



Lesson 1. The God Who Chooses You

Welcome to our Bible study course based on the Hope Channel series, *Story Encounters: The Chosen*. Here you will get a chance to dig deeper into the Biblical insights brought up through *The Chosen* and by our series hosts, Ty Gibson, and David Asscherick. It is our prayer that through this series, you will gain a clearer picture of who God is and the love He has for you.

1. Think with me for a moment. When you picture God, what do you think of? When you look at God's face, what do you see in your mind? Do you feel that God is near you, or do you feel He is distant?

Answer: _____

2. When we think of how people around the world view God, there are many different perspectives. Which of this best aligns with what you think? Circle one of the statements below¹:
 - A. God? What God? Life is just a biological accident, there is no God.
 - B. God is nature, He is in everything, He is everything.
 - C. God made this world, set it on a spin, and left it to the natural evolutionary process. There is no personal God; He is there but stays out of our business.
 - D. God is an angry Being. You must appease Him or He will be out to get you.
 - E. God is a control freak. He controls everything, be it good or evil.
 - F. God is love, and He has designed and created this world. He cares for us and created each of us with the freedom to choose to love him back or not.
3. The series, *The Chosen*, paints a picture of a very loving God and Savior who wants to personally interact with us and know us. One of the key verses in episode one—and probably the entire series—is found in Isaiah 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.”’** (NKJV)

In trying to understand this verse, let's first find out who Isaiah was, where he came from, and what he was doing. Isaiah was what the Bible calls a prophet. That word, prophet, is literally the word *seer*. In the Bible, God used prophets to send messages. Those messages most often can fall into two categories: foretelling and forth telling.

- Foretelling is being able to describe a future event before it happens.
- Forthtelling is sharing a message that brings to light a certain subject for people to understand.

Isaiah was writing to Israel, which the Bible calls *God's people*. But take a guess: Do you think Isaiah was writing to God's people at a time when they were (circle one):

- A. Listening to God and living lives of joyful obedience OR
- B. Outwardly rebelling and living lives contrary to God's law?

The answer is B. Whoa! **Isaiah wrote his book at a time when the people were NOT listening to God!** He actually lived at a time when the people of God were actively rebelling against Him. The sister nations of Israel and Judah (Judah had split from Israel several hundred years prior to Isaiah) had grown rich materially, but with the prosperity came spiritual decline. In a world led by leaders drunk on greed and selfish pleasure, poverty and injustice reigned. Many in Israel had turned to gods of foreign nations, while seemingly clinging to an outward form of religion yet not knowing of its true meaning and transformational power. ⁱⁱ

In some ways, it sounds like the world we live in today!

4. With that brief explanation of who Isaiah was, let's return to Isaiah 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.**"' (NKJV)

Let's unpack this amazing message for us a little more:

I. God created you.

You are not here by chance. Just as an artist puts much thought into how he will depict a scene, or an author carefully crafts the characters of her book, God specifically and joyfully designed you to be YOU—a unique expression of His love and creativity. And even while we live in a world where sin has marred that perfect image of God, one day He will restore all of us fully into that one-of-a-kind reflection of God's perfect image.

II. Don't be afraid.

In a world fraught with uncertainty and fear, the only way we can rest in perfect peace is by trusting that God loves us and desires nothing more than eternal happiness. And that the Bible promises that God is our refuge, He is our Deliverer and we do not need to fear.

III. God has redeemed you.

The Hebrew word for *redeemed* gives the idea of being delivered from danger or bondage by paying a ransom.ⁱⁱⁱ But what is this bondage and why is there a ransom? The Bible reports the history of a rogue angel who rebelled against God and could no longer live in Heaven. In turn, this rogue angel came to this earth in hopes that he could get humanity to join in his rebellion. Genesis 3 tells the sad story of humanity joining that rebellion and thus enslaving ourselves to this rebel. Later, in the New Testament, Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Can you imagine? God saw you as so valuable that when this rogue angel, called the devil, 'kidnapped' you, God chose you and was willing to sacrifice His own life to buy you back into His kingdom. Talk about a high ransom! And God did that for you.

IV. God calls you by name.

To God, you are not simply a face in a sea of people. He knows you and everything about you. There is an "intimacy of friendship" implied here.^{iv}

Wow! That is simply amazing! It helps us understand how personal God really is. "Here you have the Creator of all things, the Almighty maker of the world, and in His mouth is tender language: "Fear not, I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine." –*Ty Gibson*

The last phrase of this verse basically summarizes everything in it: **We are His!**

5. There is a story told of a woman who knitted a red sweater which became her favorite sweater. Unfortunately, one day she left it at a park and when she went back to retrieve it, it was nowhere to be seen. Many months later, she was shocked to see her red sweater in the window front of a second-hand store! She went in and examined it carefully, noting all the stitches she had lovingly made, even the slight imperfections that made it undoubtedly hers. She gladly handed over her money to the cashier and walked out proudly with her beloved sweater. She loved it so much that she was willing to buy it back again. It was hers by **creation** and hers by **redemption**!
6. In episode 1, little Mary's father was trying to convey to her that she has no need to fear anything because she is of infinite value to God. He made her, redeems her, knows her, and calls her His.

Today, that lesson is for YOU as well. Jesus spoke these words in Luke 12:6-7: "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows." (NKJV)

How does knowing all of this impact your picture of God?

Answer: _____

7. Unfortunately, this picture of God does not line up with what most people think of God.

"Our world is filled with popular images of God that either drive people into religious slavery or into angry atheism, to serve God out of fear or to hate the very idea of God. Contrary to popular religious opinion, atheism is not the worst thing in the world. Bad religion is. And bad Christianity is at the top of the list. It's so bad that the Bible calls it 'Babylon, the mother of whores.' Wow, now that's some strong language! The Bible then goes on to warn people about false religion and urges people to run from it. The reason why is quite obvious, isn't it? When those who claim to know God best convey diabolical things about Him, terrible distortions of God's character are inevitable. The problem is so serious that historians have suggested that atheism is the bastard child of the church, born into our world as a violent intellectual and emotional reaction against the church's ugly misrepresentations of God."—Ty Gibson, *'Distorted.'*^v

Throughout this 13-part series, we invite you on a journey to uncover the true God, the God of tender love, the God who chose you, knows you, and calls YOU by name.

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| 1. The God Who Chooses You <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 8. The God Who Transforms |
| 2. The God Who Removes Shame | 9. The God Who Gives Life |
| 3. The God Who Sets You Free | 10. The God Who Transcends Boxes |
| 4. The God Who Feels | 11. The God Who Sacrifices His Life |
| 5. The God Who Uses Broken Pieces | 12. The God Who Sees Our Heart |
| 6. The God Who Is Faithful | 13. The God Who Breaks Down |
| 7. The God Who Calls You | Barriers |

Would you like to go on a journey with us, to get to know Him more by completing this series?

☐ Yes ☐ No

ⁱ Adapted from <https://digma.com/worldviews/>

ⁱⁱ SDABC vol 5, pg 89

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/isaiah/43.htm>

^{iv} <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/isaiah/43.htm>

^v <https://digma.com/distorted/>