

# The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

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Text

Isaiah 43:1-28

Topic

The LORD tells the Jews to not remember certain things from their past.

Title

***“Fuhgeddaboudit”***

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Often considered Italian-American Mafia slang, *fuhgeddaboudit* is East Coast English. It entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 2016. The definition reads, “In representations of regional speech (associated especially with New York and New Jersey), ‘forget about it’ is used to indicate that a suggested scenario is *unlikely* or *undesirable*.” Their sample sentence: “So you think you’ll have enough money to retire? *Fuhgeddaboudit!*”

Look with me at verse eighteen: “Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old.”

- In the NIV “Do not remember” is rendered **“Forget** the former things.”
- In the MSG “Do not remember” is rendered **“Forget about** what happened.”

What former things happened to the Jews? This chapter is especially interested in their dispersions. In verses five and six we read, “I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth.”

The emphasis is on the LORD bringing them back from dispersion, and not just once.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Don't Forget To Forget The Former Things**, and **#2 Do Remember To Remember The Future Things**.

### **#1 - Don't Forget To Forget The Former Things (v1-22)**

The word *diaspora* refers to a large group of people who share a cultural and regional origin but are living away from their traditional homeland, usually by forced emigration.

The nation of Israel was dispersed several times. Two major times that we encounter in Isaiah involve Assyria and Babylon. Two others involve Rome:

- Writing before 62AD, the Book of James is addressed "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (1:1).
- In 70AD the Romans sacked Jerusalem and took the Temple apart stone-by-stone. Jews fled all over the world. They remained *diaspora* until May 1948.

Isa 43:1 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

Abraham was chosen to become father of a new nation. His grandson, Jacob, would be the father of the twelve tribes, the nation of Israel.

In the Book of Exodus God said He redeemed the nation from slavery in Egypt (6:6-8). Every Jew in the nation is "called" and many believe and are saved. The Jews who believe God, as Abraham did, are the LORD's. They are justified by grace through faith just as was Abraham.

Isa 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.

In point of fact the Jews suffered greatly throughout human history. For every Daniel untouched by lions there were multitudes killed. This, then, is a national promise to protect His people from total destruction. The LORD always preserves and protects a remnant of Jews.

Isa 43:3 For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.

One hundred fifty years future from Isaiah the Jews would be conquered and taken captive by Babylon. After 70yrs the LORD raised-up King Cyrus of Persia to free the Jews and permit them to go home.

Thomas Constable writes, *"Perhaps the LORD would give Persia rulership over Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, as rewards for allowing the Israelites to return to their homeland."*

Isa 43:4 Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.

Despite their history of faithlessness and failure, the LORD would "honor" them whenever they repented and turned to Him.

The nation of Israel was so bad that it has prompted Christians through the ages to conclude that God has closed the book on Israel. Any and all promises God made to Israel are transferred to the church. No, no, no, no. The apostle Paul said, "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew" (Romans 11:2).

He has made a way to forgive our sins without compromising His holiness. Jesus is the way. He died then rose from death. He offers whosoever will believe in Him to take their sin and exchange it for His righteousness.

John Nelson Darby wrote, *"The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of grace."*

In the ISV the end of verse four reads, "I'm giving up people in your place, and nations in exchange for your life." We know from the Bible that the LORD has installed supernatural rulers over the nations. This wording makes it sound like the LORD is playing a supernatural version of Monopoly.

Does God really negotiate with supernatural terrorists? Before you say "No," remember the first two chapters in Job. Besides, no one can out maneuver God.

In the MSG paraphrase it reads, *"That's how much you mean to me! That's how much I love you! I'd sell off the whole world to get you back, trade the creation just for you."*

I am constantly pointing out that Isaiah is writing to and about Israel, *not* the church. But when something is said that is universal, we can claim it for ourselves. Jesus has this same self-sacrificing love for you and I.

The Lord negotiates for us, from a position of almighty power. Jesus said to Peter, "Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Isa 43:5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;

Isa 43:6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth -

The Jews would be taken away by force to Babylon. This, however, is not the *diaspora* return Isaiah is describing:

- A lot of Jews chose to remain in Babylon.
- Those who returned did not come from all points of the compass, or from "the ends of the earth."

Isaiah prophesied that all nations will be involved. It is the Time of Jacob's Trouble. We commonly call it the Great Tribulation. It ends after 7rs with the Return of the King to establish the promised Kingdom of God on Earth.

Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

- We know from elsewhere in the Bible, in both Testaments, that "all Israel will be saved."
- We know from Matthew 25 that multitudes of Gentiles will be saved.

When it says "created," "formed," and "made," I think there is more to it than God forming us in the womb. Don't get me wrong; as Tony the Tiger would say, "*That's great.*"

**I think it is referring to the fact that as believers we are new creatures who will inhabit a new creation at the consummation of the age.**

Isa 43:8 Bring out the blind people who have eyes, And the deaf who have ears.

The scene in verses eight through thirteen is like a courtroom where God's deity and sovereignty over the nations is being defended.

We've all seen enough trials on TV to be familiar with expert witnesses. The 'expert' witnesses God uses are physically handicapped. We wouldn't go that route but it's so 'God.'

- The physically blind and deaf can see and hear that God is God.
- Unbelievers who can physically see and hear are spiritually blind and deaf.

### **God prefers to use the foolish things and that is us.**

Isa 43:9 Let all the nations be gathered together, And let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, And show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; Or let them hear and say, "It is truth."

"Show us former things" points to God being 100% accurate in His prophecies. *Case closed!*

Isa 43:10 "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 there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.

Isa 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.

Isa 43:12 I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, And there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses," Says the LORD, "that I am God.

"I am He... I am the LORD... I am God." God demands your verdict. Eternal life hangs in the balance.

Three times the LORD said, "You are My witnesses." We are, too. The question is, "Am I a credible witness?" Think of it this way: Would my testimony about my relationship with Jesus help the defense or the prosecution?

Isa 43:13 Indeed before the day was, I am He; And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?"

Isa 43:14 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon, And bring them all down as fugitives - The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their ships.

Isa 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King."

Technical point: The Chaldeans were the ethnic people who for a time ruled the Babylonian Empire.

In Babylon the Jews would read what Isaiah prophesied over a century earlier. They'd be encouraged. To paraphrase Dr. Lazarus in *Galaxy Quest*, God would "Never give up, never surrender."

Isa 43:16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters,

Isa 43:17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse, The army and the power (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):

This is another nod to the Exodus from Egypt. When God parted the Red Sea for Israel, He drowned the pursuing Egyptians. This was the kind of past event they should remember.

Isa 43:18 "Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old.

### **Fuhgeddaboutit doesn't apply universally to their past.**

The *diaspora* in particular was not to occupy their minds. This kind of forgetting is expressed by the apostle Paul when he writes, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Isa 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.

Isa 43:20 The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen.

This is a Millennial scene. This is the thousand-year Kingdom of God on earth, after all Israel is taken through the Great Tribulation and saved to greet Jesus at His return.

Isa 43:21 This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.

Singing praises to the Lord, might be part of what this verse is expressing. But it is deeper than that. The word "formed" is *molded*. It would be a word you could use of a potter working with his clay. God is molding you, shaping you, in such a way that your

life exudes praise. Each of us ought to enlist the help of God the Holy Spirit, who indwells us, so that *everything* we do is a praise to our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**T**he apostle Paul wrote, "but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Albert Barnes wrote,

*"It may be, and is, profitable for a Christian to look over the past mercies of God to his soul, in order to awaken emotions of gratitude in the heart, and to think of his shortcomings and errors, to produce penitence and humility. But none of these things should be allowed for one moment to divert the mind from the purpose to win the incorruptible crown. And it may be remarked in general, that a Christian will make more rapid advances in piety by looking forward than by looking backward. Forward we see everything to cheer and animate us - the crown of victory, the joys of heaven, the society of the blessed - the Savior beckoning to us and encouraging us. Backward, we see everything to dishearten and to humble. Our own unfaithfulness; our coldness, deadness, and dullness; the little zeal and ardor which we have, all are fitted to humble and discourage. He is the most cheerful Christian who looks onward, and who keeps heaven always in view."*

## **#2 - Do Remember To Remember The Future Things (v22-28)**

We interpret this set of verses in their context. The nation of Israel had been, and would yet be, dispersed. God tells them point-blank it was their own doing.

**The nation became a prodigal son who would never wake up to their status without a severe mercy drawing them back.**

Isa 43:22 "But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; And you have been weary of Me, O Israel.

Isa 43:23 You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings, Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings, Nor wearied you with incense.

Isa 43:24 You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices; But you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities.

Talk about a one-sided relationship. The more the LORD blessed them, the more they “burdened” Him with their “iniquities.”

We know something about this kind of rebuke. Jesus wrote to His church in Ephesus. He told them they had “left” their first love. It wasn’t on account of their backsliding, but rather because they were doing the work of God in the energy of the flesh.

It is obvious when sin is the problem. Not so much when you are laboring with patience and persevering. But equally, if not more, dangerous.

Isa 43:25 “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

“Blots out” is *erase*. Do erasers ever work? I remember erasing stuff with my #2 pencil and the paper tearing.

### **Who remembers white-out?**

Our ledgers won’t look like they’ve been erased and whited-out. It will be just as if I’d never sinned.

Isa 43:26 Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted.

This is a confrontation. The LORD wants to hear their case against Him. He’s saying, “Am I wrong?” If He is wrong about their sin, they will be acquitted.

Nope. They are convicted.

Isa 43:27 Your first father sinned, And your mediators have transgressed against Me.  
Isa 43:28 Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary; I will give Jacob to the curse, And Israel to reproaches.

If this is a courtroom scene, we can think of this as a closing argument. “First father” has to be Abraham. Scripture unashamedly reveals times he was far-out of the will of God. The LORD was saying, “Like father, like son.” Or, in the case of Jacob, “Like father, like grandson.”

Found guilty, the punishment of withholding blessing from the nation would be enforced. The “prince’s of the Sanctuary” are the priests and their Levite assistants.



They would become “profane,” a word that encompasses a slew of carnal, material, idolatrous pursuits. Their example would corrupt the nation. It was a devastating downward spiral.

In the previous verses the LORD promised He would bring them back from Babylon. Of course, *that means they would first have to be taken there!*

**T**here will be a great gathering of Israel when Jesus returns. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that it shall no more be said, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.’ For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers. “Behold, I will send for many fishermen,” says the LORD, “and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks” (16:14-16).

This is only partially fulfilled in the modern state of Israel. Israel’s greatest *diaspora* is yet to come. In the very middle of the seven-year Time of Jacobs Trouble Jews will flee Jerusalem in order to avoid the wrath of the antichrist. The Lord will keep ⅓ of them safe. They will receive Christ. All surviving Israel will be saved.

Will the church be in the Time of Jacob’s Trouble?

### ***“Fuhgeddaboudit”***

*“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (First Thessalonians 4:16-18).*