

God Thy Savior

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Bible Text: Isaiah 43:1-13

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I'd like to have you look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 43. I want to read beginning again with verse 1 that we began last time, right on down to verse 13 and talk to you about God being the Savior. God, the Savior. I'm thankful that this is a place where we're in no hurry when it comes to reading the word. I once had a visitor after having attended Bible class and then came and sat with the men and we read and we had our first service and at that time we took a little pause and had our second service. His comment going away and he never has come back but he said, "You sure do an awful lot of Scripture reading around here," almost as if it was a fault of ours and some of us remember how lightly the word was treated in the various organizations that we grew up in. I can remember people standing up and quickly reading a verse to get through it so that they could get to the special music. "We want to allow enough time for the special music today so let me just read you this verse," as if it was a footnote. But I rejoice in that it is the one time that we can sit quietly while someone reads for us and I thank the Lord for each of these men as we read the Scriptures, it is done with carefulness and prayerfulness and certainly that's how we need to hear it. But here in Isaiah 43:1,

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Here's the title, it comes from verse 3,

3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. 8 Bring forth the blind

people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. 9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. 10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. 12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. 13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

So I want us to see here how God is the Savior of his people. This, like many words in Scripture, are used very loosely today by many people in religion. They speak of God as being the Savior and yet when you hear in the end how they describe him, you scratch your head and wonder, "Did you just describe a Savior?" Especially when they tell you that he can't save you because in the word "Savior" is the word "save." He can't save you unless you let him. Can you imagine a person being hired to be a lifeguard for the summer and every day in the news you hear about people that the lifeguard couldn't save and every day it's multiplied? So they bring the lifeguard to the microphone and ask him, "Well, what's going on? How come so many people are dying under your watch?" And the lifeguard gives that answer, "Well, I try to save them but they won't let me." How long do you think a lifeguard would keep their job? You're there to deliver. You're there to save.

That's just a little picture of just how little people think of God when they speak of him as the Savior. I see no such God or Savior here in Scripture. What I've just read for you is the Savior of his people and the first thing I would have you to note going back to verse 1 that we looked at so this is just a little bit of review, but it is he who is the Savior from beginning to end. Again, using the lifeguard experience, you don't find a lifeguard coming up to a drowning person and swimming around them and saying, "Okay, I'll tell you what we're going to do now. I need your help. Let's negotiate this so I can get you in." You don't find that. You find a lifeguard that is trained and taught to take control and get that person that's drowning and bring them to safety because they can't help themselves. That's why you're there.

Truly, God as he is set forth in Scripture is that Savior from beginning to end. He's the Creator. That's how he describes himself here in verse 1 and if you like to underscore key words in your Bible, these are key words. These are key characteristics of God. He describes himself as the Creator but he also describes himself as that one that formed them. So to create is the word "to make something of nothing." Well, that's what we confess. We're nothing. In us is no goodness. In us is no life. So if we are anything, just like Brother Lane read with the men in 1 Corinthians 4, "Who maketh thee to differ?" If we are anything, go back to the garden, God took Adam and formed him of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and it says he became a living

soul. That's true physically, that's true spiritually. There is none of us that can claim any kind of glory for knowing God or being Christ's if we're his. He did it. Beginning to end.

Secondly, he's described there as the one who has redeemed them. "I have redeemed thee." So again, he's the Savior from beginning to end. Any who are his are the people of his purchase. He has redeemed them. Now, you stop and think about who was redeemed back in the day: worthless slaves. They were but pawns, if you will, and it was totally up to the master to do with them as he will.

So the redemption, of course, it historically here goes back to God having brought Israel out of Egypt through the Passover lamb. That's what he was reminding them of and he did it with a high hand but it is a type and picture of any of us that have been redeemed through the Passover Lamb, Christ our Passover, that if we're his, it's because of his shed blood. It's because he earned that righteousness. He worked it out. He established it and God, the holy God, was satisfied in that righteousness imputed to our account.

So from beginning to end he's the Savior and when I say the end, it's what we see here in the last part of verse 1, he's not going to lose one. We're not to pray as if somehow the seeking and the saving of sinners really depended on how hard we pray. I know the Lord gives us an urgency at times to pray for this one or that one, but there is a confidence that when we pray the Lord is going to get his own because he says, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Those two go together. It's not the Spirit out there trying to get as many saved as possible but it's God calling those that he already knows by their name because they are his. The "thou art mine" is not in order that they might be his but because they are his, he calls them by their name.

Any of us as parents that have lost a child or not know where that child is at any one particular moment, when you're calling different ones to find out where they are, I've never had somebody say, "Well, how come you're so concerned?" It's your kid. You've loved them and you've provided for them. You're going to care for them and you're going to see to it that they're in a place of safety and you're concerned for them even when they're not concerned for themselves. Many times they'll chew you out, "Well, what's the deal?" I need to know where you are. I need to be assured that you're safe. That's the responsibility God has given me as a parent.

So he's the one who summons, everyone he calls by name. I like what one of you told me a couple of weeks ago that a preacher told them and that is we all have the same name, sinner. That's who Christ came to save, sinners. It's not anything in our name but it's all in the Lord.

That's what we kind of looked at last time. Secondly, with regard to God as the Savior coming down to verse 2, we see this: that as the Savior, it is he who delivers. That's what the word "saved" means. A lot of people get that word confused because they relate it simply to an act that man does: walk an aisle, say a prayer, which is totally false. People talk in that religious language, "I got saved." Well, I'll tell you what: if you got saved as if it was something you could go and get bread, then that's not salvation. Or, "I got milk."

I've even seen that translated blasphemously into the question, "Got Jesus?" We live in a day of religion where they like to take things that are precious to God and Christ and minimize it like one of Billy Graham's organizers in England and this was in an interview I heard said, when someone asked him, "How can you get so many people out to hear this man that's not an Englishman, he's from America?" This was back when Billy Graham was first starting to try to get a foothold over into England in his crusades and this is what the man said: they hired a marketing director who used to sell toilet paper for Charmin and he said, "It's just as easy as selling toilet paper." That's his perspective, "I can get anybody to come out." And they did. They did.

That's not what salvation is. When we're talking about salvation, again, it's a God who saves. He has delivered, past tense, he delivers and he will yet deliver and any that are his shall not be lost. That's what we see here in verse 2 described under the emblems of waters and fire. Water and fire. Stop and think about what it is that destroys. We need water for life and yet how many die in a flood. How many die in a hurricane. We need fire for warmth and energy and yet how many people it does kill.

So what we see here is a God who as the Savior delivers from every conceivable danger whether spiritual or temporal. In other words, God is present with his people whether they know it or not. "When thou passest through the waters and through the rivers." I think there of the history of Israel when the Lord brought them to the Red Sea. Again, he's addressing this people but it was a type. Think about the walls that stood up and every one of them going through on dry land. We're talking about dry land. You think about a riverbed, if the Lord were to even part the waters, how long would it take for that riverbed to dry and yet the Lord made it so, taking what should have been just mud and muck and made a pavement out of it to bring his people through. What a glorious Savior he is. Did they in their journey pass through deep water? For the Lord said that none of them should perish. In fact, every one, that's the type and picture, every one of those that he brought out with a high hand from Egypt made it to the other side. When the Egyptians, with their strongest army, sought to pursue, that water became their enemy and the Lord destroyed them. What a beautiful picture of salvation.

If it were up to us for us to stand up to the law of God described whether it be by water or fire because God is a consuming fire. You stop and think about that. Holy. Just in all his ways. How foolish it is for us to think that we're going to somehow be able to stand on our own merit, our own goodness. How foolish. But here he says, "when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." That reminds me of Daniel and his three friends. When they cast his three friends into that fiery furnace, the king going and looking down in the pit and said, "Did we not cast three and are there not four and does not that fourth appear to be like one as the Son of Man?"

When we are brought to face the fire of God's holiness and justice and law, what's our hope? Well, it's that Christ passed that way for us and it says, "neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." It doesn't kindle upon us because it kindled upon him. How thorough a Savior do we need? Well, we need one that has absolutely satisfied every requirement of

God's law and justice without one jot, one tittle, one iota left for us to handle because if it were, we'd have to perish. We'd perish.

Thirdly, down in verses 3 and 4, again, continuing this thought of God as the Savior, we note that he is the particular Savior of his people. Not some general Savior but a particular Savior. You see how he states it? "For I am the LORD thy God," in other words, thy God in a way that is different from the rest of the world. You see, religion has a god that loves everybody regardless and I've used that illustration: imagine coming back to the house and your wife asking you, "Do you love me?" and you saying to your wife, "Yes, honey, why do you ask? I love you just like I love all the women of the world." What do you think would be her response? You might get a good slap.

But that's how men portray God, "Oh, he's a loving God. He loves everybody just the same." We don't find that here. The Lord is purposely making a distinction here between those that are his people and those that aren't. "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." It's like one lady told me one time, "I could never worship a God like that." Well, you obviously aren't, otherwise you wouldn't have an argument with it. This is the God who saves. He is the particular Savior of his people. The LORD thy God.

But also in that he saves in a particular way, particular to his holiness, particular to his righteousness, particular to his justice because he says, "the Holy One of Israel." In order to love a people, in order to save a people, he in no way diminishes his standard of justice. He is the Holy One, notice, of Israel. Israel here representing that people that he chose and redeemed and called, typical of any of those sinners that he has chosen, rede and called in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. His salvation is always in connection with his righteousness, his justice, his holiness. That's what gives me rest right now even to be able to talk about God being my Savior is that it is a just salvation. I want it to be that way. No legal loopholes.

If you go over, keep your finger here, but go over to Romans 3, you know, people say the devil is in the details. Well, the justice of God is in the details. People will argue with you and say, "Well, you just get too particular in this matter of salvation." Well, I'll tell you what: when it involves an eternal matter, don't I want to know that every detail is taken care of? You've seen the show, my wife has got me involved with it, the HGTV, all the house hunters and going in and checking out houses and all the stuff they can find that's wrong and when it involves investing several hundred thousand dollars, you see people walk away saying, "No way." They've found out some detail that would matter in the long term with regard to the purchase of that house. Every detail matters. That's why we have inspectors. That's why we check things out. If that's true of temporal things, don't you want to know with regard to eternal matters that this matter of standing before a holy God that every detail has been cared for? Taken care of?

That's what we see here in Romans 3, starting with verse 21, "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," in other words, without you keeping the law, the righteousness of God is revealed, "being witnessed by the law and the prophets," being witnessed by the Old Testament, being witnessed even as we're reading here in Isaiah.

"Even the righteousness of God," now notice in Scripture it's always called God's righteousness. We speak of Christ's righteousness, he had to come and work it out but it was God's righteousness that he was satisfying. "The righteousness of God which is by faith," make sure that your translation reads "of Jesus Christ." It's that faith which is of him. He's the source. He's the author. He's the finisher. He's the consummator of it. It's that body of truth in connection with Christ and his death that reveals the righteousness of God and it is "unto all and upon all them that believe." It's not your believing that makes it so but it is already unto all. It has been imputed unto all, upon all them that believe. That's why you believe. That's why he brings you to believe because he already established it. He already accomplished it. He worked it out. But "there is no difference." There is not one way for one and one way for another. "For all have sinned," and here Paul us using a word that could be translated "all did sin" at one time. It's not saying all are sinning but all did sin. When Adam fell, we all sinned in him. We fell. The trial was over. So here is the sentence, "come short of the glory of God." Even if you could today determine that I'm going to start obeying the law from here forward, you're already condemned. How are you going to deal with what is past? You can't undo that history so you've come short of the glory of God.

But now, "Being justified," that's also translated "having been justified." How? "Freely," without any of you yourself bringing any sort of resource. "Being justified freely by his grace through," in, by, "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That's the only place that justification has taken place. The Scripture is tied there. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." Now, editors put commas in. There weren't any in the original but I believe here is where a comma ought to go, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." Christ is that propitiation so "propitiation" means "satisfaction" and this is the point being established.

He's "the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." As a holy one, he should have condemned this but "thy Saviour" means that he determined a way in that Savior to satisfy his holiness that Christ might be that propitiation on behalf of his people and then the rest says, "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness." That's what faith in his blood does and there it is translated correctly, "faith in that blood shed, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." That word "remission" is not the word "putting away" of sins that are past, it's the word "passing over." That's what it means.

What justified God in passing over the sins of his people all the way from Adam to the time of the cross? Well, it says here, "through the forbearance of God." He wasn't just looking the other way, he was forbearing until Christ should come and establish that righteousness, work it out and he would impute it once for all in one place at one time. That's what verse 26 says, "To declare, I say, at this time." That's a time word. Since the cross. Since the satisfaction that Christ made there at the cross. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It's not my believing that justifies me, it's because he justified me that I am caused and made to believe.

So you can see that in time the Lord came and worked this all out. He does not set aside his righteousness or his justice to save any. If he says here, coming back to Isaiah 43:3, "I am the LORD thy God," but then he doesn't say, "Shh, don't tell anybody but I'm going to show you a little favor on the side here. I don't want the others to know about it." No, here in full display, "the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," so that in the end there is not going to be an enemy, not Satan himself, that could ever stand and put his finger in my face and say, "You were a respecter of persons." Every one he purposed to save, he did so based on his love and grace and mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ to the degree that he spared not his Son but delivered him up that he might be that just God and Savior.

Can you see how he is the particular Savior of his people? He says, "the LORD thy God." The just God. The Holy One. The Savior. Thy Savior. But also, thirdly, distinguishing his favor toward them in distinction from the rest of the world. Do you see that in this context? He said, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." I don't know as we'll ever be fully aware in this life of who the Lord took out to spare us, that we would be brought to a place that in his time he would draw us unto himself.

I lived in Africa and saw whole countries go to war, upheaval, to shake out one person that after they heard me preach, thanked the Lord for the war and the displacement and being a refugee because had the Lord not done it, they would never have heard, never have known. We say that as if it was a surprise but it was the Lord doing it all the while. You think about the number of people whose lives have been taken and yet you're spared that the Lord might be pleased to draw you unto himself. That's what he's speaking of there. Ah, I'll tell you, that shows just how particular a Savior he is.

Fourthly, in verses 5-7, as the Savior, he cannot lose one whom the Father has given him. He says there, "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west." Do you realize that he was with us before we ever knew him? That was one of the things that surprised Nathanael when the Lord approached him. "How did you know me?" "I saw you when you were still under that tree, Nathanael." He knows his own. We just come to discover it.

He says, "I am with thee." Will he not be with his own? Paul spoke of being separated from his mother's womb and you look at his life and religion, the Lord was with him all the way up in the breathing out hatred that the Lord was energizing him to do those things until it was time for the Lord to arrest him and bring him to himself.

But notice every direction is covered, isn't it? I wasn't very good in geography but I know east and west and I know north and south. My dad taught me always if you get lost, kind of try to figure out where the sun is. It comes up in the east and goes down in the west so if it's 4 o'clock in the afternoon and you're staring toward the sun, it's a pretty good indication you're facing west. It's in the afternoon.

But the Lord says here, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." They're not sons when they believe, they're sons even before they believe and he's the one that brings them. He's the one that declares it's time to give them up, every one that he calls by his name. He knows them. He knew them in eternity when he chose them. He knew them when Christ died for them. And he knows them when he calls them. There is no mistake. Any that come will come because he has determined it.

Then verses 8 through 13, just to wrap this up: as Savior he is incomparable to any idol gods that men might serve. I don't know about you but the more that the Lord teaches me of himself, the more I am ashamed of what I thought I knew before he was pleased to reveal Christ in me. You know, we live in a day today when it's easy to get back in touch with some of those people. You just have to click on a button now on what they call social media and if you want to get back in touch with anybody you ever went to school with at any time, you can do it. When I have gotten back in touch with some and look at their Facebook pages or look at some of their lifestyle and I see that they're still carrying on in the same old religion that I was brought up in, for them there is no reason to be concerned. It's like one man said, "You know, when I was a child, I made my decision for Jesus and I've never looked back." That's their foundation of hope for eternity. I'll tell you, I'm so thankful that the Lord shook that foundation and took it away from me, brought me low at Christ's feet to see myself as a sinner, lost and otherwise condemned were it not for his shed blood.

That's really the challenge here in verse 8 that God gives to people who are yet blind and following after their gods. It would be like today people honoring the god of free will or the god of self-sacrifice or the god of self-righteousness or god of works, whatever little g-o-d. It's whatever a man puts a value to other than Christ that is an idol and the Lord challenges them. He says, "You make that your idol? Go ahead, bring forth the blind people that have eyes." He's talking about people yet in blindness. Even though they have physical eyes, they don't see.

"The deaf that have ears." They have ears but they don't hear. They're not hearing or seeing the glory of Christ. He said, "Gather them all together." In essence, let's put your god on the witness stand and let him speak. What can free will accomplish? You're telling me that a man's willing can satisfy a holy God? Do you see how foolish that is? Let's put your god of works up on the stand.

That's what he's saying here in verse 9, "let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified." What justifies you in putting confidence in your works before a holy God? Let's cross-examine this witness. I wouldn't want to be on that seat. You see, our mouths are stopped. Thankfully, we don't even have to call a witness to that stand because Christ, our advocate, has already stood for us. He's our defense. He's our Savior.

That's how this God distinguishes himself from any other hope that men might put their confidence in and the Lord says that in verse 10, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD."

In other words, let the redeemed of the Lord say so. We don't need to hold our head in shame when people start talking about their faith, their works, their will and their denomination and all these things. He says, "Ye are my witnesses." Stand up and declare what the Lord has done for you. Has he done anything? Is he particular to you? Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

"My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour." Are you ashamed to look somebody in the eye and tell them that may be your god but that's not my God? Why would you be ashamed? If there's any slight declaration on their part that shows they're not giving God all the glory, why wouldn't you want to say something? Look how upset you get when someone says something about your wife or your child. "Oh, you'd better not say that." Any that are precious to you, you stand up for. I ask you: is Christ precious to you? Is he different for you than these idol gods? I'll tell you, he is for me because I've been on both sides of that darkness and light.

The Lord says, "I am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared," he says, "and have saved." You don't have to be a theology professor to declare that if you're the Lord's he saved you. I'm his because he saved me and bore my sin. Put it away.

"Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?" That answers that question right there. Who is going to stay his hand? Who is going to say no when he has determined to draw us? He makes his Son irresistible and we come because he has chosen us and bought us.

Well, I trust that you know this God, the Savior, and the truth is there is none other.