

### Make No Mistake – Is 43-48

**Is 43;** I imagine most of you have heard the expression – “make no mistake” in the course of your life; I know I have  
It’s usually a phrase that’s used to set the record straight when all isn’t as it seems; Or to correct someone’s thinking when it’s off

Like when my high school basketball coach told us one time before a big game – “Make no mistake, the other team’s coming to win, and you better do the same”  
It was his effort at correcting a complacent attitude, and preventing defeat

Or, even more memorable was my Mom’s mantra from time to time – “Make no mistake mister, God is not mocked; Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”  
And despite the fact that I mocked *her* for speaking in King James English, shame on me – she was right; And I usually got my comeuppance

Make no mistake; Don’t be fooled; Get it right; That’s the thrust of these chapters here in Isaiah; Where God lays out 3 major truths about himself, as if to say . . .  
“This is how it is; This is reality”

And to see it, I’m going to do something a bit different this weekend  
Instead of focusing on just a *few* verses, I’m going to cover a few *chapters*, and let the Scripture speak for itself in large part

Starting with this . . .

**God is God alone (Is 43:10-13; 44:6,8; 45:18; 46:1-11)**

That’s the first of these recurring truths we find here

Make no mistake – God is God alone; He is, and there is no other

**Is 43:10-13** – [10] “*You are my witnesses,*” declares the LORD, “*and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he* [that I’m Yahweh; that I’m God].

*Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.* That’s not to say that God has an end, but that he’s *it*; There’s nobody else

[11] *I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.* [12] *I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you;*

IOW I was at work before any idols were even *made*; Or the imaginations stirred to even think of them; *And you are my witnesses,*” declares the LORD, “*and I am God.*

[13] *Also henceforth I am he* [I will always be God]; *There is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?”*

Multiple ways of saying that he, Yahweh, is God and God alone

➤ Which he comes back to in **44:6** – *Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.”* I’m timeless, and there’s never been another like me

And just in case we didn’t get it there, he comes right back to it in **v8b**; Asking – “*Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.*”

He *alone* is the unshakable foundation of our life

That’s the 2<sup>nd</sup> place he says it

➤ The 3<sup>rd</sup> is found in **Is 45:18**

[18] *For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the LORD, and there is no other.* He’s God alone

➤ And then, as if all that’s not enough, he comes back to it *again*, in **46:1-11**

This time, tying it to his diatribe against *idols* that he started all the way back in ch41

[1] *Bel bows down; Nebo stoops* [he’s talking about the 2 main idols in Babylon at that time, and that they are anything *but* exalted];

*Their idols are on beasts and livestock; these things you carry are borne as burdens on weary beasts.* [2] *They stoop; they bow down together* [as in they’re *both* pathetic]; *They cannot save the burden* [the people can’t; they can’t save the idols], *but themselves go into captivity.* The idols themselves are captured and held

[3] “*Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; [4] even to your old age I am he* [the one who upholds you], *and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.* Love those words

And what a contrast – between God who carries, and idols who are *carr-ied*

[5] “*To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike?* [6] *Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god* [an idol]; *then they fall down and worship!* [7] *They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble.* IOW they’re useless; Idols are useless

[8] “*Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors* [you sinners], [9] *remember the former things of old* [the things I’ve done]; *For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me* [there it is again], [10] *declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’* [11] *calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country* [I’ll come back to that]. *I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*

Make no mistake God’s saying – I’m it; I’m God and God alone

Which means Buddha is not God; Mohammed is not God; Allah is not God; Krishna is not God; Mother Earth is not God; Brahman is not God . . .

And you and I *certainly* aren’t God; Only Yahweh is God

And he’s proven it over and over, by declaring the end from the beginning, and bringing it to pass; Make no mistake

➤ The question is, do you live like it? Do you live as if God is God alone, or are you a *functional idolater*? Giving *lip* service to God, but putting your trust in lesser things Like money; Or position; Or influence; Or relationships; Or talent; Is that you?

If it is, you’re a functional idolater – worshipping the *creation* instead of the creator;

Things that can neither save nor carry; Only God, and God alone

That’s the first recurring truth we see here; The 2<sup>nd</sup> is that . . .

## God does what he does for the sake of his praise (Is 43:19-20,25; 48:9-11)

Which might involve a change in your thinking; B/c we tend to be pretty self-centered and self-absorbed, thinking God does what he does for *our* sake; We do; **Is 48:9-11**  
[9] “For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.

It's not that God's unconcerned about us, it's just that it's secondary – that we wouldn't perish; First and foremost is the praise of his name

[10] *Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.* [11] *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*

Couple of things here; #1 – God is jealous for his glory; Possessive of it; *My glory I will not give to another.* It's mine, and I'm not sharing it  
His *glory*, in this context, referring to the *declaration* of his greatness; AKA praise  
The declaration of God's greatness, is praise; He uses the 2 terms interchangeably here

Which is different than how God's glory is referred to in other Scriptures

Like when Moses said to God in Ex 33, “*Please show me your glory.*”

He wasn't referring to the *declaration* of God's greatness, but the *display* of it; God, show me your greatness

So sometimes, God's glory refers to the *display* of his greatness, and other times, like here, it refers to the *declaration* of it; And he's jealous of it

➤ Which for us, would be a sin; B/c we don't deserve it; We don't deserve praise/glory  
That doesn't mean it's not fitting or appropriate to be commended for a job well done, or a performance well played, or a life well lived . . .

It's just not our *right*; It's not our right to be praised

B/c *our* success is not self-determined; And our gifts are not self-generated; And our abilities are not self-made; It all comes from God

Which means if *anyone* deserves praise, *he* does; And therefore has the right to be jealous of it; That's the first thing here – God is jealous of his praise

➤ The 2<sup>nd</sup>, is that he's passionate about the fame of his name; Which goes hand in hand with praise; Fame and praise go together  
So when he says in v9 – *For my name's sake I defer my anger* . . .  
He's saying that he shows us mercy for the sake of his reputation – the praise and fame of his name  
He's passionate about the fame of his name, b/c he wants us to know him for who he is

And then he expands on that thought, saying in v10 . . .

*Behold, I have refined you* – I've restrained my anger, but I haven't left you to your own devices; *I have refined you, but not as silver;*

I haven't burned you up in order to remove your impurities – *I have tried you in the furnace of affliction* [the crucible of suffering]. Why?

[11] *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned?*

Why would I allow my name to be dragged through the mud, b/c of your sin and rebellion? I'm not going to do it; He's far too passionate, and far too jealous

Sometimes *withholding* what we deserve for the praise of his name, and sometimes *refining* us for the praise of his name; Either way, it's all for the sake of his praise

➤ As is our salvation; He also *saves* us for the sake of his praise

Like he says in **Is 43:19-20** – turn back there a minute

[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 in the desert.* Poetic expressions to say . . .

I'll make a way for you to come to me, when it seems entirely impossible

[20] *The wild beasts will honor me* [praise me], *the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people*

Even the most *unlikely* people will be saved; Even the most *rebellious* will come to him

All for the sake of his name – his honor; Which he comes back to in v25

Saying – “*I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*”

God saves, God forgives, God withholds, and God refines – first and foremost for *himself*

For *his* glory; For the sake of *his* praise; And the fame of *his* name

Which means, it's not about *you*; And it's not about me

It's about him; Make no mistake; God does what he does for the sake of his praise

## God works in amazing ways (Is 44:24-28; 45:1-7,13)

And while that's not new news to most of you, there is an aspect here that might be

**Is 44:24-28** – [24] *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, [25] who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish, [26] who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited,’ and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins’; [27] who says to the deep, ‘Be dry; I will dry up your rivers’; [28] who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”*

It's a list of some of the jaw-dropping ways that God worked then, and still does now

And I don't want you to miss it; Starting with the fact that . . .

### 1. He redeems us from the grip of sin (24a)

*Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer* (24a); We saw that 2 weeks ago

### 2. He brings us into existence (v24a)

Forming us *from the womb* (24a)

### 3. He created and fashioned all that there is (24b)

He didn't just create the universe and let it go – he created it and fashioned it; Like an interior designer; Stretching *out the heavens* and spreading *out the earth* (24b)

### 4. He exposes religious crackpots (25a)

Frustrating the *signs of liars* and making *fools of diviners* – v25

Diviners were the religious leaders in those days, who would cut open animals on occasion, in order to predict the future based on the layout of their entrails, their guts

Kind of like people who “read” palms in our day; Or tarot cards; Or stars

Or religious sorts who claim to have a knowledge nobody else does

Crackpots; All of them; And it's only a matter of time before their exposed, and shown for what they are – fools and liars

## 5. He confounds the wise of this world (25b)

Turning wise men back and making their knowledge foolish (25b)

Just like he said back in ch29 – *the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden* (Is 29:14)

And the very theme Paul camps on in **1 Cor 1**; Asking rhetorically – *Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* (1 Cor 1:20b); I wonder where he got that?

*For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness* (1 Cor 3:19)

## 6. He supports those who speak for him (26a)

Confirming the word of his servant and fulfilling the counsel of his messengers (26a)

Which doesn't just apply to prophets and pastors, but *everyone* called by his name

We're *all* ambassadors for Christ; *God making his appeal through us* (2 Cor 5:20)

Which means he *supports* us when we speak the truth

## 7. He predicts outlandish things (26b)

Saying of Jerusalem, '*She shall be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins*' (26b)

That's nuts; B/c first of all, Jerusalem wasn't even uninhabited yet

And when it was, the prospect of restoring it was unthinkable

And yet that's exactly what God said would happen; Something only a madman would do, unless he was absolutely certain of it

## 8. He controls the forces of nature (27)

Saying to the deep, '*Be dry; I will dry up your rivers*'; Even creation beckons at his call

And then #9, the part that might be new news to you . . .

## 9. He uses all kinds of people to accomplish his purposes (28)

Saying in v28 – I am the Lord who says of Cyrus, '*He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose*'; saying of Jerusalem [this is what Cyrus will say], '*She shall be built, and of the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.*'

IOW some guy named Cyrus was going to be God's instrument of leading his people, fulfilling his purpose, and rebuilding Jerusalem

- The problem is, he wasn't even born! And when he was, *125 years later* – he wasn't a God-fearer; Nor an Israelite; Nor a Babylonian
- And the nation he eventually led, the Persians, *a far country in the east* (46:11), was barely a blip on the radar screen in Isaiah's day
- In fact, the *Babylonians* were barely a blip when Isaiah preached this
- And yet God said it, and did it – starting in 538BC; He used a pagan ruler to accomplish divine purposes; It's recorded in Ezra 1, and confirmed in *extra-biblical* writings

So it's not just believers that God uses, it's unbelievers as well

They just don't know it; And certainly don't praise him for it

- And if there was any *doubt* as to what God meant, or any thought that Isaiah might have misspoke, or heard wrong – it's removed in the very next verses; **Is 45:1-7**

[1] *Thus says the LORD to his anointed* [the one on which he has his hand and bestows his blessing], *to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed* [referring to Babylon, 160 years later]:

[2] *“I will go before you* [speaking to Cyrus] *and level the exalted places* [the thrones of Babylon], *I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, [3] I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.* [IOW I'm saying it now, so that you know who's behind it all]

Not only that, but – [4] *For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me.*

It wasn't just for Cyrus's sake that he's saying all this, but for his people's sake

To bolster their confidence and hope, that God would indeed deliver them

[5] *I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you* [still speaking to Cyrus], *though you do not know me, [6] that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

In addition to making sure Cyrus knew who's in control, and his own people – he also wants to make himself known to all the *other* nations of the world

For the sake of *their* praise

- And then he wraps it up with this thought . . .

[7] *I form light and create darkness* [what you consider helpful and unhelpful], *I make well-being and create calamity* [what you consider good and bad], *I am the LORD, who does all these things.* He ordains good and bad

And lest you think he's somehow wrong for doing so, for ordaining that bad things happen, look at v13

*I have stirred him up* [referring to Cyrus] *in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level;* IOW what I'm doing in using a sinful person to accomplish my purposes . . .

Is not wrong at all; It's right; B/c God only does what's right

- And just to make sure we don't try to explain this all away as the normal result of a greedy king, or someone who just wanted to make a name for themselves . . .
- He says in v13b – *he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,*” *says the LORD of hosts.*
- IOW *I'm* the cause behind all this, not his desire for money or fame; *I'm* doing it; It's me; And me alone (**Summary**)

Confirmation upon confirmation, that God works in amazing ways

Including the use of sinful people to accomplish righteous purposes, and bring fame to his name; He did it then, and he's doing it now; Make no mistake

Prayer – Father, change our thinking and adjust our perspective, to match your word and the reality of your work; And please God, keep doing amazing things among us

We give now, to the praise of your glory; And sing, for the sake of your name