

**Sermon Notes & References**  
**Witnesses to Our Saviour God**  
**Isaiah 43:8-13**  
**February 6, 2011**

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Getting a picture of what God is like
  - 2. The picture in this passage<sup>A</sup>
  - 3. The two applications of this picture<sup>B</sup>
- B. The Subpoena of Witnesses ..... 43:8-9
  - 1. the first group for God's defence (8)
  - 2. the second group for the opposition (9)<sup>C</sup>
- C. The Opening Argument ..... 43:10
  - 1. that the LORD's absolute Deity be defended
  - 2. that His people may understand the truth

- D. The Truth to be Affirmed ..... 43:11-13
  - 1. the only Saviour (11)<sup>D</sup>
  - 2. God's witness can speak (where the opposition's can't; 12)
  - 3. the Judge's summary (13)<sup>E</sup>
- E. Conclusion
  - 1. man's standing before this exalted God
  - 2. God's dealing with the problem in Jesus<sup>F</sup>

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<sup>A</sup> Revelation 4:8, John 17:4-5, 16:14, Isaiah 42:8  
<sup>B</sup> Titus 2:13  
<sup>C</sup> Daniel 5:25, Psalm 96:13, Philipians 3:21

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<sup>D</sup> 1 John 4:14  
<sup>E</sup> John 10:28-29  
<sup>F</sup> John 1:14, Colossians 2:13-14

—{1}. **Isaiah 43:8-13** . . . . . **Witnesses to Our Saviour God**

A. Introduction

1. How can we get a picture of what God is like?
  - a. a few weeks ago we spoke of *anthropomorphisms*, that is, the use of something that is purely human – such as hand, arm or feet – in describing God’s actions and power
  - b. the Bible also uses emotional words in describing God
  - c. words that when we examine them can startle or shock us
  - d. for example, God describes Himself as a jealous God, in fact that His Name is Jealous
  - e. or His wrath against sin and sinner is described as being fiery or red-hot anger
  - f. emotions that we usually associate only with mankind
    - (A) emotions are things that move and change a person
    - (B) but God is unchangeable and the unmoved mover
    - (C) yet human emotions, such as love and hate, things that we understand, are the best way for the Bible to convey what God is like to our understanding
  
2. to understand what this passage is conveying—{2}.
  - a. I want to use what may be some startling language to you
  - b. the book of Isaiah is the most sustained exaltation of God by Himself in the Bible
  - c. this chapter and the next are breathtaking in God’s exaltation in His own exaltation; in their boasting of the absoluteness and sovereignty of God over all things
  - d. hear the way God describes Himself: ‘I, I am He, and there is no other god, no other Saviour, ... no other rock! I am the LORD the Holy One of Israel!’
  - e. it is small wonder that of ‘the four living creatures ... day and night they do not cease to say, “**Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.**”’ (Revelation 4:8)
  - f. as our boast is to be in the Lord, so this book of Isaiah shouts the ringing cry of God’s own boast in His greatness
  - g. the Lord takes great pleasure in being God

- h. listen as Pastor John Piper, of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, describes it, 'There is a kind of volcanic exuberance in God over the fact that He is God. He virtually erupts with the exaltation of His own glory. God is thrilled to be God.' – that is a strong statement
- i. do you think that is too strong? then listen to these words from Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, the words of God the Son to God the Father: <sup>4</sup> 'I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.' and likewise of the Holy Spirit we read in John 16:14, 'He will glorify Me' – God is intense in His bringing glory to Himself: Isaiah 42:8, 'I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another...'
- j. 'the LORD, He is God;' that truth enraptures and transports Isaiah as He writes these chapters

3. what does this truth do to you this morning?

- a. as we read from Titus 2:13 the words, '... the glory of our Great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus...' were you thrilled to realize that the Lord, He is God?
- b. was there an eruption of wonder and awe and amazement at who God is and that He is our Saviour God?
- c. that is the first objective of our message this morning
- d. the second objective is that we should carry that same wonder into our daily witness concerning our Saviour God
- e. let's look at the passage under these headings
  - (A) The Subpoena of Witnesses, verses 8-9
  - (B) The Opening Argument, verse 10
  - (C) The Truth to be Affirmed, verses 11-13

B. The Subpoena of Witnesses . . . . . 43:8-9

- 1. Those first subpoenaed are described in verse 8. Here I believe that both the NAS and NIV have it wrong, because the preceding verse speaks about the Divine restoration of God's people, while those translations revert to a lost Israel in exile, still blind and deaf – so let me use a literal translation
  - a. He has brought out a blind people and they have both eyes, and deaf ones, and they have both ears.
  - b. it is not a command, but a statement of Yahweh's actions
  - c. the restored people of verse 7 are now the redeemed and regenerate people of verse 8 who are called

upon by God

- d. who now have working eyes and working ears
  - e. they have seen what God has done
  - f. they have heard His word and hearkened
  - g. this verse goes far beyond its initial and real fulfilment to Israel in the return from captivity to the land of promise, but anticipates the conversion of Gentiles unto God, of God's calling pagans out of darkness into the marvellous light of God Himself
  - h. these are called as witnesses for God's defence of His claim that He alone is God, and all the gods of the nations, idols
2. those next subpoenaed are described in verse 9
- a. the witnesses for the opposition
  - b. the heathen Gentiles and the pagan peoples of earth
  - c. *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.'*
  - d. God has brought all the people together for judgement
  - e. judgement and salvation go together
    - (A) Babylon was judged, with the writing on the wall of Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin – weighed in the balances and found wanting – with that judgement came salvation to the people of God
    - (B) the sins of the world were judged on the cross as Christ Jesus bore them in His own body – with that judgement came salvation to every one who would trust in Him
    - (C) when Christ Jesus returns, *'... the LORD, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness.'* (Psalms 96:13) – then the final stage of salvation will take place for those who are in Christ, the redemption of our body – being given a new body like unto His glorious body<sup>{3}</sup>.
  - f. now, all these things that God will do, who among them, what gods – be they the gods of wood and stone or the gods of man's intellect – have foretold these events?
  - g. of all the things that God has done – the march of various nations appearing and disappearing on the tapestry of history over the last four millennia – preserving His people against all odds; what gods have

explained these events?

- h. let the godless nations muster their witnesses; it must be more than a mere claim, but backed by truthful witnesses
- i. and, if they cannot do so, let them keep silent, and listen to what God is saying, and confess that His words are true
- j. and the witnesses for the opposition are silent.

C. The Opening Argument . . . . . 43:10

1. '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.'

- a. the witnesses for the defence of God's absolute Deity are called upon – those who now have eyes and ears – who can give testimony to what they have heard their God say
- b. who can bear witness to seeing what their God has done
- c. and in the bearing of this witness
- d. that their knowledge of God will be increased
- e. and their faith and trust in God will be strengthened

2. and that His people may understand this truth

- a. so that all the world may know that the LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and for ever, He is the great I AM – the One True God who is because he is, existing throughout all time and eternity
- b. from a grammatical perspective, 'before Me' and 'after me' refer to time: there was no god who pre-existed our God, not is there any god that will succeed Him as God
- c. from an eternal perspective, viewing God as existing in the eternal now, those words can be used spatially, 'in front of Me' and 'behind me' – search as you like, you will find no other real god anywhere, for He alone is God

D. The Truth to be Affirmed . . . . . 43:11-13

1. Dr John Ryland listed some of the principal things which we as believers are called upon to witness for God

in this courtroom

- a. to His being and His glorious perfections
- b. to the equity of His holy law
- c. to the excellence of His gospel
- d. to the power of His grace
- e. to the influence of His truth
- f. to the use of His ordinances
- g. to the attention of His providence
- h. to the fulfilment of His promises
- i. to the glorious nature of His rest<sup>-(4)</sup>.

2. v 11: **I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.**

- a. Hebrew is an inflected language, the same as Latin & Greek
- b. in an inflected language there is no need to use pronouns to indicate who is the subject, the one doing something – e.g. *amo, amas, amat* – I love; you love; he, she, it loves
- c. now in this passage, God uses the personal pronoun in each of these three verses: 11, 12, and 13, so the I in these verses is emphatic – I, in bold letters
- d. but here the pronoun starts the verse; even more emphatic – I, in big, bold letters
- e. and it is repeated – I, I, in big, bold, underlined letters
- f. **I, I, Yahweh** – the I AM – **and there is no Saviour besides Me** – I am the only Saviour, the Redeemer of my people
- g. but Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour of the world<sup>-(5)</sup>.
- h. so we are left with the inescapable conclusion that Jesus, the Christ of the NT and Yahweh, Saviour of the OT are one and the same being – very God of very God

3. returning to the challenge of verse 9

- a. in which the witnesses for the opposition were called upon to prove how their gods had ever foretold or explained the events that God had done
- b. God now calls upon His own witnesses – His people – in
- c. v 12: **'It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there (or, it) was no strange god among**

you; So you are My witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'And I am God.'

- d. 'you My people,' says God, 'have two eyes and two ears, and you can testify that it was I who acted among you, not some man-made god'
  - (A) you have heard from your fathers what I have foretold
  - (B) you have seen and felt my salvation
  - (C) you have heard my announcement unto you
  - (D) and you can give testimony that it all took place
- e. and so – Q. E. D. as I used to write in a mathematics exam – it is now proven as fact in this case: 'I, Yahweh, am God'

4. so the LORD, the Judge, summarizes in verse 13

- a. 'Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?'
- b. God is not only eternal, sovereign, knowing the end from the beginning, but He is all powerful
- c. 'deliver out of My hand' can also be translated 'snatch out of My hand' which reminds those who are in Christ of Jesus' promise to those who should come to God through Him
- d. <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.' (John 10:28-29)
- e. and this, then, is our God! Isn't He worth telling about!

## E. Conclusion

1. what is a person's standing before God?

- a. it is that of a sinner, of one who has fallen short of God's holy law, which only Jesus ever has fulfilled
- b. In a Peanuts cartoon, Linus comes running across the beach to Charlie Brown shouting 'I can swim, I can swim!'
  - (A) 'Well, I'm glad to hear that, Linus, congratulations!'
  - (B) 'Yes sir,' Linus says, 'If I'm ever aboard an ocean liner and it sinks four feet from shore, I won't have a thing to worry about!'—<sup>{6}</sup>.
- c. how well that describes us when we rely on our own ability – our good thoughts, our good deeds, our

good lives – to save us from sin and to make us fit for heaven

(A) we are more than four feet from shore

(B) we are far out of our depth

2. but God has dealt with this problem

a. the most wonderful and awesome and amazing truth is this

b. that this unique, sovereign and absolute God

c. took the problem of the sin that keeps mankind from having a personal relationship with God

d. and dealt with it Himself

e. John 1:14, 'And the Word – 'Word' is a title John uses in this chapter to describe the Son of God, Jesus Christ – And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

f. by this Word, Jesus Christ, God has nailed our sins to the cross, and dealt with the problem



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Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Opening thoughts and emphases adapted from *'From Wonder to Witness,'* a message by John Piper, June 28, 1989, Kerux sermons #3811
3. [“who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”](#) (Philippians 3:21)
4. Biblical Museum, editor James Comper Gray, under Isaiah 43:10
5. [“We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”](#) (1 John 4:14)
6. *'Four Feet from Shore,'* by Charles Schultz, Kerux illustrations #17914