

# I Gave Egypt for Thy Ransom

“For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

**I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.**

Since thou wast precious in my sight,

thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee:

**therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.”**

Isaiah 43:3-4

## **Introduction:**

1. I have known this text for over 40 years, since it is valuable for the true interpretation of II Peter 2:1.
2. However, I had not fully appreciated its deep and glorious intent until recent meditation by the Spirit.
3. We are in the middle of a sermon series about the only right worldview, but this passage serves it well.
4. Recall axiom #6 – *God created for Himself*; #7 – *God rules over all*; #12 – *God saved unconditionally*.
5. The combined effect of these axioms is the absolute dominion and sovereignty of God over all men.
6. The bottom line you and I need to see from this text is God’s distinguishing and supreme love for us.
7. God chose various ways to measure His love for us, but this measure is not known by most Christians.
8. There is great comfort and glory knowing how much God loves His people, and this lesson adds to it.
9. The best cross-reference is likely Malachi 1:1-5, where the two questions in 1:2 should be emphasized.
10. It is our job to look and consider the great differences He has made between us and most or all others.

## **The Context**

- A. It is important to remember that Isaiah wrote many things prophetically about Babylon.
- B. Isaiah has 9 chapters of God boasting He would deliver the Jews from Babylon (40-48).
  1. They went to Babylon, Jerusalem and Judah destroyed, for long-term, terrible sins.
  2. Since they would not keep a 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath gift, He put them in Babylon 70 years.
- C. God named a man to defeat Babylon – Cyrus the Persian – 150 years before his birth!
  1. God specifically named him and told how He would take Babylon (Is 44:28; 45:1).
  2. The first and last mentions of Cyrus are Isaiah 41:2 and then 48:14-15, respectively.
- D. The chapter begins with declared love and promises of great preservation (Is 43:1-2).
  1. Note the use of *redeemed* there – an economic turn about buying Israel out of trouble.
  2. We sing of these promises in the song, *How Firm a Foundation* (1787; Rippon’s).
  3. The basis on which these promises can and should be believed is our lesson here.
- E. The chapter continues with God ordering nations to give up Jews to return (Is 43:5-7).
  1. God’s rescue of the Jews from Babylon would also be called a redemption (Is 48:20).
  2. The basis on which He would crush others for Israel’s deliverance is the lesson here.
- F. Much more of 9-chapter context ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/boasting-about-god-isaiah.pdf>.

## **The Text**

*For I am the LORD thy God.*

- A. The coordinating conjunction *for* explains why God would keep promises (Is 43:1-2).
- B. Jehovah God of Israel spoke in the first person – I AM THAT I AM of the burning bush.
- C. Isaiah the writer is quite irrelevant here – for the declaration is straight from the LORD.
- D. He declared He was the Jews’ God; He repeated this personal commitment many times.
  1. The lesson or matter here is entirely personal; do not overlook the singular pronouns.

2. It is incredibly personal – note *thy, Israel, thy, thy, thee, thou, thou, thee, thee, thy*.

### *The Holy One of Israel.*

- A. He is no ordinary God. He is the holy God. Never forget that Jehovah is perfectly holy.
- B. Let no one question or criticize the lesson here, for God is holy and just in all His ways.
- C. Let no one think God may promise and not perform, for the holy God always performs.
- D. He declared He was Israel's own Holy God; He repeated this relationship many times.

### *Thy Saviour.*

- A. For the third time in as many clauses or phrases, Jehovah repeated that He was Israel's.
- B. He was their God, but His relationship and role with and toward them was salvation.
- C. When you make calling and election sure, God is not just God, but Savior and Father.
- D. He had saved them in the past, which should give great hope; He would yet save them.

### *I gave Egypt for thy ransom.*

- A. The LORD, still declaring in the first person, reminded Israel of what He did to Egypt.
- B. He called it a ransom – the price paid to free a person or thing held captive by another.
  1. This ransom is sacrificing others instead of Israel for their deliverance and escape.
  2. This concept of a *ransom* price is found elsewhere in the Bible (Prov 11:8; 21:18).
  3. God saving Israel out of Egypt uses *economic terms* (Exodus 15:13,16; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 32:6; II Sam 7:23; I Chron 17:21; Psalm 74:2; 77:15; 106:10; Isaiah 51:10; Micah 6:4; II Peter 2:1; etc.).
  4. *Ransom* is what God calls destroying nations to rescue Israel (Is 51:10; Jer 31:11).
  5. Egypt held Israel captive and would not let them go, so God ruined Egypt for escape.
  6. Egypt had not sent a ransom note, nor was it to their benefit, but it was yet a ransom.
  7. You can be paid for captives; Cyrus was not (Is 45:13); you can be killed, like Egypt.
  8. If God had destroyed greater nations than Israel to rescue in the past, He could again.
- C. He gave Egypt for them by Moses. He destroyed it and confiscated its wealth for Israel.
  1. God destroyed or killed crops, livestock, water supply, firstborn, army, Pharaoh, etc.
  2. Pharaoh's servants told him Egypt was destroyed after plague seven (hail and fire).
  3. Then they got locusts, darkness for three days, death of firstborn, and the Red Sea.
  4. Egypt gladly let them depart to go to Canaan and gave them Egypt's wealth to help.
- D. There may be a better, more recent event to apply this historical reminder to from God.
  1. We have Ethiopia and Seba connected to Egypt in context here we must deal with.
  2. We have a defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia recorded by Isaiah (Isaiah 20:1-6; 37:8-9).
  3. God thus defeated Egypt by Sargon, Sennacherib, or other leaders of the Assyrians.
  4. God later destroyed Egypt again by Nebuchadnezzar for wages (Ezekiel 29:19-20).
  5. God ruined three nations to keep Israel from trusting them and to divert their attacks.
- E. God could have delivered Israel from Egypt in any of the cases by more peaceful means.
  1. Under Moses, God could have softened Pharaoh's heart, but instead He hardened it!
  2. God can alter kings' hearts gently (Gen 20:6; Ex 34:24; Neh 2:1-6; Esther 2:7; 5:2).
  3. He could have softened kings' hearts, but He did not (Deut 2:30; Joshua 11:19-20).

### *Ethiopia and Seba for thee.*

- A. Similarly, God also destroyed and killed Ethiopia and Seba to benefit His people Israel.
- B. Due to the tight connection of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, we assume two things here.
  - 1. The event God through Isaiah is considering must have included all three nations.
  - 2. We confirm what we know geographically; Ethiopia and Seba are south of Egypt.
  - 3. Therefore, we prefer the event more recent in time that connects Egypt and Ethiopia.
- C. While difficult to identify which events the LORD intended, there are several options:
  - 1. Ethiopia by Asa (II Chr 14:9-15), the Assyrians (Is 20:1-6), or Cyrus later (Is 45:14).
  - 2. Seba was sacrificed with Ethiopia, with Egypt (Is 20:1-6), or Cyrus later (Is 45:14).
  - 3. Compare – God gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as wages for work (Ezek 29:19-20).

### *Since thou wast precious in my sight.*

- A. Having concluded past events for the comfort of Israel, God moved to future promises.
  - 1. Past and perfect verb tenses of the first three clauses before the future tie all together.
  - 2. Since explains the action of 43:3, the love of 43:4, and then the future action of 43:4.
- B. Israel was precious to God, not by any goodness in them, but rather by His own promise.
  - 1. Scripture tells how God chose Israel for Himself (De 7:6-10; 14:2; 32:10; Ps 135:4).
  - 2. There was nothing precious in Israel but His choice of them – their beauty (Ps 45:11).
- C. Consider Ezekiel 16 as one example of Israel's depraved condition and then character.

### *Thou hast been honourable.*

- A. Israel was not honorable actively by their goodness, but He chose rather to honor them.
  - 1. They were in Babylon as the context here for their heinous and extended wickedness.
  - 2. The record we can read of them in the wilderness and then in Canaan is quite wicked.
  - 3. The prophets made comparisons that other nations were better (Is 5:1-7; Jer 2:9-13).
- B. God chose to honor them, like the vessels of honor identified by Paul (Rom 9:21-24).
- C. The difference between Jacob and Esau were by His choice (Mal 1:1-5; Rom 9:11-16).
- D. Since Israel was the apple of His eye by choice, He would deliver them accordingly.

### *And I have loved thee.*

- A. Thus, by God's choice, He chose Israel as the precious object of His honor and love.
  - 1. Love is a choice in all creatures, but it is surely a choice for a Holy God to love men.
  - 2. The basis for His promised protection (Is 43:1-2) was by preferential love (43:3-4).
- B. God's love for Israel was a choice He made and acted upon (Deut 7:7-8; Jer 31:3-4).
- C. God's love for His people is incredibly important, and He proved it by killing others.
  - 1. The statement of love here is between past and future examples of destroying others.
  - 2. As with Jacob and Esau, we should see the enormous difference in His treatment.

### *Therefore will I give men for thee.*

- A. What is *therefore* there for? What conclusion? He would prove love by killing others.
  - 1. His love for Israel was exclusive, discriminating. He would destroy her competitors.

2. Here is future tense – the opposite of that in verse 3 – past of Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba.
3. The lesson not to miss is that God’s love for His people is measured by killing others.
- B. God destroyed Babylon and other nations by giving them to Cyrus (Is 14:1-3; 41:2,25; 45:1,3,14; Jer 27:5-7; 50:3,35,37; 51:11,20-24,53; Dan 5:24-30; 7:5; 8:3-4; Ezra 1:2).
- C. This is love well beyond just words, mercy, or gifts. It wrecks any competing objects.
  1. Illustrative stories might be used here, but they break down quickly as inadequate.
  2. A perfect suitor loving an ugly duckling is nice, but can he kill other girls for her?
  3. A faithful and loyal guy not talking to other girls is nice, but killing them is higher.
  4. Though Egypt and Babylon were far superior to Israel, God ruined them for Israel.
- D. The Holy Spirit chose the personal word *men*, not some vague, weak noun like nations.

*And people for thy life.*

- A. The *therefore* also connects. What conclusion? He would prove love by killing others.
- B. God killed people by this prophecy ... for one famous example – Belshazzar (Dan 5:30).
- C. God blessed the Medes and Persians to take Babylon in one night free Israel by Cyrus.
- D. This is the measure of God’s love for His people – He sacrifices others for their good.
- E. The Holy Spirit chose the personal word *people*, not a vague, weak noun like nations.

### **The Simple Lesson**

- A. *How much does God love you?* It is measured several different ways, but get this one.
  1. It may be measured by man’s terrible rebellion and his insatiable sinful depravity.
  2. It may be measured by the eternal torment of hell’s fires the elect are saved from.
  3. It may be measured by the eternal inheritance of a perfect new heaven and earth.
  4. It may be measured by God’s gift of His own Son for your redemption (I Jn 4:10).
- B. But God chose to tell the Jews to measure His love for them by what He did to others.
  1. His goal was to convince Jews of His great and special love for them over any others.
  2. God’s choice and His revelation of it to His people should not be slighted or ignored.
  3. He could have rescued Israel from Egypt or Babylon by much more peaceful means.
- C. God’s love for His people is greater than you think or know – by His revealed measure.
  1. How do you measure the love of God for His people – by Jesus’ death? Excellent.
  2. But a new measure revealed here should cause great humility and praise to Jehovah.
  3. Herein is love certainly applies to Christ (I Jn 4:10), but this is also love (Is 43:3-4).
- D. He loves His people in great distinction from His hatred for all other peoples on earth.
  1. He used the fabulous example of twins Jacob and Esau (Mal 1:1-5; Rom 9:10-16).
  2. God loved Israel, but read the context or what is not written (Deu 7:7-8; Jer 31:3-4).
  3. God has distinguishing, particular, special love for His people and for them only.
  4. Here is where the doctrine of reprobation fits nicely into theology and soteriology.
- E. God gladly kills anyone that gets in the way or threatens His children and their success.
  1. Solomon taught this axiom by substituting pagans for His people in trouble (Pr 11:8).
  2. Solomon taught this axiom by sinners being destroyed for the righteous (Pr 21:18).
  3. Commentary of Proverbs 11:8 ... [http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/11\\_08.php](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_08.php).
  4. Commentary of Proverbs 21:18 ... [http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/21\\_18.php](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/21_18.php).

- F. Love economics is something to consider in meditation of God's love for His people.
  1. Economic theory declares the value of a thing to be what you will exchange for it.
  2. Any choice to purchase a thing implies and requires that you deny all other things.
  3. God's economic practice by demonstration chose Israel and destroyed other nations.
  4. He further demonstrated His love by hating and killing all competitors and boasters.
  5. God not only chose Israel and did not choose others; He often destroyed the others.
- G. God loves you so much, like He did elect Jews, that He gladly sacrifices others for you.
- H. Any balking at this Bible rule of God's sovereign love is due to ignorance of the truth.
  1. God is not unfair in this equation – all men deserve nothing but total, eternal wrath.
  2. Therefore, God's goodness to any man is not fair – it is better than fair – it is mercy.
  3. God does no harm to those He does not bless, for none of them deserve any blessing.
  4. Man damned himself – God chose to exalt opposite attributes – by two human ends.

### **The Lesson Illustrated**

- A. The Bible is filled with examples of God destroying others in order to save His people.
  1. God killed animals for their skins to clothe Adam and Eve for cleanness (Gen 3:21).
  2. God drowned the earth to keep His from marrying the world's pagans (Gen 6-9).
  3. God killed a ram to save the life of Isaac at Abraham's hands (Genesis 22:11-14).
  4. God sent a famine that caused Egypt and others great hardship for Jacob (Ps 105:16).
  5. God killed the best lambs to save firstborn alive of Israel's families (Ex 12:1-13).
  6. God destroyed Egypt in most every way possible to bless His church (see above).
  7. God annihilated Canaan's seven nations to give their stuff to His own (De 6:10-11).
  8. God sent Sisera to Jael's tent for her to nail his head to the ground (Judges 4:17-24).
  9. God raised war and casualties to distract Saul from killing David (I Sam 23:26-28).
  10. God had Haman and sons killed on the gallows made for Mordecai (Esther 7:9-10).
  11. God killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night to rescue His virgin (Is 37:21-38).
  12. God had the enemies of Daniel and their families fed to hungry lions (Daniel 6:24).
  13. God arranged for governments to subsidize Israel, not others, like nurses (Is 49:23).
  14. God killed 1.1 million Jews for love and escape (Mal 3:17-18; 4:1-3; Mark 13:20).
  15. He blinded even elect Israelites for Gentiles to hear the gospel (Romans 11:11-15).
- B. Consider how God overthrew the Byzantium Empire by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.
  1. After the overthrow of Rome in 476 A.D., Rome's empire moved to Constantinople.
  2. When it was overthrown by Muslims in 1453, its Greek manuscripts flooded Europe.
  3. God used Johannes Gutenberg (1400-1468) to have ready movable type for printing.
  4. He prepared Erasmus, Tyndale, Stephens, and others to compile them for scripture.
  5. By killing pagan Greek Catholics and Muslims, God blessed English Bible readers.
- C. Consider American Indians (Native Americans) that were sacrificed for you to be here.
  1. It is estimated there were 10 million Indians in America when Columbus landed.
  2. By 1900, after the last Indian Wars, there were less than 250,000 left in America.
  3. The issue of right or wrong is not the key, like WWII, but in God's genocidal choice.
  4. Most of the deaths, estimated at 75-90%, were due to diseases white men brought.
  5. Do not balk at God's punishment of a people (Amos 3:6; Acts 17:26; Rev 17:17).

6. You plant gardens, hunt, build houses, and drive on superhighways on their land.
  7. They lost millions of lives over 400 years, their culture, freedom, etc. just for you.
- D. Human history has other examples of such substitution for the good of Christian nations.
1. The Battle of Britain (July, 40 – June, 41) ended when Hitler attacked Russia with 4 million men (June 22, 1941). Britain lost 14,286 civilians and 1,542 aircrew (15,828 dead). Germany could have taken the island. Russia lost 3.2 million in six months.
  2. God’s diversion of Hitler by hatred of Stalin saved Britain and cost Germany/USSR.
  3. The Allies were “Christian” nations, but the Axis, Soviets, and Japan were atheists.
  4. Britain lost .94% of its population in WWII total deaths and America lost only .32%.
  5. The USSR lost 13.7% of population (27 million), Germany lost 8.5%, and Japan 4%.
  6. Do you understand these numbers? The USSR lost 43 times as much as did the USA.
  7. Russia’s May 9 celebration of WWII Victory Day is a joke for the cost to that nation.
  8. WWII casualties by nation by percentage ... [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_War\\_II\\_casualties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties).
- E. Consider the competition for large foreign investments, and the Bible Belt gets many.
1. States do everything they can to get foreign factors like BMW or Michelin in them.
  2. The factories and headquarters employ thousands and require many support firms.
  3. If they are in the Greenville area of South Carolina, then they are not in other states.
  4. If they are not in other states, then those states lost jobs and revenue in comparison.
  5. If Greenville gained and those states lost, then God gave them as a ransom for us.
- F. When we try to illustrate this lesson ourselves, to form examples, we cannot do it right.
1. If a man says, *I love you*, it is appreciated, but what does he feel for other women?
  2. If a man adds, *I hate all other women*, especially your competitors, it means more.
  3. We could go on, but how do we rightly reflect an infinite God with rebel enemies?

## **The Lesson Applied**

- A. Election – God’s choice to save and bless some while judging others eternally – is true.
1. God chose by His will to make vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath from one lump.
  2. God’s makes this terrible distinction, differentiation, and discrimination among men.
  3. God willingly chose to show wrath and power by killing some to justly save others.
  4. God willingly chose to display the riches of His grace on others for eternal glory.
  5. Man damned himself – God chose to exalt opposite attributes – by two human ends.
  6. Arminians balk, but their God is worse, creating unbelievers for hell, calling it love.
- B. Substitutionary Atonement – God’s choice to kill His own Son in the place of His elect.
1. God willing chose to save some by an incredibly wise design to substitute Another.
  2. God sending Jesus to be tortured and killed for you brings all blessings (Rom 8:32).
  3. If God gave Egypt to prove love – an enemy – how much more by His beloved Son?
- C. Think of other ways in which God directed blessings your way while sacrificing others.
1. When Paul came to Mysia, the Spirit would let Him go only one direction ... west.
  2. His preaching ambitions we can read in scripture are all west ... Rome and Spain.
  4. Religious wars aided the Protestant Reformation, freeing Baptists after 1260 years.
  5. When you heard or hear a preacher and are convicted, most all others are not hearing.
  6. We pray for God to improve our church; He gets rid of bad members and adds good.

7. Calculate how the IRS transfers wealth by taxes from aborting atheists to Christians.
8. When a brother gets a lung transplant in a few weeks, another will have died for him.
9. It is profitable wisdom for thanksgiving to think daily about special benefits to you.
10. If you get a job or promotion, consider applicants that did not and peers passed over.

### **The Lesson's Value**

- A. God chose by this and related texts to give you another measure of His love for you.
  1. You are loved beyond the knowledge most Christians have by reading of the Bible.
  2. They see the love of God by Christ, but we must preach the whole counsel of God.
  3. You are loved beyond comprehension when we add this further addition of sacrifice.
  4. The love of God for His people, fully expanded, is unsearchable and unspeakable.
- B. This love God has for you should affect you in several ways to greater faith and service.
  1. God told Israel these things in Isaiah 43 as He introduced Cyrus to save them again.
  2. Though Babylon was cruel and impregnable, He would sacrifice her in one night.
  3. There is no enemy you can have, even other persons, He cannot or will not sacrifice.
  4. What you think all hopeless, it is only your lack of faith in God's great love for you.

### **The Lesson's Response**

- A. You already know you should be constrained by Christ's love for you (II Cor 5:14-15).
- B. But now God in mercy and gentleness has revealed even more for your consideration.
- C. We sing, "*I gave my life for thee, what hast thou given me?*" What will you give Him?
- D. A Samaritan gave thanks loudly about leprosy. Jesus rebuked the 9, but which are you?
- E. You should sing and do the song, *Count Your Many Blessings*, to see what He has done.
- F. How do we show reciprocal love? We kill relationships that threaten our love to Christ.
- G. How do we show reciprocal love? We count all our accomplishments dung like Paul.

### **Conclusion:**

1. What will you do with such love? Will you meditate long on it to grow in faith and love back to God?
2. Never stop reading – even places you know – for you never know when God will show you new things.

### **For Further Study:**

1. Commentary of Proverbs 11:8 ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11\\_08.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_08.php).
2. Commentary of Proverbs 21:18 ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/21\\_18.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/21_18.php).
3. The Dominion of God ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/god/dominion-of-god/sermon.php>.
4. God's Distinguishing Love ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/distinguishing-love-of-god.pdf>.
5. God Boasted of Himself (Isaiah) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/boasting-about-god-isaiah.pdf>.
6. Total Depravity Condemning All Men ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/total-depravity.pdf>.
7. How the IRS sacrifices pagans for Christians ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/god-bless-the-irs.pdf>.