

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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ISAIAH CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

God'S WITNESSES TO HIS FAITHFULNESS

THE Lord's gracious care of Israel is continued. How wonderfully He enters into their sorrows!

“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. 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. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour” (verses 1-3).

He who led Israel in safety through the Red Sea and the Jordan, and who walked with the three devoted Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace, is still the unfailing resource of His troubled people in every hour of trial, no matter how severe the test. Faith can count on His sustaining grace and blessed companionship, in each perplexity or apparent defeat or grave danger. Millions have tested and proven the faithfulness of His promise. With His gracious care for His people He brings His witnesses to it.

“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. even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour . . . Yea, before the day was I am he” (verses 10-13).

It is to Israel the Lord says, **“Ye are my witnesses,”** and this is true of them whether they are obedient to Him or disobedient, in the land or out of the land, whether they are keeping the law or breaking it, because God has given His testimony through Moses and other prophets showing just how He was going to deal with His people down through the centuries, the blessings that would be theirs, if they walked in obedience; the curses and judgments that would come upon them if they were disobedient.

History shows the truth of what God has declared and, therefore, Israel are God's witnesses to the truth of His Word.

Frederick the Great who had been listening to Voltaire's agnostic ideas once asked one of his court chaplains, "If the Bible is true it ought to be capable of very clear and succinct witness. Generally when I ask if the Bible is true, I am handed some long scholarly volume which I have neither the time nor the patience to read. If your Bible is true, give me the proof of it in one word."

The chaplain answered, "Sire, Israel."

And Frederick acknowledged that this indeed is a proof that the Bible is true, the Word of the living God.

But to Israel's witness to the past is added, "And my chosen Servant." He is the faithful and true witness to God's faithfulness. In chapter 42:1-9 we were called to behold Him and the character of His service. The purpose of this witness is next given:

"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."

From this time on the Lord challenges the idolaters to give some evidence of any spirit of prophecy working in them. Tell us what is to come. Tell us things that have never been. Explain the past. Explain the origin of the world. They could not. God alone has done all these things.

~ end of chapter 43 ~

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