



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

## "God's People Called to the Stand"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** Is 43:8-13; Is. 40:27 Is.. 42:6, 18-19; Ex. 2:23-25; Acts 1:6-8; Mt. 24; Dt. 30:1-6

Isaiah has been building this courtroom scene since Isaiah 41—the LORD is putting the gods of the nations on trial. It's like He's saying, "All right—bring your case. Tell Me the former things. Explain what's happened and what it means. Tell Me what's coming. Bring your witnesses." And the reason He does this isn't to humiliate people like we think of humiliation—God's not trying to squash you. He's trying to *awaken* you. He's trying to bring you to that moment where you finally see the emptiness of what you've been trusting in and you say, "What was I doing?" That's not condemnation—that's mercy.

And all of this is happening while God's people are in exile—while they're wrestling with fear, with purpose, with identity. That's why Isaiah 43 starts the way it does. "*But now thus says Adonai—the One creating you, O Jacob, the One who formed you, O Israel—fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are Mine.*" (Isa. 43:1) Those verbs are in the perfect tense—what was, what has been, and what is. In other words: "I called you. I've been calling you. I continue to call you." And that hits the exact place where exile tries to lie to you—the place that says, "Was any of this real? Does God see me?" Isaiah answers that same accusation from earlier: "*Why do you say, O Jacob... 'My way is hidden from Adonai'?"* (Isa. 40:27) You're not hidden. He sees. He has always seen—just like in Egypt: "*God heard... God remembered... God saw... and He was concerned.*" (Ex. 2:23-25) And if you belong to Him, exile doesn't erase that. It becomes the place where He speaks it louder: "You are Mine."

**1. The LORD brings the blind and deaf into the courtroom to expose what we trust (Isa. 43:8-9)** The courtroom scene continues in v.8—and the LORD does something that feels almost like a shock to the room. He says, "*Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears.*" (Isa. 43:8) In other words, "Bring in the ones who have the equipment—but not the perception." And then it's like Isaiah is the court reporter, watching the whole thing unfold: "*All the nations are gathered together and the peoples are assembled.*" (Isa. 43:9) You can feel the moment: the litigants come in, the crowd is there, and the presiding Judge speaks. And behind the apparent challenge—"Which of you can declare the former things?"—there's a deeper question: **Who is the God of action?** Who actually moves in history with purpose? Who can take the "first things," the "former things," and show they weren't random—they were covenant, they were promise, they were meaning?

So the LORD turns to the nations and says, "*Who among them can declare this, and proclaim to us former things? Let them present their witnesses, so they may be justified, or let them hear and say, 'It's true.'*" (Isa. 43:9) That's the challenge: "Let's hear truth." The exodus redemption was one of the first great acts of the LORD for Israel as a nation—deliverance over impossible odds. So ADONAI is basically saying: "Show Me something like that. Show Me your gods doing anything like that. Show Me how your idols can explain the past and speak meaning into the future." And of course—there's silence. Because action figures don't act. Idols don't redeem. False dependencies can't carry the weight we put on them.

**2. The shock of the trial is that God's people aren't spectators—they're witnesses (Isa. 43:10)** Here's the surprising part: Israel might have thought they were just there to watch. "Oh wow, the gods have nothing to say." But the LORD turns and says, "No—you're not here to be interested spectators. **I'm calling you to the stand.**" *"You are My witnesses," declares Adonai, "and My servant whom I have chosen."* (Is. 43:10) That parallel is everything—**My witnesses / My servant.** One explains the other. **Your chosenness is for witness. Your identity has a purpose.** Not to be a religious audience. Not to be a silent crowd. But to be living evidence that the LORD alone is God—His covenant faithfulness displayed in a people.

And then He gives the reason—this is so important—*"So that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He."* (Is. 43:10) Notice the order. He doesn't start with, "So the *nations* will know." He starts with, "So **YOU** will know." Because you don't rush ahead of the process. Others are to know, yes—but only after the people of God themselves have come to know Him. And this "knowing" isn't just a set of intellectual theorems, like knowing the distance from the earth to the sun. This is lived knowledge—experienced knowledge—covenant knowledge. The LORD takes you from being *avodim* of Pharaoh to being *avodim* of the LORD. And you could say, "Well that's going from one servitude to another," but no—because Pharaoh's service is insatiable: "More bricks, more, more." The LORD's service brings life and freedom—water from a rock, manna from heaven, Shabbat rest. So your witness isn't just proclamation. It's demonstration. It's a life that says, "Come on—bear witness. Look at what He has done."

**3. The content of our witness is God's absolute uniqueness—He alone saves, and His hand cannot be reversed (Isa. 43:10–13).** Now the LORD makes His claim even more emphatic. *"Before Me no god was formed, and there will be none after Me."* (Isa. 43:10) In the pagan world, gods are always "formed," always part of a genealogy, always coming from somewhere and going somewhere. But the LORD says, "I proceed from none and I am succeeded by none." And then He says it in a way you can almost hear thundering through the courtroom: *"I, I am Adonai—and there is no savior beside Me."* (Isa. 43:11) That word "savior/deliverer"—that's who He is. His Name is not an idea. His Name has been proven. What was the evidence? Promise after promise: Abraham made into a nation, deliverance from Egypt, brought into the land, David's dynasty preserved—again and again requiring deliverance over impossible odds. Israel itself—held together for centuries—is living evidence that He keeps covenant. He alone.

And then verse 12 stacks it: *"I alone declared, saved and proclaimed, and not some foreign god among you. So you are My witnesses... and I am God."* (Isa. 43:12) Divine speech comes first—God tells what He will do—then God acts—then He explains it deeper through His authorized messengers. And He says plainly: "It wasn't some other agency. It was Me." And then the verdict of the Judge: *"From eternity, I am He. None can deliver from My hand. I act, and who can reverse it?"* (Isa. 43:13) That's the ground under your feet when everything else shakes. That's why the fear-mongering can't own you. Yes, you hear things—banks failing, rumors, "I heard this," "I heard that." But Messiah told us: *"I tell you these things so that you'll endure."* (Matt. 24) Not so you can avoid everything—so you can endure with trust. Your hope is not in horses, not in money, not in economies, not in politicians, not in governments. **Your hope is in the LORD, and**

**in Him alone.** And that's what it looks like to be a witness: not freaking out with the nations, but shining as a light of trust in the God who saves.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The LORD is still saying what He said at the beginning: *"Fear not... You are Mine."* (Isa. 43:1) And He's still saying what He repeats through the passage: "I AM with you." Not just "I will be"—*"I AM With you."* That means the waters won't overflow you. That means the fire won't consume you. That means exile doesn't get the final word. And it means your life—redeemed, held, guarded by God—is meant to be living testimony. You are called to the stand. Not to perform. Not to impress. But to demonstrate, "He alone saves."

And this is exactly what Yeshua echoes after the resurrection. The disciples ask about the kingdom, about timing, about all the stuff we tend to obsess over. And He says, essentially, "That's not your concern." *"But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses... to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8) That's the calling: light to the nations. Not panic to the nations. Not fear with the nations. Witness—demonstration and proclamation—because we know Him. We've come to know WHO He is.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. In what ways do you most relate to Israel's exile questions—"Does God see me?" or "What's my purpose?" How does Isa. 43:1 answer that?
2. Why do you think the LORD brings "the blind and the deaf" into the courtroom (Isa. 43:8)? What might that reveal about how people can have "eyes" and "ears" but still miss God?
3. What stands out to you about the order in Isa. 43:10—*"so that you may know... believe... understand"*? How is that different from treating faith as just information?
4. Where do you see "fear-mongering" shaping people today? What does it look like, practically, to be a witness who doesn't panic with the nations?
5. What part of God's self-declaration hits you most—*"there is no savior beside Me"* (Isa. 43:11) or *"I act, and who can reverse it?"* (Isa. 43:13)—and why?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

ADONAI, Holy One of Israel, You are the One who created us, formed us, redeemed us, and called us by name. You have not forgotten Your people, and You have not lost sight of us in exile, in hardship, or in fear. You say, *"Fear not... You are Mine,"* and we confess that we have often lived like You didn't see us—like our way was hidden from You. Forgive us for looking elsewhere, for trusting in what cannot save, for panicking with the world instead of shining as Your light.

*Ruach ha-Kodesh*, come upon us with power to be true witnesses—first that we would know You, believe You, and understand that You are He, and then that our lives would demonstrate Your faithfulness. Teach us quietness and trust. Steady our hearts when rumors rise and systems shake. And make our homes, our conversations, our choices, and our endurance a living testimony: You alone are God, and there is no savior beside You.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.