

ISAIAH LESSON 37

Real Yaweh's Witnesses^a

(Isaiah 42:18-43:21)

Isaiah 42:18-43:21 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Israel Blind and Deaf

42¹⁸ Hear, you deaf;

and look, you blind, that you may see!^b

¹⁹ Who is blind but my servant,

or deaf as my messenger whom I send?

Who is blind as my dedicated one^c,

or blind as the servant of the Lord^{d,e}?

²⁰ He sees^f many things, but does not observe them;

his ears are open, but he does not hear.^g

²¹ The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness' sake,

to magnify his law and make it glorious.^h

²² But this is a people robbed and plundered,

they are all of them trapped in holesⁱ

and hidden in prisons;

they have become a prey with none to rescue,

a spoil with none to say, "Restore!"^j

²³ Who among you will give ear to this,

will attend and listen for the time to come?^k

²⁴ Who gave up Jacob to the spoiler,

and Israel to the robbers?

Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned,

in whose ways they would not walk,

and whose law they would not obey?^l

²⁵ So he poured upon him the heat of his anger

and the might of battle;

it set him on fire round about, but he did not understand;

it burned him, but he did not take it to heart^{m,n}.

Restoration and Protection Promised^o

43 But now thus says the Lord,

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.^p

² When you pass through the waters I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.^q

³ For I am the Lord your God^r,

the Holy One of Israel^s, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
 Ethiopia^t and Seba^u in exchange for you.^v
⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes,
 and honored, and I love you,
 I give men in return for you,
 peoples in exchange for your life.^w
⁵ Fear not, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you;
⁶ I will say to the north, Give up,^x
 and to the south, Do not withhold;
 bring my sons from afar
 and my daughters from the end of the earth,^y
⁷ every one who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made."^z
⁸ Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
 who are deaf, yet have ears!^{aa}
⁹ Let all the nations gather together,
 and let the peoples assemble.
 Who among them can declare this,
 and show us the former things?
 Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
 and let them hear and say, It is true.^{bb}
¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," says the Lord,
 "and my servant whom I have chosen,
 that you may know and believe me
 and understand that I am He.
 Before me no god was formed,
 nor shall there be any after me."^{cc}
¹¹ I, I am the Lord,
 and besides me there is no savior.^{dd}
¹² I declared and saved and proclaimed,
 when there was no strange god^{ee} among you;
 and you are my witnesses," says the Lord.^{ff}
¹³ "I am God, and also henceforth^{gg} I am He;
 there is none who can deliver from my hand;
 I work and who can hinder it?"^{hh}
¹⁴ Thus says the Lord,
 your Redeemerⁱⁱ, the Holy One of Israel:
 "For your sake I will send to Babylon
 and break down all the bars,
 and the shouting of the Chalde'ans^{jj} will be turned to lamentations."^{kk}
¹⁵ I am the Lord, your Holy One,
 the Creator of Israel, your King^{ll}.^{mmm}
¹⁶ Thus says the Lord,
 who makes a way in the sea,
 a path in the mighty waters,ⁿⁿ

¹⁷ who brings forth chariot and horse,
 army and warrior;
 they lie down, they cannot rise,
 they are extinguished, quenched like a wick^{oo,pp}.
¹⁸ “Remember^{qq} not the former things,
 nor consider the things of old.^{tt}
¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
 I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers^{ss} in the desert.^{tt}
²⁰ The wild beasts will honor me,
 the jackals and the ostriches;
 for I give^{uu} water in the wilderness,
 rivers in the desert,
 to give drink to my chosen people,^{vv}
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
 that they might declare my praise.^{ww}

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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^a **Real Yaweh's Witnesses** – After Isaiah, Judah would have 100 years of ill-rule and trouble before finally falling to Babylon in 586 B.C. After that, there would be 70 years of exile until Babylon itself fell in 539 B.C. and its new Persian ruler permitted the Exiles to return to the Land in 538 B.C. The second half of Isaiah would include many words of comfort and hope for the Jewish people in their Exile. Chapters 40–55 are viewed by some scholars as having been written by Second Isaiah (or Deutero-Isaiah), an anonymous prophet living the end of the Babylonian Exile. Isaiah, who is named frequently in Chapters 1–39, does not appear in these chapters by name. The Assyrians, the great threat during the eighth century, hardly appear at all. The Jews are in Babylon, having been taken there by the victorious Babylonians. Cyrus II, the Persian king, is named. He will defeat Babylon and release the Exiles. The Prophet, who sees this not as a happy circumstance but as part of God's age-old plan, exhorts the Jews to resist the Babylonian religion and provides hope of an imminent return to the Land, where the Lord will again be acknowledged as King (Is 52:7). Because the Prophet proclaimed the triumph of Persia over Babylon, his message would have been considered seditious if written during the Exile. If it were composed during the Exile, it would likely explain why the collection would have circulated anonymously. Under this theory, these chapters were later appended to Isaiah 1–39 and considered the work of Isaiah or perhaps his disciples. However, if these chapters were first written and circulated during the later years of Exile, and if they contain the name of Babylon's conqueror before the conquest, there would be no reason that the original Isaiah, author of Chapters 1-39, could not have predicted what would happen during the Exile as well. Indeed, since all of Isaiah, and particularly the second half, are considered to be a primary prophecy regarding the coming Messiah, there would be no reason to exclude the Isaiah of Chapters 1-39 as the author of the remainder of the Book merely because it speaks of events that were not known to Isaiah's contemporaries. Nor does the mere fact that Isaiah himself, or Assyria, are not mentioned in these chapters dispositive since they were written about a later time period in which neither of these were actors. Whether written by Isaiah, Isaiah's disciples or Second Isaiah, the author of these chapters works within the tradition of Isaiah and develops themes found in the earlier chapters, such as the holiness of the Lord (Is 6:1-8) and his lordship of history (Is 7:14, 14:24-27, 26:4). These chapters also develop other themes common in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as the Lord as Israel's redeemer or deliverer (Ex 3:8, 6:6, 15:13, 18:8). Chapters 40-55 are frequently referred to as the Book of the Consolation of Israel and contain the so-called "Servant Songs" which Christians interpret as speaking of the coming Messiah. The initial chapters of this section also contain predictions concerning the role of Cyrus II, the Great (559-530 B.C.), the founder of the Persian Empire, in the return of the Exiles to the Land who is referred to in Chapter 41 as "**one from the East**" and mentioned by name later (Is 44:28). God was thus able to use a pagan ruler to protect and care for His people, just as He had used the Assyrians to punish Judah for its sins. In Chapter 40 the power of God to save His people is demonstrated. Continuing the same theme, Chapter 41 paints a picture of a courtroom in

which God challenges first the nations, and then the gods of the nations, to prove their power. In opening of Chapter 42 we are introduced to the Servant in the first of the Servant Songs which promises that the salvation which is available to the Jewish people will also be available to the gentiles through the actions of the Servant in carrying out God's plan, which leads to a song of joy song by the gentiles now included in God's people. In verse 18 of Chapter 42 the scene shifts back to the courtroom and the subject to the Jewish people. They are rebuked for not following God and His Law. But they are also called as witnesses to God's unique nature and power. And finally they are assured that God has not forgotten them, or their election, and that He will save them and bring them back from Exile.

^b (42:18) Ex 4:11; Dt 28:7-14; Pr 20:12; Mk 7:34-37; Lk 7:22; Rv 3:17-18 == In verses 16-17 the Lord promises to lead the blind, in that case the gentiles who have come to the Lord, be paths they do not know, while those gentiles who persist in worshipping idols will be turned back in shame. Now in verses 18-20 God says to the blind, the gentiles, that His servant Israel, who was chosen to bring light to the gentiles (Gn 12:1-3), is blind also because the Jews have eyes and ears, but cannot see, hear or understand. Other commentators interpret the blind in the opening phrases of verse 18 to mean Israel only, though that would not fit with the obvious universality of the new song of verses 10-17. In either case, the deaf or blind are those of the people of Israel who do not acknowledge God and follow His will. The Jews have the Law, and the history of the Lord coming to rescue them in hard times such as the Exodus or at the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Yet they are just as blind as the gentiles because they refuse to see (Rm ____). Nor did they act as a light to the nations because they did not understand themselves. In the *Targum of Isaiah*, the "wicked" are identified as the deaf who are told to hear, and the "ungodly" as the blind who are told to see or understand. Spiritual blindness and deafness is a common theme in Isaiah (Is 6:9-13, 29:9, 29:18, 32:3, 35:5, 42:16, 43:8). The words of the next verse in the *Targum of Isaiah*, hold out the opportunity for the wicked and the ungodly to repent and come to God, thereby avoiding punishment for their transgressions. But if they repent, they will be called "servants of the Lord".

^c **My dedicated** (or devoted) **one** (שָׁלֵם, *shalem*), is a somewhat obscure reference that is not present in the LXX. The Hebrew root verb, here appearing as a participial (בְּשָׁלֵם), is translated variously as complete, repay fully, make peace, make restitution, restore, perform, finish, and reward, none of which make that much sense in the context. It might be translated "covenant partner" as in the NET or "the one who is at peace with me" as in the NASB. Some scholars believe the text should read מֹשְׁלָם (**moshylam**, their ruler) or מְשַׁלְלָחִי (*myshullakhi*, my sent, dedicated or commissioned one), as in the RSV, which fits with the parallelism in the rest of the verse.

^d **Lord - Yahweh**, or **Jehovah** (יהוה, YHWH), written without vowel markings, unpronounced by Jews and referred to as the Tetragrammaton. See Note in the Introduction to this Study. **YHWH** appears here and in verses 42:21, 24 and 43:1 (twice), 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

^e (42:19) Is 6:9, 26:3, 27:5, 29:9-14, 41:8-9, 43:8, 43:10, 44:1-2, 44:21, 44:26, 45:4, 48:20, 49:3, 54:17, 56:10; Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2, 28:25, 37:25; Hag 1:13; Mt 13:9-15, 15:14-16, 23:16-24; Mk 8:17-18; Lk 1:54; Jn 7:47-49, 9:39-41, 12:40; Rm 11:7-10, 11:25; 2Co 3:14-15, 4:4 == The Lord rebukes his people for their failures, but their role as servant and mission to the nations remain. The LXX reads, "And who is blind, but My servants? And who is deaf, but those that rule over them? Yes, the servants of God have been made blind." The plural "servants" in the LXX provides a basis for considering the "servant" to be Israel. Jesus condemned the lawyers and religious leaders of His time for disregarding God and the weightier matters of the Law (Jn 9:39-41; ____). In much the same way we ignore God's commands and fail to bring light to unbelievers around us, both by failing to show God's love in our actions and by failing to tell other people about the Messiah. Thus Israel, as servant, is contrasted with the Servant of the Servant Songs who we will learn is the Messiah who is coming.

^f The Hebrew is in the second person singular rather than the first person singular.

^g (42:20) Is 1:3, 6:9-10, 43:8, 48:6-8, 53:1, 58:2; Nu 14:22; Dt 4:9, 29:2-4; Neh 9:10-17; Ps 106:7-13, 107:43; Jr 5:21, 6:10, 42:2-5; Ezk 33:31; Mt 13:13-14; Mk 6:19-20; Jn 9:37-50; Ac 28:22-27; Rm 2:21-23 == Israel, as the servant, had eyes and ears, and a history of being saved by God. They had heard the law and the prophets, but they did not understand or act accordingly. Thus they were more culpable than the gentiles who did not have the Law or the Prophets. The LXX reads, "You have often seen, and have not taken heed; your ears have been opened, and you have not heard."

^h (42:21) Is 1:24-27, 42:4, 43:25, 46:12-13, 51:4; Ps 40:8, 71:16-19, 85:9-12; Dn 9:24-27; Mt 3:15-17, 5:17-20, 17:5; Jn 8:29, 13:31-32, 15:10, 17:4-5; Rm 3:25-26, 3:31, 7:12, 8:3,4, 10:4; 2Co 3:7, 5:19-21; Gal 3:13, 3:21, 5:22-23; Php 3:9; Heb 8:10; 1Jn 3:4-5 == The Jewish people had no excuse for failing to perform the service God had assigned them (Lk 12:47). To demonstrate His character and bring light to the nations, the Lord had called Israel to follow His law and be an example (Dt 4:5-8). But since Israel disobeyed and failed to carry out this commission, God demonstrated His justice, and **magnified his Law**, by sending Israel into Exile (Dt 28:15-68). This object lesson would show that adherence to the Law would bring benefits while disregarding it would have consequences. The LXX includes no reference to the law and instead states that God sent the Jews into Exile to be justified by not tolerating disobedience indefinitely, "The Lord God has taken counsel that He might be justified, and might

magnify His praise.” People seeing God’s justice being carried out would praise God. According to the *Targum of Isaiah*, the Lord delights in justifying His people Israel, and he will magnify, hold and support those who follow the Law.

ⁱ Holes, or caves (חוקים, *Chuqqoq*).

^j (42:22) Is 1:7, 5:29, 14:17, 18:2, 24:18-22, 36:1, 42:7, 45:13, 51:23, 52:4-5, 56:9, 66:11; Dt 1:39, 28:29-33; Jdg 6:4; 2Ki 24:13; Ps 50:22, 102:20; Jr 2:14, 50:17, 51:34-35, 52:4-11, 52:31; Ezk 34:8, 36:4; Lk 19:41-44, 21:20-24 == Rather than streaming to Zion for a blessing (Is 2:1-5), the nations will plunder and loot it. The people of Israel will end up in prison, caves and holes. As a consequence of their sin, God withdrew his protection from them and they were taken into Exile (1Sm 13:6). The LXX might indicate that there was no safety anywhere. Traps awaited in every hole and cave.. There was no one to rescue them other than God. The LXX reads, “And I beheld, and the people were spoiled and plundered; for there is a snare in the secret chambers everywhere, and in the houses also, where they have hidden them; they became a spoil, and there was no one that delivered the prey, and there was none who said, Restore.”

^k (42:23) Is 1:18-20, 47:7, 48:18, 57:11; Lv 26:40-42; Dt 4:29-31, 32:29; Ps 81:13; Pr 1:22-23; Jr 3:4-7, 3:13; Mi 6:9; Mt 21:28-31; Ac 3:19-23; 1Pt 4:2,3 == The suffering the Jews experienced should have caused them to seek to understand the reason for it. Yet they did not listen to the Law and Prophets who had predicted it or heed God’s invitation for them to abandon their sin and return to God for His aid and protection.

^l (42:24) Is 5:24, 10:5-6, 30:15, 43:28, 45:7, 47:6, 48:18, 50:1-2, 57:17, 59:1-2, 63:10; Dt 28:49, 32:30; Jsh 1:7; Jdg 3:8, 10:7; 2Ki 17:6; 2Ch 15:6, 36:17; Neh 9:26-27; Ps 106:40-42, 119:136; Jr 2:19, 5:15, 25:8-9, 44:10; Lm 1:14-18; Am 2:6; Mt 22:7 == Isaiah identifies with the sins of the people by admitting that “we have sinned” but then describes the sin itself in the third person, indicating that he understands and acknowledges God and is obedient to the Law, though he is part of a sinful people (Is 6:__). Israel cannot be the Servant. Cyrus cannot be it either. Only the Messiah will be able to bring the gentiles in.

^m Did not take it to heart, or paid no attention

ⁿ (42:25) Is 1:3, 5:25, 9:13, 9:17-19, 29:13, 47:7, 47:11, 57:1, 51:11, 57:11, 57:17, 66:15; Lv 26:15-46; Dt 32:22; 2Ki 22:13, 25:9; Ezr 7:19; Ps 79:5-6; Jb 40:11; Jr 4:4, 5:3, 21:11-12; Lm 2:3; Ezk 7:8-9, 20:34, 22:21-22; Hos 7:9; Na 1:6; Am 4:6; Mal 2:2; Rv 9:18-21, 16:1-21 == By allowing other nations, the Assyrians, the Babylonians and others, to assault them and ultimately carry them into exile, the Lord poured out upon the Jewish people the heat of His anger which is likened to a fire set round about. Despite their suffering, the Jews did not take this discipline to heart and abandon their sin. Nevertheless, God’s mercy will overcome God’s judgment for His Chosen Ones and the Jews will be brought back from Babylon. The LXX reads, “So He brought upon them the fury of His wrath; and the war, and those that burned round about them, prevailed against them; yet none of them knew it, neither did they take it to heart.”

^o Chapter 42 ends with God’s sorrow over the spiritual decay of His people. In Chapter 43, God says that despite their sin, God will show mercy to the Jews, bring them back from Exile, and restore them. They have nothing to fear. Rather than respond to their sin with anger, He will respond with love. He will demonstrate to the world that God Himself has brought this about. This prophecy is parallel to Is 41:8-20.

^p (43:1) Is 15:21, 27:1, 35:9-10, 41:8, 41:14, 42:6, 42:25, 43:7, 43:15, 43:21, 44:2, 44:5-6, 44:21-24, 45:3-4, 48:17, 48:20, 49:1, 54:4-5, 62:12, 63:16; Gn 2:7, 31:6-8, 31:23; Ex 15:13, 19:5-6, 33:17; Dt 7:6, 32:9; Ps 91; Ps 100:3, 102:18; Jb 19:25; Jr 31:3, 33:24-26, 50:34; Ezk 16:8; Zec 13:9; Mal 3:17; Ac 27:20-25; Eph 2:10; 2Tm 2:19; Ti 2:14; Heb 8:8-10; Rv 5:9 == As the Exile in Babylon nears its end, God reminds the Jewish people that they are His (Gn 32:26-29), that He has called them (Ex 6:2-8) by name and that He will redeem them, so they need not fear (Is 35:4). This verse implies an intimate relationship between the Almighty and His people. He not only **created** (בָּרָא, *bara*) them, he **formed** (יָצַר, *yatsar*) them, implying that He touched them as a potter might touch a pot that he is shaping (Jr __; Rm __). He, like a father, gave them their name when He changed Jacob’s name to Israel (Gn 32:25-29). And He will become their **kinsman redeemer** (גָּאֵל, *gaal*; Dt 19:6; Ruth 2:20, 4:4-6; Jb 19:25; Ps 19:14, 69:18, 72:14, 78:35) implying a close family relationship. The other nations fashioned their own gods of wood and metal, but Israel’s God existed before the nation, and He Himself chose, fashioned and protected His people, bringing them into covenant relationship with Him. For this reason they had no reason to fear, for God will not allow the Jewish people to perish as a nation or to remain in Exile forever. This verse may also refer to the time when all Israel will be saved (Rm__).

^q (43:2) Is 8:7-10, 11:15-16, 29:6, 30:27-29, 41:10-14, 42:24, 66:12; Gn 26:3; Ex 14:22, 14:29; Dt 31:6-8, 32:23; Jsh 1:5, 1:9, 3:7, 3:15-17; Ps 23:4, 46:4-7; 66:10-12, 91:3-5, 91:15; Jr 1:8, 30:11, 46:28; Dn 3:17, 3:25-27; Am 9:8-9; Zec 13:9; Mal 3:2-3,4:1; Mt 1:23, 7:25-27; Lk 21:12-18; 1Co 3:15; 2Co 12:9-10; 2Tm 4:17-22; Heb 11:29, 11:33-38; 1Pt 4:12-13 == God tells His people that they will walk safely through waters as they have in the past with God’s help (Ex 14:21-31; Jsh 3:14-17). They will not be burned as they walk through heat and fire, perhaps metaphorically the desert, but clearly referencing v. 42:25. It could also be a reference to being tossed into an oven by the soldiers of the Babylonian King (__). No obstacle will prevent God’s people from

returning to the Land (Ps 32:6, 42:7-8, 124:4-5). If we rely upon the Lord during times of difficulty, He will sustain us. Regardless of the dangers or hazards they might face, Israel as a people would not come to harm as long as they were under the protection of God (Ps 66:12). Scripture, and the subsequent history of the Jewish people, show numerous episodes of the Jews being conquered, subjugated, persecuted and slaughtered, and yet they have survived as a people for over 3000 years while their conquerors, subjugators, persecutors and slaughterers, from the Egyptian Pharaohs to Hitler, have passed from the scene providing real evidence of God's care for His people. The LXX reads, "And if you pass through water, I am with you; and the rivers shall not overflow you; and if you go through the fire, you shall not be burned; the flame shall not burn you." The LXX includes two words for "not" (οὐ, *ou* and μή, *mē*) in the penultimate phrase providing an emphatic sense difficult to render in English. Other translations of the LXX would translate that phrase as "by no means will you be burned" to convey the same sense. In the *Targum of Isaiah*, relates this verse to past and future events, the former passage through the Red Sea () and, in the future, when the Jews "will go among the nations that are as strong as fire, they will not prevail against [them], neither will the kingdoms that are as powerful as a flame destroy [them]" thus reversing verse 42:25.

^r **God - Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים), the plural form of the generic *el* (אֵל). See Note in the Introduction to this Study.

^s **Holy One of Israel - Qedosh Yisrael** (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל), is used as a name for God approximately 45 times, most often in Isaiah. Appears here and at 43:14.

^t Ethiopia, or Cush, might also refer to regions in upper Egypt at the outer limit of the Babylonian Empire. https://www.worldmapsonline.com/images/Cram/History/persian_empire.jpg

^u **Seba** - According to the LXX, this is not to Seba in eastern Africa, but Soene or Syene, a location near Aswan in southern Egypt. Seba is not Sheba in southern Arabia (1Ch 1:9).

^v (43:3) Is 19:1, 19:20, 20:3-5, 25:9, 30:11, 41:13-14, 41:20, 43:11, 45:11, 45:14-15, 45:21, 49:26, 52:3-4, 60:16, 63:8; Gn 10:7; Ex 10:7, 14:30, 20:2; Jdg 2:18; 1Ki 10:1; 2Ch 14:9-14; Pr 11:8, 21:18; Ps 3:8, 68:31, 72:10; Ezk 29:20; Hos 13:4; Ti 2:10-14, 3:4-6; Jude 1:25 == God is saying that, metaphorically, He rewarded or paid Persia by enabling it to conquer Egypt, Cush and Seba so that Persia would permit, or in exchange for permitting, the Jews to return to the Land. The metaphor might be better understood as God setting Cyrus in motion and giving Him the strength to replace Babylon as the major power in the region and, in victory, release the peoples that Babylon had held captive. In doing so, Persia was made powerful enough to conquer the named regions, although this would not occur until the time of Cyrus's son Cambyses II. Cambyses conquered Egypt, but there is no historical evidence that he conquered Ethiopia or beyond. Cyrus and his successors followed the practice of allowing each conquered people to retain its own religion, a practice that benefitted the Jews and permitted them to resume their ancient religious practices. The Holy One of Israel, a title emphasizing his purity and holiness, gives His promise that He will redeem Israel, thus assuring that it will happen (Ezr 8:21-22).

^w (43:4) Is 28:16, 49:5, 63:9; Gn 12:2; Ex 19:5-6; Dt 4:27, 7:6-8, 14:2, 26:18, 32:9-14; 2Ki 1:13-14; Ps 36:7, 72:14, 112:9, 135:4; Pr 3:15; Jr 31:3; Hos 11:1; Mal 1:2, 3:17; Jn 5:44, 16:27, 17:23-26; Ti 2:14; 1Pt 1:7, 2:9; Rv 3:9 == This echoes the Exodus in which the Jewish people were redeemed at the expense of Egypt (Pr 21:18). God ransomed Israel because He considered Israel precious for carrying out His purpose of saving the Nations through the coming Messiah who would come out of the Jewish people and complete the purpose for which the Jews were commissioned but failed to accomplish. The Jewish people were honored or glorified in that "to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the [Messiah]" (Rm 9:4-5; Dt 4:37) through whom the purpose of God would be accomplished. God's love for Israel came to be on account of his love for their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The LXX reads, "Since you became precious in My sight, you have become glorious, and I have loved you; and I will give men for you, and princes for your life."

^x (43:5) Is 8:10, 11:11-12, 24:14, 27:12-13, 41:8-14, 43:2, 44:2, 49:12, 49:18, 49:22, 54:3, 60:1, 60:8-9, 61:9, 66:19-22; Gn 15:1, 21:22; Ex 14:22; Dt 30:3; 1Ki 8:46-51; Ps 22:27-31, 106:47, 107:3; Jr 30:10-11, 30:18-19, 31:8-9, 46:27-28; Ezk 36:24-27, 37:21-28, 39:25-29; Mi 2:12; Zec 8:7; Mt 8:11; Lk 13:29; Jn 10:16; Ac 18:9-10 == Verses 5-7 describe the gathering of God's people from the ends of the Earth. It may refer to the return from Exile in Babylon in which many diaspora Jews also returned to Jerusalem after the rebuilding of the Temple and the resumption of Temple sacrifice. Some commentators see it as referring to the founding of the State of Israel in 1949 and the return of many diaspora Jews. Or more likely, because of the universality of the places from which the sons and daughters will be gathered, it refers to the future Messianic time when all peoples, including the Jews (Mt 24:31), will acknowledge the Lord and come to worship in Jerusalem ().

^y (43:6) Is 11:12, 18:7, 45:22, 49:22, 60:4, 60:9; Dt 30:4; Ps 107:3; Jr 3:14-19, 23:8; Ezk 16:20, 16:61, 36:24; Hos 1:10-11; Rm 9:7-8, 9:25-26; 2Co 6:17-18; Gal 3:26-29 == In the previous verse the indicated directions are the east west. Here the reference is to the north and the south, thus showing that from every direction the exiles would be able to return to their land.

^z (43:7) Is 19:25, 27:11, 29:23, 43:1, 43:21, 44:23, 46:13, 48:1, 48:11, 56:5, 62:2-5, 63:19, 65:1; Ps 50:23, 86:9, 95:6-7, 100:3; Jr 14:7-9, 15:16, 33:16; Jn 3:3-7, 15:8; Ac 11:26; Rm 9:23; 2Co 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 1:6, 1:12, 2:4-7, 2:10; Ti 3:5-7; Jas 2:7; 1Pt 2:9, 4:11-14; Rv 3:12 == God had called Abraham and the Jewish people by name to be His people, giving them His Name. He redeemed them and protected them over and over, even though they have failed Him many times. Because of the work of Messiah, gentiles are now grafted into Israel and also called by God's name. Because we are called by His name, we have a special responsibility to not bring that Name into disrepute. The *Targum of Isaiah*, finding echo in Paul's Letter to the Romans (Rm 9:4-5) relates this to the Patriarchs by stating that Exiles will be brought back for the sake of their forefathers who were first given God's name were called for his glory. It concludes with, "I made ready their exiles, yes, I performed miracles for them."

^{aa} (43:8) Is 6:9-10, 40:18-20, 41:21-29, 42:18-20, 44:7-11, 44:18-20; Dt 29:2-4; Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2; 2Co 4:4-6 == In another courtroom scene extending through verse 15, God challenges the nations to prove that their gods and idols are real. He challenges them to bring forth their witnesses who can testify to the power of these gods. For His own case, He calls for the deaf and blind, even though they have ears and eyes, that is the people of Israel (Is 42:18-19), to testify to their own history. But since they have not understood, and remain deaf and blind, He answers His own question in verses 10-13 stating that He is God and there are no others. Some commentators assert that this verse and the following verses show God calling forth those who He has cured of blindness or deafness, whether literal or spiritual (), so that they may testify to God's power. But one does not see in any of the nearby chapters of Isaiah any formerly deaf and blind who have been cured calling into question that interpretation. The LXX reads, "and I have brought forth the blind people; for their eyes are alike blind, and those that have ears are deaf." The *Targum of Isaiah* is explicit in identifying Israel as the blind and deaf. This passage has to be seen in connection with Is 42:20 indicating not blindness so much as inattention or refusal to see the significance of what they had in fact observed. Thus, most recently, the defeat of Sennacherib at the gates of Jerusalem could only be attributed to the Lord, yet, after Hezekiah, the people of Jerusalem forgot all they had learned from this experience and went back to worshipping idols.

^{bb} (43:9) Is 34:1, 41:1, 41:21-26, 43:26, 44:7-9, 45:20-21, 46:10, 48:5-6, 48:14; Jsh 24:15-24; 1Ki 18:21-24, 18:36-39; Ps 49:1-2; Ps 50:1; Jl 3:11 = The imagery of verses 9-10 speaks of God's unique nature as the One True God. God, and only God, can foretell the future because it is he who brings it to pass (Is 41:22, 43:10, 44:7-8, 44:26). The gods and idols are challenged to show how they have made valid predictions in the past or to make predictions of the future which can be verified. In the LXX, the gathering of all the nations is represented as a completed action, with a reference to the future assemble of rulers. The LXX reads, "All the nations are gathered together, and princes shall be gathered out of them; who will declare these things? Or who will declare to you things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and be justified; and let them hear, and declare the truth." While neither the Hebrew nor the Greek for this verse contains a word for "idols," "gods," or "deities," a number of translations (e.g. NLT and NCV) make the implication specific.

^{cc} (43:10) Is 19:21, 20:3, 40:21-22, 41:4, 41:8-9, 41:20, 42:1, 43:12, 44:6-8, 45:5-6, 45:14, 46:8-9, 55:4; Ex 6:7; Dt 4:35, 32:39; Jsh 24:22; Ps 86:10; Jr 14:22; Jn 1:7-8, 15:16, 15:27, 20:31; Ac 1:8; 1Co 15:15; Php 2:7; Col 1:7; Rv 1:2-5, 3:14 == The task of the Jews, for which they were called, was to be God's witnesses in the world (Is 44:8) by telling the nations who God is and what He has done for His people. Believers today, as adopted children of Abraham (Rm ___), share this mission to tell people about God and His wonderful works. We fulfill this mission not only by what we say, but also by how we act. Israel's role as chosen people now takes a new turn as they are given the active role of bearing witness before humankind to the Lord's role in history by proclaiming events beforehand and bringing them to pass; see also Is 44:8. The false gods, on the other hand, cannot produce such witnesses (Is 44:9). I am he: this formula of self-identification, repeated in vv. 13 and 25, is used here to support the assertion that the Lord alone is God; see also Is 41:4, 46:4, 48:12, 51:12, 52:6. This expression in part may be behind the self-identification formula used by Jesus in John's gospel (cf. Jn 8:58). Before...after: another example of the same assertion, that the Lord alone is God; see also note on Is 44:6. The deities the peoples of the nations revered could not provide any witnesses to confirm that they had foretold future events that had unerringly been fulfilled. YHWH, however, did have the Israelites as his witnesses. Through his prophets he had revealed significant developments in advance, and they made known the messages publicly. Therefore, when the prophecies were fulfilled, the Israelites could bear witness to this effect, confirming that YHWH is indeed the true God. As a people, Israel was YHWH's "servant," one chosen for his purpose that primarily related to the coming of the Messiah through whom peoples of all the nations could gain blessings. On account of YHWH's dealings with his people, including the messages he communicated to them through his prophets, they came to know him — his qualities and his matchless power. The reliability of his word should have led them to believe or trust him, and what they heard and saw should have taught them to understand his ways and to follow them. No god existed among all the other nations regarding whom anyone could testify what they had accurately foretold, for all these deities were nonexistent and their images were the workmanship of mortal artisans. So no god was ever formed before YHWH, the eternal God, and no artisan would be able to fashion a real god at any future time. The LXX reads, "Be My witnesses, and I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and My servant whom I have chosen; that you may know, and believe, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no other God, and after Me there shall be none." The Septuagint differs from the Masoretic Text in representing God as also being a witness. The Targum of Isaiah refers to the servant as the "Anointed One" or "Messiah," but this interpretation does not fit the context. Reference note on first and last from prior chapter. In response to Question 104 of the Westminster Larger Catechism (1647), the following answer is given: "THE DUTIES REQUIRED IN THE FIRST COMMANDMENT ARE: THE KNOWING AND ACKNOWLEDGING OF GOD TO BE THE ONLY TRUE

GOD, AND OUR GOD [Is 43:10]; AND TO WORSHIP AND GLORIFY HIM ACCORDINGLY; BY THINKING, MEDITATING, REMEMBERING, HIGHLY ESTEEMING, HONORING, ADORING, CHOOSING, LOVING, DESIRING, FEARING OF HIM; BELIEVING HIM; TRUSTING, HOPING, DELIGHTING, REJOICING IN HIM; BEING ZEALOUS FOR HIM; CALLING UPON HIM, GIVING ALL PRAISE AND THANKS,²⁰ AND YIELDING ALL OBEDIENCE AND SUBMISSION TO HIM WITH THE WHOLE MAN; BEING CAREFUL IN ALL THINGS TO PLEASE HIM, AND SORROWFUL WHEN IN ANYTHING HE IS OFFENDED; AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH HIM.”

^{dd} (43:11) Is 12:2, 25:9, 42:8, 43:3, 44:6-8, 45:5, 45:18-22, 45:21, 46:9, 64:4; Ex 6:2, 20:3; Dt 6:4, 32:39; Ps 3:8, 18:31; Hos 1:7, 13:4, 13:14; Lk 1:47, 2:11; Jn 8:58, 10:28-30; Ac 4:12; Ti 2:10-13, 3:4-6; 2Pt 3:18; 1Jn 4:14, 5:20-21; Jude 1:25; Rv 1:11, 1:17-18, 7:10-12 == YHWH revealed himself as the savior, redeemer or deliverer of his people, liberating them from Egyptian enslavement and, on numerous occasions thereafter, from enemy threats and oppression. Being nonexistent, the deities of the nations could not deliver anyone nor could they make known their name, as had YHWH through his dealings with the Israelites.

^{ee} **Strange god** (), lit. foreigner.

^{ff} (43:12) Is 37:7, 37:20, 37:35-36, 43:10, 44:8, 45:22, 46:9-10, 48:4-7; Dt 32:12-16; Ps 46:10, 50:7, 81:9-10; Rm 10:17 == To his prophets, YHWH announced significant future developments. He saved or delivered the Israelites from enslavement in Egypt and at other times from military aggression or from subservience to other nations. At Mount Sinai, the Israelites did hear YHWH's commands. (Exodus 20:1-21) Furthermore, the prophets did not just proclaim their messages once, but YHWH had them repeat his words so that the people did indeed “hear” what he wanted them to know. According to the rendering of the Septuagint, God censured his people, reproving them for their wayward ways. He often used his prophets to do this. When the Israelites first left Egypt, YHWH led them. After they crossed the Red Sea and began their journey in the wilderness, there was then no strange god among them. In view of YHWH's dealings with the Israelites, the law he gave to them at Mount Sinai, and what he revealed to them through his prophets, they were his witnesses to the things he had declared and accomplished. He also was uniquely their God who dealt with them in a special way as his people. The Septuagint represents God as being a witness. He could testify to what he had revealed in advance, and the Israelites could bear witness regarding what he had foretold through the prophets and how his word had been unerringly fulfilled. The LXX reads, “I have declared, and have saved; I have reproached, and there was no strange god among you; you are My witnesses, and I am the Lord God . . .” The Targum of Isaiah interprets YHWH's advance declaration as having been made to Abraham and then indicates that the deliverance from Egypt fulfilled the oath-bound promise to him. YHWH caused the Israelites to “hear” the instruction of his law at Mount Sinai. When there was no strange god (stranger) among you, perhaps a reference to the Exodus before the corruption of Canaan? There were strangers coming with them in the Exodus. Does stranger really mean strange gods?

^{gg} **Henceforth** (), lit. from this day on.

^{hh} (43:13) Is 14:27, 41:4, 42:8, 46:4, 46:10, 48:12-16, 57:15; Nu 23:8; Dt 28:31, 32:39; Jb 9:12, 34:14-15, 34:29; Ps 50:22, 90:2, 93:2; Pr 8:23, 21:30; Dn 4:35; Hos 2:10, 5:14; Mi 5:2; Hab 1:12; Jn 1:1-2, 8:58, 10:28-29; Rm 9:18-19; Eph 1:11; 1Ti 1:17; Heb 13:8; Rv 1:8 == Throughout time, God's plans cannot be turned aside by any other. What He says He will do, He will do. This verse is perhaps a continuation of verses 1-7. The expression “from the day” probably denotes “from the beginning,” which agrees with the Septuagint rendering. As the eternal one, YHWH has been the only true God before the very start of everything that exists. Therefore, he is uniquely the One who is. The rendering of the Septuagint is elliptical. With “says the Lord God” being the concluding words of the previous verse, the implied thought could be, “Yet from the beginning, I am he.” YHWH is the Almighty and, therefore, no deliverance is possible whenever his hand or power is directed against any individual, people, or entity. Whatever he purposes is certain to occur. No one can “turn back” his “hand” or reverse what he has determined to do. The LXX reads, “even from the beginning; and there is none that can deliver out of My hands; I will work, and who shall turn it back?” According to the Targum of Isaiah, YHWH will not reverse what he does, but this interpretation does not agree with the extant Hebrew text nor with the Septuagint rendering. The Tree of Life Version (TLV) translates this verse as, “I alone declared, saved and proclaimed, and not some foreign god among you. So you are My witnesses” —it is a declaration of Adonai—“and I am God.” This gives a different take on the presence of foreigners.

ⁱⁱ Redeemer ()

^{jj} Chaldeans, or Babylonians

^{kk} (43:14) Is 1:4, 13:14-15, 23:13, 28:13, 41:20, 43:1-4, 44:6, 44:24-28, 45:1-5, 47:1, 54:5-8; Ex 15:13; Ps 19:14, 78:35; Pr 23:11; Jb 19:25; Jr 50:2-11, 50:17-18, 50:27-34, 51:1-13, 51:24, 51:34-37; Ezk 27:29-36; Rv 5:9, 18:11-21 == Verses 14–17 - The destruction of Babylon is described in language that recalls the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Ex 14–15). The Lord, Israel's Holy One (Is 41:14, 48:17, 49:7) will redeem (Is 54:5, 59:20) His people from the Babylonians who will become exiles in the place of the Jews. YHWH would manifest himself as the one who redeems or delivers his people upon freeing them from Babylonian exile. As the Holy One of Israel, he is pure in all respects and his word is deserving of absolute trust. Therefore, when the Israelites witnessed the fulfillment of his word, they saw the unmistakable evidence that identified him as their Holy

One. For the sake of his people, particularly the repentant Israelites in exile, YHWH would take action against Babylon by means of a conquering military force. That force would “bring down” all the bars of Babylon, destroying the defenses of the city and conquering it. The Septuagint does not include a reference to “bars,” but refers to God’s arousing the ones fleeing or escaping. Possibly the ones escaping could be understood to be the Israelite exiles who would not be adversely affected by Babylon’s fall but would be able to return to their land. There is considerable uncertainty about the meaning of the words “ships of their shouting.” Perhaps the reference is to ships that plied the Euphrates and which were the object of Chaldean pride or of great boasting. In the Vulgate the words are rendered, “Chaldeans glorying in their ships” (Chaldeos in navibus suis gloriantes). The Septuagint rendering suggests that the Babylonian defenders manning the fleet would be bound as captives. Another possibility is that the “shouting” could relate to the resounding of joyous cries when the gods were being transported on boats or barges during the course of cultic processions. The LXX reads, “Thus says the Lord God that redeems you, the Holy One of Israel; for your sakes I will send to Babylon, and I will stir up all that flee, and the Chaldeans shall be bound in ships.” After mentioning that the Israelites had been exiled on account of their sins, the Targum of Isaiah says, “I [YHWH] brought them all down in boats, and the Chaldeans in the ships of their rejoicing.” Those who are brought down in boats are not identified. If this is to be linked to bringing down the Chaldeans in defeat, then the thought could be that YHWH brought down all the defenders of Babylon who were on the ships. Concept of kinsman redeemer here? Same word as in Ruth? Hebrew at the end of this verse is obscure.

^{ll} King ()

^{mmm} (43:15) Is 6:3, 27:11, 30:11, 33:22, 40:25, 41:14-16, 41:20-21, 42:8, 43:1-7, 43:21, 44:6, 45:11, 48:17; Lv 17:1; Ps 74:12; Jr 51:5; Hab 1:12; Mt 25:34; Rv 3:7 == In verses 15-21 God refers to the new thing that He is doing, and compares that to what He did in the Exodus. The repeated identification of YHWH as Israel’s “Holy One” should have served as a reminder to the people of their wayward course and the need to change their conduct to reflect the holiness or purity of their God and to trust him fully. He was their Creator, the one who made it possible for them, as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to come into existence as a people or nation. YHWH was their King to whom they owed obedience and who, in turn, would come to their aid in time of need, protect them from threats, and deliver them from their foes. The LXX reads, “I am the Lord God, your Holy One, who have appointed for Israel your king.” The Septuagint rendering could also be understood to refer to God as the King of Israel. By what he did for them, he revealed himself as their King.

ⁿⁿ (43:16) Is 11:15-16, 40:3, 43:2, 44:27, 50:2, 51:10-11, 51:15, 63:11-13; Ex 14:16-29, 15:8; Jsh 3:13-16; Neh 9:11; Ps 74:13-14, 77:19, 78:13, 106:9, 114:3-5, 136:13-15; Jr 31:35; Rv 16:12 == God reminds His people of His miracles during the Exodus (Ex 14-15) in verses 16-17 as a preface to His telling His people to forget the former things, and wait for the new thing that God was going to do in verse 19. These words apparently allude to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt when the Red Sea was parted, enabling the people to cross by means of the way that had been opened up for them. The expression “mighty waters” may be regarded as paralleling “sea.”

^{oo} Wick (), lit. linen. Is this the same word as in Is 42:1-17?

^{pp} (43:17) Is 1:31; Ex 14:4-9, 14:20-28, 15:4, 15:19; 23:28; Ps 46:8-9, 76:5-6, 118:12; Jb 13:25; Jr 51:21; Ezk 38:4, 38:8-18; Rv 19:17-21, 20:8-9 == Seemingly, YHWH is represented as leading out the Egyptian forces for the purpose of bringing about their destruction. In this case, “chariot” and “horse” are collective singulars, meaning “chariots” and “horses.” Whereas the Septuagint mentions a mighty crowd or a large military force, the Hebrew text, besides referring to an army, adds “mighty one,” a collective singular denoting “warriors.” According to Exodus 14:27-30, the Egyptian host perished in the Red Sea. Thus the warriors lay down or fell asleep in death, unable to rise again. Their end was comparable to the extinguishing of the flame of a flaxen wick.

¹ **tn Heb** “led out chariots and horses.” The words “to destruction” are supplied in the translation for clarification. The verse refers to the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

² **tn Heb** “lay down”; NAB “lie prostrate together”; CEV “lie dead”; NRSV “they lie down.”

^{qq} Remember (). The form of the verb indicates second person plural in Masoretic and LXX. 1QIsaa has the second person singular.

^{rr} (43:18) Is 41:22, 46:9, 65:17; Dt 7:18, 8:2; 1Ch 16:12; Jr 16:14-15, 23:7-8; 2Co 3:10 == God’s new act of delivering Israel from the Babylonian captivity is presented as so great a marvel as to eclipse even the memory of the exodus from Egypt. This comparison of the return from Babylon to the exodus from Egypt recurs throughout Second Isaiah (cf. Is 41:17–20; 43:18–21; 48:20–21; 49:8–13; 51:9–11). In this context, “first things” or “former things” (“ancient things,” LXX) appear to relate to the former deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian enslavement. Their not recalling or remembering this deliverance did not mean that they should forget about it, for they were commanded to observe the Passover to commemorate it. They were not to focus on the former deliverance as if nothing of this nature would ever happen again. As indicated in the next verse, YHWH would do something new that would be deserving of memorializing.

^{ss} Rivers (), or in 1QIsaa, paths.

^{tt} (43:19) Is 11:16, 33:21, 35:1, 35:6-10, 40:3-4, 41:18-22, 42:9-10, 48:6, 48:21-22, 49:10, 51:3; Ex 17:6; Nu 20:11; Dt 8:15; Ps 78:16-20, 105:41, 126:4; Jr 16:14-15, 23:7-8, 31:22; Lk 3:4-5; 2Co 5:17; Rv 21:5 == After the expression here rendered “new thing,” the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah includes the conjunction “and.” Instead of “rivers,” this scroll reads “paths” (the singular form of the same word being found in verse 16). The “new thing” or the new development is the release of the repentant Israelite exiles from Babylon. YHWH would clear out all obstacles that would hinder a return to their land, providing for them what they needed along the way. Thus he would have made a path for them in the wilderness. One of the prime essentials for life is water. The assurance that YHWH would cause rivers to flow in the desert indicated that the people would have all necessities when making the long journey back to their land. God tells His people to look forward to the new thing that He will do. He wants His people to see Him as their present protector and provider. In a sense, He is telling them that their punishment is over, and that they no longer have to look to ancient history to have a relationship with the Lord (Jr 23:7-8). He promises to provide life giving water in the desert (Ps 42:1, 63:1; Jn 4:14; Rv 7:16). The new thing appears to me to be a reference to Is 42:10-17, and the new song, and therefore to the Messiah, the Servant of Is 42:1-9.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “sprouts up”; NASB “will spring forth.”

² **tn** Or “know” (KJV, ASV); NASB “be aware of”; NAB, NIV, NRSV “perceive.”

³ **tn** The Hebrew texts has “streams,” probably under the influence of v. 20. The Qumran scroll 1QIsa^a has חֲבוֹתַי (“paths”).

^{uu} **Gave** (), in Masoretic Text, 1QIsaa has give.

^{vv} (43:20) Is 11:6-10, 13:22, 35:6-7, 41:17-18, 43:19, 48:21, 49:10, 55:1-2, 65:15; Ex 17:1-7; Nu 20:8; 1Ch 16:13; Ps 33:12, 104:21, 148:10; Jr 31:9; Jl 3:18; Mk 13:20; Jn 4:10-14, 7:37-39; 1Pt 2:9; Rv 17:14, 21:6,22:17 == Masoretic Text: “Beasts of the field, jackals and ostriches [literally, “daughters of greed”), will honor me, for I have given waters in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to provide drink to my people, my chosen one, “ Septuagint: “The beasts of the field will bless me, sirens and daughters of ostriches, for I have given water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to provide drink to my race, the chosen one,” The Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah reads, “my people and my chosen one” (or, “my people, even my chosen one”). According to the Targum of Isaiah, the “exiles” are the ones for whom YHWH would provide water to drink. This Targum, however, does not represent the animals as glorifying or honoring YHWH but refers to the people as doing so upon his re-peopling the desolated land, including the place where jackals and ostriches had their dwelling. Wilderness and desert dwellers included ostriches, jackals, and a variety of other wild animals. Although their need for water was not as great as that of other animals, they still were dependent on having access to a water supply. Therefore, the abundant provision of water YHWH is represented as making for his people during the course of the journey back to their land would also benefit the animals. Seemingly, for this reason, these creatures are spoken of as glorifying, honoring, or praising YHWH. In the Septuagint, the mythical “sirens” are mentioned, apparently this would be because the ancients believed that such creatures had their haunt in desolate places. The mention of these mythical creatures in the Scriptures does not necessarily imply that these creatures exist, or existed then, since this is Hebrew poetry. English Romantic poets also made reference to such things not as an assertion that they exist, but to evoke the emotions, and convey the poetic meanings that were intended. There is also a possibility that the mention of wild animals honoring YHWH could relate to the security the Israelite exiles would enjoy on the way back to their land. The wild creatures would not harm the people when they traveled through wilderness and arid regions. Thus the animals could be considered as honoring YHWH, for it was his purpose for the Israelites to have a safe journey when returning to their land. Israel is designated as YHWH’s chosen one. This is because he had chosen the people as his own for his purpose.

^{ww} (43:21) Is 42:12, 43:1, 50:7, 60:21, 61:3; Gn 2:7; Ps 4:3, 22:3, 66:2, 79:13, 102:18, 105:1; Pr 16:4; Mal 3:17; Lk 1:74-75; 1Co 6:19-20, 10:31; Eph 3:21; Col 1:16; Ti 2:14; Heb 13:15; 1Pt 2:9 == God reminds the Jews that their purpose was to give praise to God and tell of His glory to the nations (Gn 12:1-3). YHWH had formed the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob into a people or nation for his purpose, dealing with them in a special way and giving them his commands for their guidance. His purpose included their making known his praise or, according to the Septuagint, his “excellencies” — his attributes and the things he had done for them. By the way they lived their lives in harmony with God’s commands and the resultant blessings they enjoyed, they could have shown to observers from other nations that YHWH truly cared for them as his people. The Israelites would have exalted him in the eyes of others and thus related or made known his praise. In a sense, when the repentant people were gathered and returned to their land, YHWH again formed them into a people. His providing for them and protecting them also brought praise to him and deserved to be related. In the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah (the Great Isaiah Scroll), the conjunction “and” is included after the words “I formed for myself.” This scroll also has the word for “speak” instead of one that is here rendered “recount.” According to the Targum of Isaiah, YHWH appointed Israel for his “service.”