

## Isaiah Lesson 48

Isaiah Chapter 48

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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**Introduction:** Last week in Chapter 47, we studied the coming destruction of Babylon, of the Chaldeans, and the causes of it. This week, the focus returns to Israel, and once again, God calls His rebellious people to repent. If they would repent and return to God, He promised them peace. Their hearts were hard and far from God. They had no desire to fellowship with Him. Their flesh was sinful, and they had no desire to serve Him. None was willing to repent.

### I. Israel Refined for God's Glory

*Isa 48:1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.*

*Isa 48:2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.*

The hypocrisy of Israel is confronted by God. They talked the talk, but they did not walk the walk. Judah had a form of godliness, but their actions denied the truth and power of All Mighty God. They claimed to trust Him, however, their fidelity to God in did not exist.

*Isa 48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.*

*Isa 48:4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;*

*Isa 48:5 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.*

God made known His watch and care over their forefathers. God saw to it for the sake of Israel, that they knew of the many times He delivered Israel in centuries

gone by. God knew the spiritual condition of Israel. Through the centuries, God had foretold Israel of coming events lest they think their idols had done it.

The mark of a prophet of God is that his prophecies come to pass. That certainly had been the case as God through His prophets had foretold things to come. Israel had no excuse. They either saw for themselves or heard of the many things that God did for His people. God does many great things for His people today. He hears and answers our prayers, even when we are a great distance away from Him.

*It is a sad truth today, that many remain distant from our Lord until trouble comes, causing great pain. Illness of self or a loved one, financial distress, or trouble in the home. The Lord is called upon. He hears and answers, He blesses abundantly, above what we hope or expect, only to be forgotten after things return to what is considered normal. The few services that were attended while in distress have ceased. All that was said or implied before God's throne fade with time. Those things were meant in all sincerity when spoken but are now covered in Apathy. There is no thought of what it cost God to make such a provision.*

*Isa 48:6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.*

*Isa 48:7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.*

*Isa 48:8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.*

God continues to plead His case against Israel. God spoke of how that they had heard of all these things—how they were foretold before they happened and how they came to pass exactly as they were predicted. God revealed His truth to rebellious Judah notwithstanding their backslidden condition.

The thought here likely is how that God had decreed the coming judgment against Babylon before it ever happened. God knew of these things from time long before. Judah could not plead that they already knew about God's impending judgment against Babylon. Even after God revealed what was coming regarding their future, their heart was so darkened that they could not understand.

God knew that Judah would not be faithful even when they knew what was coming. Not unlike their gentile counterparts, Judah was a “transgressor from the womb.” The thought may be to Jacob being a deceiver from birth. The greater truth, however, is how all humanity is born as sinners. Judah was no exception.

Matthew Henry said this about verses 1-8

The Jews valued themselves on descent from Jacob, and used the name of Jehovah as their God. They prided themselves respecting Jerusalem and the temple, yet there was no holiness in their lives. If we are not sincere in religion, we do but take the name of the Lord in vain. By prophecy they were shown how God would deal with them, long before it came to pass. God has said and done enough to prevent men's boasting of themselves, which makes the sin and ruin of the proud worse; sooner or later every mouth shall be stopped, and all become silent before Him. We are all born children of disobedience. Where original sin is, actual sin will follow. Does not the conscience of every man witness to the truth of Scripture? May the Lord prove us, and render us doers of the word.

*Isa 48:9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.*

*Isa 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.*

*Isa 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.*

It was only by the divine purpose of God that He did not destroy Judah. He had made a covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He would protect the integrity of His word to them. The testimony of His name was at stake. In order that there be a people to still praise His name, God determined to refrain from destroying Judah.

God had not attempted to purify His people through the world's ways. Rather, He had chosen His people in “the furnace of affliction.” God had allowed Israel to go through fiery trials, in part, to purify them of their transgressions. Sadly, even to this day, we often only learn dedication by affliction. God purifies His people (to this day) through hard times.

It was for God's own divine purposes in keeping His covenant with Israel that He would not cut them off altogether as a people. Only Judah remained. Through the furnace of affliction, He would purify them so that His name not be blasphemed. The integrity of God would not fail Him. He had promised to preserve a seed in Jacob. That He would do. Moreover, God would not and will not share His glory with any other—idols or otherwise.

## **II. The Lord's Call to Israel**

*Isa 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

*Isa 48:13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.*

God again calls unto His people to listen to Him. Notice how He refers to Israel as His called. God called out a people unto His name in Jacob. He has done the same in Christ. Once again, He describes Himself as the first and the last. See also Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, Revelation 1:11,17, 2:19, and 22:13.

*Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*

*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

*Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

God reminds Israel how He created the heavens and the earth. Even they pay heed when God speaks.

*Isa 48:14 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.*

*Isa 48:15 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have*

*brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.*

Judah is called to a solemn assembly to hear God's challenge—who of you have declared all these things? The answer is apparent. Judah certainly could not. In fact, God made clear that He loved His people. What a blessed thought! God promised that He would do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. The day was coming when He would judge Babylon. Though the text is not specific, the one spoken of here likely is Cyrus. God had already foretold his victory over Babylon in Isaiah 45-47. God would prosper this king to accomplish His divine purposes. That would include allowing the Jews to someday return to their land and rebuild their Temple. See Isaiah 44:28 - 45:1-4.

*Isa 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;*

*Isa 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:*

*Isa 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

*Isa 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me*

*Isa 48:16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.*

*Isa 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.*

God again calls Judah to hear His word. . God had not spoken secretly. He had made quite clear to His people His commandments, purposes, and prophecies. . Notice also the threefold description which God gives of Himself here. From the preceding and succeeding text (verse 14 and 17), it is clear that the One speaking is *Jehovah God*. Then, He also is referred to as the *Lord God*. Finally, *mention is made of His Spirit in sending the Messiah (Jehovah)*. There is a clear reference to the Triune God here. One of the clearest indications of the Trinity to be found in one verse is located here.

Implicit is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With that profound introduction, God proclaims, “*Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.*”

Notice once again the triple identification of God. He describes Himself as (1) their Redeemer, (2) the Holy One of Israel, and (3) the Lord (Jehovah) their God. It was He who had taught them. Furthermore, the instruction of God is profitable in every aspect of life. It was He who had provided divine guidance for His people, Israel. What a privilege they had. How can one reject His counsel? Yet, men to this day do exactly that.

*Isa 48:18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:*

*Isa 48:19 Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.*

One of the greatest lessons on obedience found in the Bible is here. If Israel had been obedient to God, He would have blessed them with peace. One of the general results of obedience to God is peace—peace of heart and peace with those around us. The analogy of a river is fitting. Rivers flow directionally to the sea. Though storms may rage above, a river flows peacefully on its way.

If Israel had been obedient to her God, He would have blessed her posterity. They would have been as the sand of the seashore. The name of Israel would not have been cut off as a sovereign nation which it was from the time of Daniel until 1948. Obedience is truly one of the major channels through which God will bless His people.

*Isa 48:20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a*

*voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.*

*Isa 48:21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.*

The setting and time is when Cyrus and then Artaxerxes allowed Jews to return to their land. The command here is to the Jews in Babylon. Most of them had become comfortable in their dispersion and did not wish to return. God's purpose was for them to return.

They were to praise God in so doing, noting that the Lord had redeemed them from their captivity. Even as God fully provided for His people when He led them out of Egypt, so He would when the time came to return to Jerusalem.

*Isa 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*

The chapter ends with a proverb. *There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.* . To the obedient and upright of living (Isaiah 32:17), there is the divine promise of peace.

*Isa 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*

To the wicked, the promise is the opposite— no peace. That was true then. It is true today.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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