles out of our way before we reach them. If He does you will never learn to walk by faith. However, when we are on the edge of our need, God stretches His hand out (example, the Red Sea, and Peter walking on water).

In Isaiah 43 and verse 3, the LORD reminds Israel of who He is. God uses four of His names that point to His greatness and supremacy. God is good to Israel not because they deserve it. God saves you not because of your goodness. God saves you because of His grace. Then God says, I have given Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. When Persia under the leadership of Cyrus released Israel from Babylonian captivity, God gave Egypt, Cush, and Seba into the hands of Persia in exchange for Israel. God exchanges the plight of His people with those who hate them and persecute them. When the enemies of God rejoice in the adversity of God's people, God redeems His people and punishes the enemies. God says, the righteous will inherit the land, but the wicked will be swept away. The sufferings of Christians are temporary, but the sufferings of those who reject Christ are permanent. Jesus says that they are tormented day and night. The intensity of their suffering will not be reduced.

God repeats do not be afraid. God repeats words for emphasis. God is saying to Israel, you are in captivity; you are in a strange land with strange and false gods. Yes, it is natural to be afraid, but God says, I promise you don't be afraid because I am with you. That is the same promise that God gave to Moses. God said, I am that I am, and Moses said, if they ask me of Your name what should I say? The LORD said to Moses tell them that I AM has sent me (Read Exodus chapter 4). God says, I will gather your children from the east and west. I will bring them out from the north to the south. God is saying, Israel this seems impossible to you but trust Me. **God is saying to you who are in some storms of life, trust Me, for I**

have your situation under control. Will you trust God, or will you let your circumstance overwhelm you? Our God is faithful to His promises. He is the Savior who delivers us not because of our merit but His mercy, not because of our goodness, but His grace. Our God is a caring and gracious God. The scattered exiles will be re-gathered from every geographical location. This promise was primarily for Israel, but it has a broader meaning: All God's people will be re-gathered when Christ returns to rule the earth. He says everyone who is called by My name. God is saying to Christians who are going through trials, persecution, some heartache, or difficulties, do not be afraid, for I am with you and I will bring you out of that situation. God is saying I will do that for you because I created you for My glory. You see, when God created Adam and Eve, He created them for His glory. When God created you, He created you for His glory. But when Adam and Eve sinned, the human race lost the glory of God. But when Jesus saves you through the divine activity of the Holy Spirit, God restores His glory in your life. God says now you are Mine again through My own blood. God has created you for His glory. The question is what glory does your life bring to God? Any time you sin as a Christian, you stain the glory of God. God finally says, "I formed you and made you." Brothers and sisters, we are not in this world by accident. You are the special handiwork of God the Creator and Redeemer; you are bought with a precious price. Therefore, God's divine protection is upon you. God has chosen you and me, we have been sealed with His Holy Spirit, and He watches over us. Serve Him with gladness and stop being afraid. Share His love with others. God has your situation under control.

3) DIVINE PROVISION (Matthew 6:25-34)

The Bible is fairly clear on the kinds of provisions God provides. It may not be exactly what you want now but each and every day you need to count your blessings. Our blessings largely come down to simple things. Let us look at the following Scriptures;

Matthew 6:25-34; "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble".

This is one of the central promises of the Christian faith. We know it. We recite it. It's built into old hymns and contemporary evangelical choruses, but we simply forget and start murmuring and complaining.

The Lord provides a rainy spring for the sake of our farmers and the seeds in their fields.

- The Lord provides another job when loose one
- The Lord provides friends when we move to a new city.
- The Lord provides safety during calamities

The Lord provides for each of our lives in a multitude of ways – both in the hard times and the good times. We pray for that provision on a regular basis, asking for jobs or companionship or a home. We need to continue to ask God for guidance and direction and a purpose instead of complaining of what we do not have. Whenever we pray for the Lord's provision, we need to hold onto those prayers until the manifestation comes.

The Scripture passages from the Book of Exodus 15 shows us what it looked like for Moses and the Israelites to respond to a powerful act of God's provision. After the Red Sea, after the Miracle, and after the powerful provision of the Lord, the Israelites responds in song, praising God for His strength, His majesty, and His holiness. The song ends by proclaiming "The Lord will reign forever and ever."

The Exodus is one example of God providing on behalf of his people. He brought them out from the land of Egypt and rescued them from slavery. The Easter story is another example of God providing on behalf of his people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. These Biblical references reveal to us who God is and what He can do for His people who believe. They are the foundation of our faith.

I don't know your story. I don't know what today looks like for you. I don't know if it was hopeful or lonely. Maybe it is full of travel and too much busyness, or maybe it is restful and revitalizing, or somewhere in between. I don't know your experience regarding the provision of God. Maybe it's a story with a lot of pain, uncertainty, or frustration. Maybe it's a story full of joy, blessing, and hope. Maybe it's a story with a bit of both, and a little bit more. Whichever it is, what I can promise you and assure you is that we serve a God of miracles.