

Regeneration and repentance (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 0 0] let us turn to the 43rd chapter the prophecy of Isaiah and we'll read the first three verses the prophecy of Isaiah 43 reading the first three verses but now thus saith the Lord that created thee O Jacob and he that formed thee O Israel fear not for I have redeemed thee I have called thee by thy name thou art mine when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame crumble upon thee for I am the Lord thy God the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour

I gave Egypt I gave Egypt for thy ransom Ethiopia and Siva for thee whilst we certainly believe that the whole of scripture is the word the inspired word of God there are portions there are portions such as this when the Lord speaks in a personal way to his people but now thus saith the Lord and how we need to be and pay very special attention to what the Lord says to his people how in the previous chapter he speaks of that people that are robbed and spoiled how all of them were snared in holes and they are hid in prison houses they are for a prey and none deliberate for a spoil and none safely storm who among you will give ear to this who will arken and hear from the time to come and then he comes to this but now not as if it's something in the future but at this present time with all the perplexity with all the sin with all the corruption with all the idolatry with all the departures from the living God but now as if to say

I am the Lord and everything is under control as it was in the beginning it is now and ever will be how quickly we lose sight of this don't we that not a single shaft can hit till the God of love sees fit and yet perhaps our lives seem to be nothing but confusion but oh to be given this faith to believe that everything is under the control of almighty God but now sat the Lord that created me oh Jacob and Jacob as we know was a supplanter he was a sinner but he was created by God the same as all of us we were all created we're all creatures created by God for his purpose either for his glory or for our condemnation it's a solemn thought when we come to consider especially if we are taught to know that we are just like Jacob and we cannot point a finger at him we cannot point a finger at any in God's word that we read on or any around us because if we are taught by the spirit we shall know that every evil is within our heart and it will be a plague to us but now thou saith the Lord that created thee oh Jacob now to be created and to know that we are creatures and God created us will be no satisfaction for the sinner as Jacob was able to look back as doubtless he was and had to look back upon the past and he could see that he had no desire toward God all he thought about was himself his own gain his own profit and what a great part self plays doesn't he in our lives why?

because our life is surrounded by self self is the very central of it and it was the case with Jacob all he thought about was himself until God took him in hand but look how the Lord worked with him look how he was driven out because of his sin because of his fear at that time he knew not God as Israel he may have had some knowledge of God as Jacob and there are many Jacobs about that have a knowledge of God but they do not know a saving knowledge by blessed experience that now thus saith the Lord that created thee O Jacob and he that formed thee O Israel and how he goes on to say that he formed him for his glory not for

Jacob's glory for the Lord's glory so there was this creation and then there was the forming of the glory of God now many are called then a few are chosen many are called and created and they created some in a godly home they come under a godly influence and they are brought up under that influence and as the Catholics tell us if they have a child up to seven years old but then they can rest assured that that child will continue in the faith well it may do apart from the grace of God but how easy it is to be brought up in the faith to have some knowledge of the way of salvation to have a very clear understanding of the doctrines of grace and still remain

[7 : 47] Jacob still be destitute of the grace of God it is to be feared that there are many today in that awful condition and I am certain that it is a great concern to the people of God as to whether they are in this condition especially those of us who have been brought up under the sound of the truth people have had godly pairments have heard godly ministers and have read of some remarkable experiences which the Lord's people have been brought through and delivered and we become so acquainted with these things that can be part of us but only naturally how it needs the Holy Spirit to come and to quicken us into divine life now we often read and especially in the prophecy of Isaiah when the

Lord addressed himself to Israel it was Jacob and Israel he reminded him of his past and also reminded him of what he was by the grace of God and we need to be reminded it's quite profitable to be reminded that we were Jacob that there was a past that there was a time when we had no desire for these things and how you see the Lord does remind his people by bringing home to them their weaknesses showing to them their frailties their inability to do anything right and how you see they have these idols which they set up how they worship these idols which are very evident in the churches today the dead fall many other things which we could mention but would not be profitable and how there are those who look up to these things and worship them and all the time their eyes are taken off the living God but now in spite of all that's transpired in spite of all those that have turned back they shall be greatly ashamed of trusting graven images that say to the molten images they are our gods now it doesn't mean to say that we have got to create some molten image or some graven image to be an idol

I believe the Lord's people know by sad experience what it is to have idols that they worship they could be gifts which the Lord has given us and how we can make an idol of them so easily but how difficult it is to make an idol of our God to worship him to bow down before him that he might be constantly in our thought now you see if we have idols they will be constantly in our mind won't they but the hymn writer was taught by the spirit as he realized the various idols which he had in his life and some were very dear to him and he said the dearest idol I have known whatever that idol be help me to tear it from my throne and worship only thee and I believe that those who are genuinely taught by the Holy

Spirit will be brought there they may have to go through much but as they are brought to compare the blessedness of Christ as their redeemer the greatest aisle in this world will have to go because there is nothing that will match the beauty and the glory of the work of redemption and yet from time to time there are these idols which creep in and how Satan will bring certain things and set before the eyes of the Lord's people and how they will worship them and how we see this so often especially after the services of the Lord's house there is so much to talk about with regard to idols but so little with regard to the work of the Holy

Spirit but now thus saith the Lord that created thee O Jacob and he that formed thee O Israel now it wasn't Israel who it wasn't Jacob that changed his life it wasn't because of the experiences that Jacob was brought into that he became a changed man there are many who are reformed but few who are regenerated the drunkard can become reformed but he cannot become regenerated it is the work of the Holy Spirit to regenerate the grace of God within the heart it is there it was there in eternity before that person was created until the work of regeneration takes place when that soul is quickened in divine life you see it must be there to be quickened and therefore this regeneration took place in eternity there was that power of God which was demonstrated even before the birth one said he that formed me in the womb he shall guide me to the tomb and he that formed thee oh

[14 : 33] Israel isn't it good when we are able to see the way in which at least in some measure the Lord has formed us in other words he's made us different to what we were created he says you were created and then I form thee after creation there's not a soul that has been born upon this earth that has not been born in sin and shaped in iniquity apart from Adam and Eve of course they were but they soon fell didn't they but from that time well of course all have been born in sin and shaped in iniquity but the Lord has formed his own people he has so ruled and overruled there may have been those times when they had to have as it were a pillar of stone to rest their head upon in other words there was no earthly compass and yet in that condition they had communication with heaven as Jacob did because that ladder that he saw with the angels descending ascending and ascending was the way in which the

Lord was forming him his pathway then was very difficult very hard but it's the way in which the Lord was forming him and this is the way the Lord does work within the hearts of his people he never has promised feather pillars for their heads he's never promised them great comforts in this life but he has promised to be with them he has promised that they have no need to fear and how can they fear when we're able as I trust we were on one occasion to say why should I fear pain or woe albeit death dismayed I can't as goodly land in view and realms of endless day when God forms a soul into divine life when God forms that soul in such a way and he gives that spiritual sight and that spiritual understanding and they're able to see the work of God and know the work of God in their own heart and they see that blessed state in which the church triumphant are in they see the glory which God has prepared for them and this takes away their craving for the things of time and their idols but now thus saith the

Lord that created thee O Jacob and he that formed thee O Israel fear not for I have redeemed thee now the reason he was formed in such a way was this work of redemption he was a redeemed person he was one who was redeemed by the precious blood of Christ some may say well of course how can it be because Christ didn't come upon the earth until later well how it bears out the statement I made before that this spirit was in being in eternity long before the foundation of this earth these are great truths hard to be understood but when the Lord manifests himself to his people they have no difficulty in understanding these things when we look to self when we look to our own weaknesses when we compare this God to ourselves well of course there are difficulties in the way but when we are able to see this God as he really is and we can only do this with the eyes of faith and true and living faith which of course is the gift of

God then we are able to see this God in such a way that we see the emptiness of the things around us we see the blessedness of those things which the Lord has not only prepared for his church but also given us an interest in now Israel had every reason to fear because he was a sinner and this would doubtless constantly be before him but he that formed me O Israel fear not for I have redeemed thee now the redeemed soul then has nothing to fear nothing to fear at all but the question is this and this is our greatest fear are we redeemed what do we know of the work of redemption and why is it so difficult for us to believe in this work of redemption when we come to see others and the way in which they are able to believe and how they trust in this

God and they never have any doubts for regard to their redemption and how they are constantly able to praise the Lord for that which they say the Lord has done for them yet the child of God under the tempter's power he cannot believe that he was a child of God he cannot take such things upon his lips what he needs is an assurance but to obtain an assurance he knows not how he cannot take the promises of God he cannot say well of course God's word says that all those that believe shall be saved the Lord must apply it to his heart and how he can see everything in a child of God that he can't see in himself he can see everything which is beautiful in the scriptures with regard to salvation he can see there everything that suits his case and he can rejoice in it but only rejoice in a natural way until the

[21 : 48] Lord brings it home to him I believe the child of God can rejoice in the gospel but how he rejoices in a different way when that's made home to him as he first sees and has light upon his pathway he rejoices because he feels that there is a way although it seems so far distant from him fear not for I have redeemed thee I called thee by thy name thou art mine what a difference it would make to us tonight if we could truly feel this if the Lord spoke these words personally to our souls you say well surely you can't stand up and speak with regard to this God in his name unless you have some grounds for saying this surely this

God must be your God well then do you mean to tell me that everybody sitting in this chapel are convinced that this God is their God they never have any doubts they don't need the Lord to tell them that he is their God and that they are his if so they are in a very sad case but as one is brought and taught by the Holy Spirit this is a very precious thing to hear God's voice speaking and saying thou art mine because when this word is spoken to the heart and one is able to know beyond all doubt it is the voice of God speaking they are not afraid of anything nothing can make them afraid whilst they have this knowledge that this

God is their God thou art mine now we may not have been able to come with such an assurance of faith tonight but as we look back we might be able like Jacob to see what we were and then to examine ourselves as to what we are now how you say well of course I trust that there has been a change but I still can't call this God my God I doubt say that this word could be applicable to me no well of course not because the Lord hasn't applied it and how we need to be made honest but on the other hand how the Lord does come to his people and he shows them what they are first of all before he begins to form them and then they are like clay in the hands of the potter the Lord forms them in whatever way he will and how that clay is moulded how those stones the stony heart is taken away and how that soft heart is replaced how the seed of grace is implanted within that soul within that body and how that soul having been regenerated seeks after living virtues living graces living glory how it seeks after the word of God to be applied to its heart that soul won't be satisfied with just reading the word that soul will not be satisfied with being told by others but for the

Lord to come and with this thou art mine what strength that soul would have what love what would flow out of that sinner's heart towards his God as these words are spoken thou art mine what me Jacob no Israel not Jacob but Israel that is the new nature Israel is that which was formed of God in eternity that new heart new affections new sight new hearing new understanding when one is able to see the things around them as worthless drops compared to those things which the Lord has prepared for them thou art mine and therefore that soul has nothing to fear but he says I've got much to fear why have you well you say

I haven't had a token like this I haven't had the Lord come to me I haven't had a word spoken directly to my heart there are those who are under the temptation that when the Lord speaks he's got to speak exactly as it is recorded in his word not so the Lord speaks to his people in various ways he speaks to his people sometimes by enabling them to look back and as they look back they can see the way in which he's divided the waters they can see the way in which he has delivered them and they know beyond all doubt it was the Lord that did it they know that it is the Lord who implanted prayer within their heart and gave them living faith to believe as they poured out their soul's desire before that

[28 : 16] God for they haven't as yet heard the Lord's voice and yet there's this forming going on and how the Lord he works within that soul in such a way and he will bring it eventually into that place and it may be right down to the end of the journey before that soul is able to feel that they are the Lord's but it's worth waiting for it's worth a lifetime of misery not that we would pray for a lifetime of misery but I say it's worth it to be brought down to the end and in that day of judgment for the Lord to say thou art mine now we're either his or we're not and is this a concern to us am I made a real Christian washed in the Redeemer's blood you see the hymn writes am I made he didn't look to self and you'll find this whatever you do and there be this inclination within your heart to alter yourself and you'll see things within yourself you'll have to say oh wretched man that I am and you'll feel it but to have this word spoken to the heart thou art mine and then he goes on to say when thou passest through the waters now there's no stability is there in water

Peter tried to walk upon the water didn't he and all the while he was able to keep his eyes upon the blessed Redeemer he was able to but once he took his eyes off he began to sink and the Lord brings his people into those spots and places where they begin to sink where all their hopes where all their faith seems to leave them and they begin to sink and they're burdened the weight of their person is so great you see if Peter or even you if you had no burden if you had no weight if there was no weight in your body well then you could float upon the waters quite easily but the hymn writer spoke like this he said with my burden

I begin and it's the burden which causes one to sink in the water it's the weight and when one has the weight of sin upon them the weight of guilt well then they soon begin to sink all hope that they will be saved as last they can't believe that this god will put forth his hand and save them what a blessing to be brought there when now what he's saying is this Israel your mind there's nothing more certain this is my word I've spoken personally to you they aren't mine but you've got to go through the waters you've got to go through the fire you've got to go through the rivers there's no question about it but when but then

I will be with thee how good this god was to Israel to tell him of that which was before him to prepare him for it to strengthen him and to say whilst you'll be brought into these circumstances whilst you'll have much to contend with fear not because thou art mine and since thou was precious in my sight thou hast been honourable and I have loved thee therefore I will give men for thee and people for thy life fear not for I am with thee and then the promise will be God to his seed I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west and how that's been fulfilled literally as well as spiritually and the promises of God are promises which can never never be broken and how we would thank the

Lord for that especially if the Lord has favoured us for the promise however light that promise may appear at times and however weak we may be enabled to hold it but rest assured of this is if the Lord has given you a promise that promise must and shall be fulfilled now when thou passest through the waters water although so unstable how necessary it is for this life and how there is much more water on the earth than there is earth and how in the pathway of the people of God there are more trials than pleasures as water is in a much larger quantity than land so trials are in a much larger quantity in the experience of the child of

[34 : 07] God in those times when he feels that he is upon something stable he seems to be as it were upon the water but we are reminded aren't we in revelation and there will be no more sea and when we come to consider that there is much in that because it is in the waters it is in the sea that is commerce isn't it we as an island we look to the sea as being our salvation it is the water that brings us our food or the ships upon the water without which our lives would soon be extinct and our spiritual life without the waters would soon happen being of God it couldn't be taken from us but our life wouldn't be very peaceful we shouldn't experience the love of God we shouldn't experience spiritual satisfaction we shouldn't experience answers to prayer we shouldn't experience fear taken away and therefore there is a necessity and apart from everything else you know there is water that the

Lord washed the disciples feet with when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee now it wasn't water waters it's not once that portion has been on our mind quite a lot lately go dip in Jordan seven times the waters ah but there are far better rivers than Jordan but it's the water which the Lord has bid us go through when thou passest through the waters not any other it must be Jordan and how that portion which has been on our mind all day and how we felt that we'd have to bring it before you but just as we were coming out so this word came if thou hast run with the footman and they have wearied thee then how canst thou contend with horses and if in the land of peace wherein thou trust this they wearied thee then how wilt thou do in the swelling of

Jordan for even thy brethren in the house of thy father even they have dealt treacherously with thee yea they have called a multitude after thee believe them not though they speak fair words unto thee how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan you see when Jordan overflows its banks all the wild beasts how they seek dry land how the lions roar how the wild beasts come out of the growth at the side of Jordan and how often Satan afflicts the Lord's people as they are brought down to Jordan but when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee or if the Lord is with his people in Jordan as they pass through the river through that heavenly Canaan what else matters what are the afflictions what are the sins and the temptations the besetting sins when we have a precious

Christ to view we can boldly come down to Jordan then when the Lord says thou art mine but is it not these very things which cause us so much concern and how we have to be reminded of them how we have to be reminded that we are Jacob that we have this old nature that we have sinned and still sin and will continue to sin until we come down to the end of the journey but now thus hath the Lord this isn't the word of Isaiah well might the eunuch say is it this man speaking with regard to himself or some other man the Lord makes it very clear who is speaking it is the Lord enthroned in light whose claims are all divine who has an undisputed right to govern me and mine thus but now thus hath the

Lord that created thee O Jacob and he that formed thee O Israel fear not or how he says in the gospel fear not little flock it is your father your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom that little flock a little hope a little mercy a little knowledge you know we're not to expect great things here if we had great things well of course we wouldn't have fear would we but our hope seems to be so small there seems to be so little reality in it so little life in our soul but how we come back to that word which we so often quote a little that a righteous man hath it's better than the riches of many wicked to fear not for I have redeemed thee I have called thee by thy name thou art mine when thou passest through the waters

[40 : 31] I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame candle upon thee 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 you see in confirming it to the soul he says for I am the Lord thy God thou art mine and I am the Lord thy God the Holy One of Israel called him Israel and I am the Holy One of Israel do you see this God as that Holy God and do you see him as your God have you known something of that redeeming love being shed abroad within your heart or if only in measure does the precious blood of

Christ mean anything to you have you seen his hand have you seen this God going before you have you some clear evidence that this God is yours without which it would be sad to leave this world without some clear evidence ah but you see the evidence is so small well there again we're coming back to Jeremiah there are those evidences of purchase which are seen and there are those which are sealed how that we might be enabled to rest upon those evidences which are seen and hope for those evidences which are sealed we must leave it may the Lord have his blessing Amen