

**Silence is Not Always Golden  
What Happens When a Witness Refuses to Speak Up?  
Isaiah 43: 8 – 28**

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We are still in the courtroom after being called there by the Lord at the beginning of Isaiah 41. YAHWEH has sued the nations and the fallen members of the heavenly host. His people, Israel, are in the courtroom.

The nations did not answer the charges and chose poorly, and the fallen ones could not even do one basic task to prove they were worthy of worship...predict the future accurately and without fail. They failed the deity test.

YAHWEH turns towards His people in judgement and then in love. In love, He proves to them that He is the one they should be worshipping by issuing prediction after prediction. Some already fulfilled.

As we discovered last time, the language used by YAHWEH in Isaiah 43:6 & 7 points directly to events taking place in Israel since WWII.

He is the one they should be worshipping, and some will, the remnant, but not all and that is the reason for the judgement He referred to earlier in Isaiah 42.

Because Israel are the people of YAHWEH who had been handpicked by Him. They are in the unique position to be able to testify to the uniqueness of YAHWEH. They will be a key witness as the court case continues.

The fallen ones have been sued by YAHWEH (Isaiah 41:21 – 29) and as part of that suit, which had no reply to it, it is time to call witnesses.

God will call on the false gods to present their witnesses. He is looking for them to present their best case so that they “can confirm the deity of the gods because of their ability to predict the future.” (Oswalt 1998, 144)

Israel and the nations are in court together. What is being examined is the Lord's claim to uniqueness, to sole deity. First of all, it is stated that only he can foretell (v.9; cf. 41:25–29). He alone is divine, and this always has been and always will be the truth. (Grogan 1986, 260)

Isaiah 43:8–9

“Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears. All the nations have gathered together So that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this And proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, Or let them hear and say, “It is true.”” (NASB95)

Could some of these blind and deaf be Judah? Remember, they are already adjudicated as being spiritually blind and deaf as determined by God in Isaiah 42:19 – 20. Israel is being called forward as a witness. But they are blind and deaf.

This is basically a continuation from verse 6 and 7. God's people are being gathered but they have a problem. The diagnosis is provided for us in the Psalms.

Psalms 115:4–8 “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.” (ESV)

The nation now resembles those things they have been worshipping, blind and deaf idols. The false gods who are behind those idols have lied to them and led them away from the God of the Universe. “His nation is deaf and blind, because although they have eyes and ears, they do not fully comprehend the significance of the historical events that have occurred.” (Paul 2012, 209-210)

That was made clear in Isaiah 42:25. They do not recognize what they are about to go through as judgement...blindness is total.

The Lord's people could have been very different: theirs is a culpable deficiency, for they have eyes and ears; they were granted faculties of spiritual perception but chose to be blind and deaf, refusing to see and hear (6:9–10; 29:9; 42:20, 24)—and the Lord's case depends on their testimony! (Motyer 1999, 304)

Also called forward are witnesses from the nations, those who have invested all their time in the false gods. This is a courtroom and there is the anticipation of questioning and cross examination.

Appropriately, the rival gods are invited to offer their credentials and to produce witnesses on their behalf. (Hanson 1995, 66, J. A. Motyer 1996)

But here is the amazing thing, we already know that the witnesses that YAHWEH has called as His, are deaf and blind. Because of their history, Israel was in the unique position of being able to testify to the grace of God, the omniscience and omnipotence of God and that He alone knows the future and has produced consistent evidence of that knowledge.

Now that we have all the nations in one place, who is it that can testify to things that have already taken place? Which of them can show anything that was predicted by their god that then came to pass? The challenge is simple, since the fallen did not respond to the challenge about prophesy, about the nations. You have worshipped the no gods as if they had power, “prove the reality and the power of their deities by having reliable witnesses to come forth and testify that their deities have correctly foretold the future.” (Gingrich 1993, 51)

In verse 3 the Lord made the statement that the exodus took place and Egypt was the ransom paid for Israel to be free. This is a past event. God told His people they would only be in Egypt for a certain period of time. “Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers

in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. But I will execute judgment on the nation that they will serve. Afterward they will come out with many possessions. But as for you, you will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit.” (Genesis 15:13–16, NET)

Now He goes back to that reference. “The exodus redemption was the ‘first’ act of the Lord specifically for Israel. Have the false gods any similar act to their credit? This sovereign capacity to determine what he shall do and to do it without let or hindrance is the true mark of deity.” (J. A. Motyer 1996, 334)

So, the question is posed to the nations, you have any god that can do that? Present your cases. Tell us so that others can hear as well.

Isaiah 43:10

“You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.” (NASB95)

In the courtroom, YAHWEH’s eyes now focus on the nation of Israel, those who are willingly blind and deaf and He announces to the court they are His witnesses. We would expect the called witness to speak up on behalf of the one who has called him, but as we examine this verse, do we see a reply from Israel? He even tells them that they are His servant who He hand-picked. He chose them, now is their chance to speak up.

What does it mean to be a witness? Stop and think of those who Jesus called to travel with Him for three plus years in order to be a witness to everything He said and did and to be a witness to His resurrection. He was picking them from the same people that are referred to as being blind and deaf. Just as God is appealing to the best evidence here in Isaiah 43, Jesus also would have made sure that He too had high-quality witnesses. Ones who would be above reproach. He did indeed do that. But not from the top shelf.

Let’s consider His calling of a tax collector, Matthew, as a witness. Why a tax collector? Well, first, he would know shorthand. But everyone would hate him. He was engaged in Roman politics.

Matthew was educated; an employment which must have made him acquainted with the Greek language, and extensively conversant with the public affairs and the men of business of his time; thus entitling him to our confidence, as an experienced and intelligent observer of events passing before him. And if the men of that day were, as in truth they appear to have been, as much disposed as those of the present time, to evade the payment of public taxes and duties, and to elude, by all possible means, the vigilance of the revenue officers, Matthew must have been familiar with a great variety of forms of fraud, imposture, cunning, and deception, and must have become habitually distrustful, scrutinizing, and cautious; and, of course, much less likely to have been deceived in regard to many of the facts in our Lord’s ministry, extraordinary as they were, which fell under his observation. This circumstance shows both the sincerity and the wisdom of Jesus in selecting him for an eye-witness of his conduct, and adds great weight to the value of the testimony of this evangelist. (Greenleaf 2011, Kindle Location 696-702)

Not only does Israel have the seeing and hearing problem, but so did we prior to meeting Jesus. Thanks to what He did on the cross and because He made a way for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us opening our eyes and ears, we are uniquely positioned in these last days to also be the witness that YAHWEH is calling for in the courtroom.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we see and hear and can testify that He and He alone is our savior. What He achieved on the cross by paying the price for our sin and then rising from the dead after three days in the grave, the whole world needs to know this; that someone was willing to die for you and for me.

Why us? Why use fallen men and women to be witnesses for Him. It is simple, we know by experience what He has done for us. “Angels could witness of His majesty and goodness. Devils, of His wrath and justice. All men, of His wisdom. But a child of God, while witnessing to all these, can tell of His forgiving love. He can have no greater joy. On account of our being constantly in the presence of our fellow-men. He would have the world without excuse. (Bertram and Tucker 1892, 153)

Not only did YAHWEH choose us and the people of Israel, but He did so with the purpose in mind that we would know, believe and understand who He truly is.

He has always existed, unlike the no-gods. “The gods of the pagan world were often spoken of as formed, created, coming into being or standing in genealogical relationship to each other. The Lord proceeds from none and is succeeded by none, existing from the beginning, without superior or inferior, one only God.” (J. A. Motyer 1996, 335)

God is number one on a list of one.

Israel is not to be a mighty worldly power dominating other nations and exercising world-empire. She is to be witness to what God has done for her, witness by her very existence and witness by the testimony that she can bear orally. By thus witnessing she fulfils her calling of being God’s “servant,” whom he has chosen. First of all she must come to the overpowering conviction that Yahweh is the one that alone deserves to be called God. (Leupold 1971, 84)

At this point in their history, 700BC, that is a dicey assumption.

God existed way before any idols came into being. He also predates all the no gods and none of them can save anyone, not even themselves (Psalm 82).

Yahweh is unique among all the supernatural beings (a) because one can know that he lives based on his spoken prediction and the fulfillment of his prophecies, (b) because one can have a real relationship of trust with God, and (c) because no other gods have these qualities. (Smith 2009, 203)

As God has previously testified to, Israel had every advantage and opportunity, to include the Law of God. But Israel remains silent, so YAHWEH provides the testimony.

Isaiah 43:11–13

“I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And I am God. Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?” (NASB95)

God announces to the court that which should have come from the lips of His people. They should be the ones confessing that He is Lord. That He is their savior and there is no one else who can do this. They are blind and deaf and silent. The God of Israel is the only God who is at work in the world today.

Everything else is a sham. YAHWEH declares to His people and to the nations in the strongest possible terms God is the only one who has the power to save. “None else has power to save. But this implies in the strongest manner that God has such power, and is a perfect Savior for all who accept him as such.” (Cowles 1869, 344)

In view of what God had shown and had done among them and for them, they were competent witnesses to his true divinity. They had seen abundant evidence that Jehovah is indeed the true God. (Cowles 1869, 345)

The only one who can rescue the people from the various trials and exiles still in their future and bring them back as one people is YAHWEH.

In verse 12 He makes it clear; He is the only one who has declared, saved and proclaimed. Only He can tell the future and proclaim that to others. Only He can save. It is amazing the number of times up to this point historically that YAHWEH has told His people He would save and then do so, and yet they still are blind and deaf. He has saved them in the past after saying He would do so. He has already made promises of saving them in the future and because He did that in the past the nation should trust that for the future. "I predicted what would happen, and then I came to your aid. No foreign god has ever done this; you are my witnesses." (Isaiah 43:12, GNB)

Isaiah 43:12c

"And I am God." (NASB95)

The salvation and the voice of the LORD came only from Him, and, therefore, because Israel experienced this, the LORD says they are witnesses of who He is: God ('el). The Hebrew word 'el is the general word for God, which emphasizes that He alone is God. Even though Israel failed, God did not fail. They are witnesses to His faithfulness. (Horton 2000, 328)

God wanted to make it completely clear about who He is. Starting in verse 11:

- I am YAHWEH, this term "expresses the idea that in the name Yahweh, which was revealed along with Yahweh himself at the beginning of the nation's encounter with him, his relationship with Israel is laid down in its two aspects: the name stands for God's words and God's deeds, which have their unity in it; at the same time, the name also stands for that to which Israel clung, in past and present, as she invoked it in supplication when she was in sore straits or rendered it exultant praise." (Westermann 1969, 124)
- "...no savior besides Me" points to another aspect of the relationship that YAHWEH, the God of the Universe, established with His own covenant people, Israel. The knowledge of Him being YAHWEH and being the Savior is not based on theory but based on experience. God has already demonstrated that He is the only one who has saved His people and did so in the past and He is the only one who can do so in the future as already prophesied in Isaiah in the person of the Messiah.
- "I am God," as a statement, points to the continuity that exists with Him having established the relationship in the past and continuing with it into the future. There is an unbroken line of prophesy that has been made and is continually being fulfilled. He is the standard set earlier for the no-gods and they cannot meet it...ever.

Isaiah 43:13

"Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" (NASB95)

God is eternal. He never changes. He does not change His mind about anything He has committed to do on behalf of His own. "Words were spoken to Israel, and trust was put in them. With the first revelation of his name, the first 'I am Yahweh', a promise had been united; and from then on there had been a continuous, unbroken series of words of his down to the one now being spoken..." (Westermann 1969, 124)

The verdict is simple..."I am God and always will be. No one can escape from my power; no one can change what I do." (Isaiah 43:12c-13, GNB)

Here God makes "THE" comprehensive claim of deity, He is God. This is "a comprehensive claim to a deity which pervades all time. No-one can deliver: this is no remote or ornamental deity but a sovereign over every other possible agency, human or 'divine'. The Lord is the God who has absolute rights over all people and, as who can reverse ...? adds, over the whole course of events as he determines they shall happen." (J. A. Motyer 1999, 305)

Israel was to be His witness. He tells them that in verse 12, there is no question about it. He has not abandoned them; they are to be a witness of Him.

Jesus gave us the same charge, this is not something we, as NT believers, can slack off on. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8, ESV)

Like it or not, the apostles, who walked with Him and witnessed His life, had a job to do. So do we.

Not until they were filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. 44:3) did they embrace this identity, but embrace it they did, as is evidenced especially in the prologue of 1 John (1:1–4), where the incontrovertible language of firsthand experience recurs again and again. Given that experience and its rootage by Jesus in the sweeping claims of Isa. 43, it is not surprising that the first Christian creed came to be “Jesus is Lord,” and that he should be understood to be the only Savior (cf. Isa. 43:11). Jesus himself taught the disciples to see that what was implicit in those words of Isaiah could find its fullest meaning only in him and in his work. (Oswalt 1998, 149)

We are also charged by Him with the same mission. He has provided us each with the Holy Spirit to live inside of us, and He also has even more power available to us. We can live empowered by the Holy Spirit and unlike Israel, we have a promise from Jesus “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.” (John 14:12, NLT)

To once again demonstrate His absolute authority, His omnipotence, omniscience and ability to tell what will happen in the future, He speaks of an event that will take place in the future.

Post verdict, to demonstrate to the nations and the no-gods, God makes an announcement, one that only He as God can make. He announces what He is going to do in the future. He will once again deliver His people. This will be a new work of deliverance. This is new evidence to show that “the Israelites should not so concentrate on what God has done for them in the past that they cannot see the new things he will do on their behalf.” (Oswalt 1998, 152)

Isaiah 43:14–21

“Thus says the LORD your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, “For your sake I have sent to Babylon, And will bring them all down as fugitives, Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice. I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King.” Thus says the LORD, Who makes a way through the sea And a path through the mighty waters, Who brings forth the chariot and the horse, The army and the mighty man (They will lie down together and not rise again; They have been quenched and extinguished like a wick): “Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise.” (NASB95)

At the time this is being written, around 700 BC, Babylon is a city state in the Assyrian Empire with a history of rebellion. King Hezekiah has recently even received an emissary from Babylon who was looking for an ally against Assyria. Babylon was a problem for Assyria.

In 689 BC, Babylon was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire. Yet they will rebuild and participate in the destruction of Nineveh, as predicted by Nahum. “In 612 B.C. Cyaxares the Mede in league with Nabopolassar of Babylon commenced the siege. The terrifying aspect of Nineveh’s fall is depicted as a just recompense of the powerful and cruel city.” (Unger, et al. 1988)

When Isaiah is writing, no one would expect Babylon to do much of anything...ever.

Yet in verse 14, we read of the impending doom of Babylon. Babylon will fall.

This is what the LORD says, your protector, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I send to Babylon and make them all fugitives, turning the Babylonians’ joyful shouts into mourning songs.” (Isaiah 43:14, NET)

God, the covenant keeping redeemer of Israel, will act once again to deliver His people, this time from exile in Babylon. God is going to bless His people, at the expense of the Babylonians.

Something else is reflective here as well. Recall that one of things that God can do as creator is control history. He can intervene into history whenever He deems it necessary. We see that reflected here as He sends someone to Babylon to turn the Babylonians into fugitives. Those of the ruling elite will have to escape via the Euphrates River, if that is possible. God will once again rescue His people.

In verse 15 He puts the exclamation mark on what it is HE is doing by once again reflecting that “I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King.” (Isaiah 43:15, NASB95) He reminds the people of when He did this to Egypt.

Isaiah 43:16–17

“Thus says the LORD, Who makes a way through the sea And a path through the mighty waters, Who brings forth the chariot and the horse, The army and the mighty man (They will lie down together and not rise again; They have been quenched and extinguished like a wick):” (NASB95)

To rescue the nation from Egypt, He made a way through the Red Sea destroying the strongest army in the world in the process. The terms He uses reflects that to God, it was not more complicated to do than putting out a candle. God called them out and they pursued only to be destroyed.

You would expect that by bringing this up, it would be to encourage the people to remember what He has done in the past. He is actually using it as a comparative. “That was the past, you thought that was something, you ain’t seen nothing yet.” What He is going to do in the future will eclipse what He has already done in the past.

Isaiah 43:18–21

“Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. “Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise.” (NASB95)

What YAHWEH is going to do for His people will make the exodus look like nothing. Many commentators reflect that this would be the return from exile in Babylon and yes that may be part of it, but there is more here.

I think the key is in the terminology that is used here. Yes, this does talk to the return from Babylon, but even more, it talks to the return at the end of the age from the ends of the earth and from exile in the wilderness hiding from the Beast and his armies. We saw in Isaiah 41:18 & 19 how the Lord will change the planet after the return of Messiah and the rescue of His people from southeast of Jerusalem (Isaiah 34:6. 63:1).

He says He will make a roadway in the wilderness. “The prophet anticipates a return from the ends of the earth and from all points of the compass, not just from Mesopotamia (41:9; 43:5; 49:12 cf. 51:11; 55:12–13).” (Blenkinsopp 2008, 228)

This is a global regathering which Isaiah has already written about.

Our attention is being drawn by the lord to the actions He will be doing for His people at the end of the great tribulation. “The coming salvation will completely transcend any expedience of the past. The way in the wilderness will climax in the honoring of God not only by the wild beasts, but above all by his chosen people who declare his praise.” (Childs 2001, 337)

The point is that God is master of the cosmos and can do with it exactly as he wishes to achieve his purposes. The gods have neither an overriding purpose nor the power to alter the natural order to achieve that purpose if they had one. But God, the true God, can turn wet to dry, or dry to wet, for the sake of his chosen people. (Oswalt 1998, 155)

When God does this at the end of the age, His people, those who were blind and deaf, are freed from that self-caused condition and they declare His praise.

That is the future and that is God showing to the nations and the no-gods that He is the only one who is truly deity, who is truly God. He has presented His case and evidence that He is the Creator God who is “the” Savior. But what about the lack of response from Israel. In anticipation of the cross examination that would be coming, why the Jew since they are ignoring you. Now comes the acknowledgement of that, and their short comings. Even despite the evidence about to be presented, they are still God’s chosen people. He still loves them.

We should take comfort in that since we also fail, but He still loves us too.

The problem God will bring up about His people is also a characteristic of the Laodicean church of the last days. Judah is busy doing Temple, but they are not living for the relationship with YAHWEH. We see that as a major problem in the church in the 21st century.

Satan has lied to us. He has led us to believe, as he had led Judah to believe, that as long as you got the worship part right, it did not matter how you live away from your religious life. Religion is fine, just don’t get so serious about it that you live it every day. This is reflected in how most choose to live today. Even those who say they are believers have no clue what a Biblical world view is.

Recent research from the Barna Group is not encouraging. God can do anything, and He can and has changed nations in the past. As a people, we should be mindful of what God said to Israel. “If I close the heavens and there is no rain, and if I command the locust to devour the wood, and if I send death among my people, and if my people, upon whom my name has been invoked, turn around and pray and seek my face and turn back from their evil ways, then I will hear from the heavens and will be merciful toward their sins and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:13–14, LES2)

Americans pledge allegiance to the new moral code, summed up in six guiding principles.

- To find yourself, look within yourself. 76%
- People should not criticize someone else’s life choices. 76%
- To be fulfilled in life, pursue the things you desire most. 72%
- Enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life. 66%
- People can believe whatever they want as long as those beliefs don’t affect society. 61%
- Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is fine. 40% (Kinnaman and Lyons 2016, 57)

This is not reflective of a Biblical worldview. Not even close. What is the impact on the next generation then? “No matter how we slice it, we consistently find that the next generation of Christians lacks sufficient thinking structures to engage the world. For example, we found that only 4 percent—just one out of every twenty-five teenagers today—has what we might call a biblical worldview. (Kinnaman, Matlock and Hawkins, Faith for Exiles 2019, 100)

### Revelation 3:15–19

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot! So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth! Because you say, “I am rich and have acquired great wealth, and need nothing,” but do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, take my advice and buy gold from me refined by fire so you can become rich! Buy from me white clothing so you can be clothed and your shameful nakedness will not be exposed, and buy eye salve to put on your eyes so you can see! All those I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent!” (NET)

The requirement from God is the same for us and for Israel. Repentance! A return to Him. This is reflected in what God says next to His people. The ones who have willingly made themselves blind and deaf and as such, have been unable to be the witness He desired for them to be.

### Isaiah 43:22–28

“Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob; But you have become weary of Me, O Israel. You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings, Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, Nor wearied you with incense. You have bought Me not sweet cane with money, Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices; Rather you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities. I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins. Put Me in remembrance, let us argue our case together; State your cause, that you may be proved right. Your first forefather sinned, And your spokesmen have transgressed against Me. So I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary, And I will consign Jacob to the ban and Israel to revilement.” (NASB95)

The God of Creation, the God who controls history, brings up the history of His people. Performance of ritual does not cut it. The outward appearance does not reflect the inward heart; thus the outward appearance is as if nothing has been done at all.

In Isaiah’s day, Israel at large has not called on God, giving the glory that is His due. Of course a remnant always does, those who trust Him. The majority has become weary of Him, preoccupied with their own purposes. They have not brought offerings, or honored Him; rather they have put on Him the burden of their sins, which weary Him. (Rosscup 2008, 1115)

Even in this, He still offers the only solution they have.

### Isaiah 43:25

“I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.” (NASB95)

We, as NT believers, have the same available to us whenever we blow it. For all the times we may act as hypocrites, just as Israel was, we have this solution available. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, ESV)

Romans 8:1–2 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (ESV)

In this instance what he does is to erase from the record every trace of the transgression and sin of his people, not once but continually and forever so that he cannot remember it (see also 44:22; Ps. 51:3, 11 [Eng. 1, 9]). He does this as an expression of his own nature, for my own sake (lit. “on account of me”). Nothing Israel has done or can do can qualify them for forgiveness like this. If God did not wish to do it, no court could require him to do so, and no power could compel him. It is purely an expression of the gracious character of him who is at the center of all things, encompasses all things, and is beyond all things. (Oswalt 1998, 160-161)

For Israel and for us...this is grace. Grace is something we find difficult to accept, if it was easy, the planet would be at the door seeking Christ. We have bought into the lie of the enemy that salvation must be earned, it can't possibly be as easy as it says in Romans 10:9 "because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (NET)

This is too easy for most. They must feel like this is something they merit and earned. This is called self-justification and it was a problem for Israel and is a problem even today.

Matthew 7:22–23

"On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons and do many powerful deeds?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!'" (NET)

Self-justification is a losing proposition all around. The one thing God chooses to forget is, if we repent and come to Him as the only solution to our sin problem, our sin. This was also true for Israel. God mentions that history for them as He expresses the reason for judgement.

Isaiah 43:26–28

"Put Me in remembrance, let us argue our case together; State your cause, that you may be proved right. Your first forefather sinned, And your spokesmen have transgressed against Me. So I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary, And I will consign Jacob to the ban and Israel to revilement." (NASB95)

The remnant will follow Him, but the bulk of the nation has a future that is also being prophesied here by the Lord. "Indeed, if Israel chooses the route of self-justification, all is lost. Not only is the present generation sinful, and the one before that, but every one right back to the founder of the nation. " (Oswalt 1998, 161)

At the very beginning of Isaiah, God stated the facts for the nation, and they are choosing to rebel.

Isaiah 1:18–20

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword. Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (NASB95)

The remnant can look forward to blessing, but more about that next time.

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