



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"Do You Know WHO You Are and WHOSE You Are?"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Is 43:1-7; Is. 42:1, 6, 8-9; 18-25; Is. 40:26-27; Deut. 30:16

Isaiah 43 is one of those go-to passages that you return to again and again because they don't just sound good... they *hold you up*. Isaiah 43 opens with the kind of reminder you need when life has stripped away what used to define you. And that's the setting we're coming out of. In Isaiah 42, the Lord has been talking about the Servant—there's overlap there. Is the Servant Israel? Is the Servant Messiah? And the answer is yes. Israel was called to be the servant, to be a covenant to the people and a light to the nations—to *display what it looks like when a people walk with the Lord*. But when Israel wouldn't walk in His ways, God already had a plan: the Messiah, the ultimate Deliverer, the One who would fulfill what Israel could not.

And then Isaiah 42 takes a painful turn. The Lord laments that His own servant became blind and deaf. He wanted, for the sake of His righteousness, to make Torah great and glorious through them—but instead, they became robbed and looted, trapped in holes, hidden in prisons, prey with no one to deliver, plunder with none to say, "Give them back." And it's not because God forgot them—it's because they wouldn't consent to walk in His ways. The fire of discipline blazed all around, but it didn't land on their hearts. So the exile comes—identity gets shaken—everything familiar gets stripped away—and the question rises up: "Was any of this real? Does God see me? Does He know me? Does He love me?" That's when Isaiah 43 comes in like a song you already know by heart—and God says, "Do you remember who you are? And whose you are?"

1. "BUT NOW"—THE LORD RECLAIMS YOUR IDENTITY

The chapter opens with that dramatic shift: "*But now, thus says Adonai—the One who created 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) Notice what God does first—He doesn't start with their failure. He starts with *His relationship* to them. "I created you. I formed you. I shaped you. I redeemed you. I called you by name." He's reminding them how they even became a people. Just as He created the heavens and the earth by His spoken word, He created Israel. He summoned them—He called them out—He knows them. And the Lord's message is not, "You are Mine when you're in the land, when the Temple stands, when the structure is intact." No—Israel is not merely a "there"—a land; a piece of real estate. Israel is a "YOU." A people. "*You are Mine.*"

And that's why He says, "Fear not." Fear grows when we stare at exile, when we fixate on what we lost, when we can't see the path forward. Exile creates an identity crisis: "If the place is gone, if the familiar worship structures are gone, if my life doesn't look like it used to... then where is God? And who am I?" ADONAI answers that anxiety directly. He calls back to the earlier question Isaiah raised: "*Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from Adonai, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God?'*" (Isa. 40:27) And then He responds with Isaiah 43: "I see you. I know you. I called you by name. You're not lost to Me." The perfect-tense language is the anchor: "I redeemed you—it was, it has been, it continues to be. I called you—I have been calling you, and I am calling you. You are Mine—still Mine."

2. "I AM WITH YOU" — ADONAI PROMISES PRESENCE IN THE PASSING THROUGH

Then the Lord moves from identity to experience. He doesn't pretend the waters aren't real. He doesn't deny the fire. He says, *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, nor will the flame burn you."* (Isa. 43:2) That "when" matters—because it's not hypothetical. You *will* pass through. You *will* walk through. Following the Lord doesn't mean you never see floodwaters or flames. It means you never face them alone. And the wording is so personal—*"With you is ME."* Not a concept. Not a distant theology. Presence. The Lord in the midst of it.

And notice the movement: waters to rivers, fire to flame—general to specific. Whatever kind of trial it is, however it comes, He says, "I'm there, and I'm also the One who sets the boundary." That's why this passage sits so powerfully right after Isaiah 42. In 42:25, the fire of discipline blazes all around them—and now in 43:2, God says the fire will not destroy them. Even under correction, even under the hard road, they can lean on changeless realities: they are His protected, cherished people. Think about Joseph—pit, prison, then palace—but the repeated theme is that the Lord was with him. The Lord doesn't measure His faithfulness by how quickly He gets you out; sometimes He's forming you in the middle of it. And this is what exile can become—if it lands on the heart—not the place where identity dies, but the place where identity is purified and re-established in God Himself.

3. PRECIOUS, LOVED, REDEEMED — GOD PAYS WHAT IT TAKES TO BRING YOU BACK

Then the Lord goes even deeper: *"For I am Adonai your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."* (Isa. 43:3) That's covenant language. He's not just powerful—He is *your* God, *your* Deliverer. And then He speaks of ransom and substitution: Egypt given as a ransom, Cush and Seba in their place (Isa. 43:3). The picture is that the Lord is willing to pay what it takes to preserve His people. And then He says it plainly: *"Since you are precious in My eyes, honored, and I love you, I will give a man in exchange for you, and other peoples for your life."* (Isa. 43:4) Precious, honored, loved—again in that perfect-tense reality: you have been and still are treasured. Even in exile. Even after blindness. Even after deafness. His love is not fragile.

And that love moves toward restoration. *"Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bring your offspring from the east and gather you from the west."* (Isa. 43:5) He commands the north, "Give them up," and the south, "Do not hold them back" (Isa. 43:6). The same God who said in Isaiah 42 that no one was saying "Give them back" is the very One who now speaks it Himself. And He ties it to His covenant promise: *"Now when all these things come upon you... and you take them to heart... and you return to Adonai your God... then Adonai your God will bring you back from captivity and have compassion on you."* (Deut. 30:1–3) That's the goal: not humiliation, but heart-circumcision—to love Adonai with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live (Deut. 30:6). And it ends with purpose: *"Everyone who is called by My Name, whom I created for My glory—I formed him, yes, I made him!"* (Isa. 43:7) Called by His name—made for His glory—restored to be who you truly are.

CONCLUSION:

So here's the question Isaiah 43 presses into our chest: Do you know who you are—and whose you are— *right now*? Not when things feel stable. Not when the "land" is familiar and the

“Temple” structures are intact. But in the season where things have been stripped away, where you’re tempted to say, “My way is hidden from Adonai.” The Lord answers that fear with His own voice: *“I created you. I formed you. I redeemed you. I called you by name. You are Mine.”* (Isa. 43:1) That is the foundation for “do not fear.” Not because exile is easy. Not because the waters aren’t deep or the fire isn’t hot. But because belonging to Him means His presence will carry you through.

And today, the Lord is calling His servant—once blind, once deaf—to open your eyes and see, open your ears and hear, and come home in the heart. If you’ve been living in fear because you’ve been staring at the exile—staring at the loss, the confusion, the discipline, the dark season—today the Lord is inviting you to turn your face back toward Him. Stop asking only, “Why am I here?” and let it land on the heart: “Lord, I want to return. I want to hear You. I want to walk in Your ways. I don’t want to be blind and deaf. I want to know You—and be Yours.” If that’s you, right where you are, tell Him plainly: “Adonai, I receive Your claim over me again. I am Yours. Bring me through the waters. Walk with me through the fire. Restore my heart.” And if you’ve never truly yielded yourself to the Holy One of Israel—your Deliverer—today is the day to stop drifting and start belonging. He is the God who calls by name. Answer Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What “identity markers” do you most tend to rely on (place, routine, roles, structures), and how does losing them affect your sense of who you are?
2. In what ways do you relate to Israel’s exile anxiety—“Was it all real? Does God see me?” How does Isa. 43:1 confront that fear?
3. Why is it significant that God says “when you pass through” rather than “if you pass through” (Isa. 43:2)? What does that teach us about walking with God?
4. What does it look like for discipline to “land on the heart” (Isa. 42:25)? How can a person resist that, and how can we respond rightly?
5. How do Isa. 43:4–7 connect love, redemption, restoration, and purpose? What does it mean to be “called by My Name” and “created for My glory”?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, Holy One of Israel, our Savior and Deliverer—thank You that You are the One who created us, formed us, redeemed us, and called us by name. Forgive us for the moments we have said, “My way is hidden from You,” and for the fear that rises when our familiar structures get stripped away. Help Your word land on our hearts. Open our eyes and ears—deliver us from blindness and deafness—so we will return to You with our whole heart and soul. And as we pass through waters and rivers, as we walk through fire and flame, let Your presence be our anchor: “You are with us!” Gather what has been scattered, restore what has been broken, and re-establish our identity in belonging to You. We receive Your love—precious, honored, and called by Your Name—and we ask You to make Your glory known through our lives.

B’Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.