

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 48

Theme: Last call to the house of Jacob; longing call of God to the remnant

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Chapter 48

All three of these last sections conclude with the phrase, "no peace... to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21). The Messiah brings peace, but those who reject Him will never know peace. Turning to idols is turning from the Messiah. As we have seen, this section has majored in a denunciation of idolatry. Idolatry is a road that leads to Babylon. God, in this book, is traveling the lonely road to Calvary.¹

This chapter completes the section begun in Isaiah 40:1 where the 5 major themes are introduced that are interwoven in the next eight chapters, this being the final one in the section. These themes are:

1. Idolatry is shown to be foolish by God's pre-naming historical events and persons.
2. The coming punishment, exile of the Jews and their captivity by the Babylonians.
3. The fall and ultimate disappearance of Babylon.
4. The future restoration of the nation and the temple at the direction of Cyrus who has messianic similarities.
5. The appearance of the Messiah who will introduce Zion and the comparisons of Cyrus with the Messiah.

This chapter contains the major remaining comparisons of the Messiah and Cyrus interwoven. Cyrus and the Messiah are spoken of together and because the passages mingle YHWH, the Messiah, The Holy Spirit, and Cyrus the section has very mystical qualities, especially in verse 6 and again in verse 16. In verse 6 YHWH reveals the name of Nazareth and in verse 16 it is very hard to distinguish the sender YHWH from the one sent who was present at the creation. After this chapter, Cyrus will not be referred to again and beginning with the next chapter the Messiah and the coming of Zion will be described with progressively greater detail until the crescendo of chapter 53.²

Sin, Rebellion—Sin is unfaithfulness to a relationship, or treachery (Hebrew bagad). Israel was born as a people in Egypt, but rebelled against God from that point on. They played the game of religion with God, wanting all the privileges of being His people, but they lied under oath and refused to act as He directed. They attributed His acts to other gods. In His love for His people God promised the exiles He would give them one more chance. This did not mean God takes His expectations of His people lightly. The Exile showed He carries out His threats. This text does show God is merciful even to the sinner who is unfaithful to the relationship with God.

Election, God's Purpose—Judgment is not God's goal or delight. God's mercy was slow to execute wrath against stubborn Israel. He granted time to the rebellious, elect people. He wanted them to be true to His covenant. Finally judgment came to test and refine the elect. In all this the purpose was to protect God's reputation and to prevent idols from receiving the glory due Him. Ultimately election can be explained only as God's determination to relate personally in freedom

¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

² <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

to His created people. Obedience and following His direction is best for His people, resulting in the promised election blessings. He may redeem the rebellious, but He leaves those who persist in wickedness without peace.³

This section recapitulates the revelation that Yahweh predicts the future, so that when the event He predicts happens, people will recognize that He is the only true God. He can cause new things to happen because He alone is the Creator. This prophecy has been the source of much critical attack on Isaiah. Again, the critics' disbelief in God's ability to predict the future and then bring it into being is the problem.⁴

Last time, we talked about the prophecies regarding the judgments on Babylon. One has happened already, in Isaiah's future, but our past. The other is still in our future.

The first was Babylon falling to the Medes and the Persians, under the leadership of King Cyrus, who God called by name 200 years earlier.

The future one will be a complete destruction during the Great Tribulation.

Now, God turns His attention to His people, the Jews, to both rebuke and exhort them.⁵

¹Hear 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.*

Note here the use of Jacob and the note that they are “called by the name of Israel.”⁶

[Hear ye this] Israel was now accused of hypocrisy and commanded to hear God's case against them (Isa. 48:1-22).

Four Outstanding Facts

- 1.** The house of Jacob is called by the name of Israel (Isa. 48:1).
- 2.** The Israel of Isaiah's day was made of the Jews from Judah -- out of the waters of Judah -- meaning that Judah was the fountain or source of the nation of Israel (Isa. 48:1). Those of the ten tribes who went into idolatry and refused to come to Jerusalem to worship were cut off; and Judah and the many thousands who came from the ten tribes made the nation of Israel that was still true to God and to David (Isa. 48:1-2). See The Anglo-Saxon Theory.
- 3.** Judah and all those from the other tribes with them went into sin and hypocrisy like the ten tribes did, and served God only outwardly (Isa. 48:1).
- 4.** Judah, regardless of their hypocrisy, continued to "call themselves of the holy city" -- Jerusalem -- and stay (depend) upon the God of Israel in times of trouble (Isa. 48:2). This further indicates that the Judah, with Jerusalem as the capital and Jehovah as their God, was the Israel of Isaiah's time. In fact, when these prophecies were uttered, there was no northern kingdom, for all had gone into captivity (2Ki. 17).⁷

³ Disciples Study Bible

⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁵ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4801.php>

⁶ Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, k-house.org

⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

There are those who say that Judah and Israel are different, God contradicts that thinking in this verse. Don't try to change the name God has given them. The whole house of Israel is addressed here, and they belong to the chosen line through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostate nation back then and in our day should listen to this final injunction to turn back to God. They speak of the God of Israel as though they know Him. Actually, they neither know Him nor serve Him. They have a religion without any strength whatsoever. They will not find the solution to their problems by turning to the United States, or to Russia, or to the Arab nations. Help will come when they turn to God. That is their solution and our solution.⁸

The people of Judah felt confident because they lived in Jerusalem, the city with God's Temple. They depended on their heritage, their city, and their Temple—but this was false security because they did not depend on God. Do you feel secure because you go to church or live in a Christian country? Heritage, buildings, or nations cannot give us a relationship with God; we must truly depend on him personally, with all our hearts and minds.⁹

1-5 The Lord reminded His people—called the house of Jacob... Israel, and the line of Judah—of their hypocrisy. They took oaths, invoking God's name, but they were not righteous. They thought that being citizens of Jerusalem (the holy city; cf. 52:1), though they were not living there, and claiming to rely on... the Lord, were adequate. Comfortable in the Babylonian Empire (and later the Persian Empire), they considered it unimportant to go back to Jerusalem. The Lord said He had prophesied what would happen (48:3), apparently referring to the coming Captivity. But knowing of the coming Exile, the people were stubborn (v. 4), refusing to change their ways. Again one reason God made those predictions was to point up His superiority to idols.¹⁰

House of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel: Judah should take notice at this opening statement. God identifies His people as the house of Jacob - the name Jacob essentially meaning "deceiver, cheater" - and says they only have the name of Israel, not the character of Israel, which means "governed by God."¹¹

The Lord called on His people to pay attention to what He had to say to them and to respond appropriately (cf. 42:18; 46:12). The many descriptions of the Israelites in these verses reminded them of their origins and their identity, their commitments to and their appreciation for Yahweh, and their present relationship with Him. In view of all this, they needed to heed what He said. They had not done that as they should have in the past.¹²

1-2 One of the interesting things about the Jews' history is regarding the name change of their forefather Jacob. He was called Jacob ("heelsnatcher") because of his sneaky nature. But then, God changed his name to Israel, meaning "God prevails" or "Governed by God."

So now, God points out that the people are called Israelites, of the land of Israel, supposedly governed by God. "But really," He says, "You are of the house of Jacob, the sneaky guy who always broke the rules to get what he wanted."

⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹ Life Application Study Bible.

¹⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

¹¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-48.cfm?a=727001

¹² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

He also tells them that they came "from the loins of Judah." Judah was a man who sold his own brother into slavery (Gen. 37:26-27) and slept with a prostitute after his wife died (Gen. 38:18). This was a pretty accurate description of the Jews in their national behavior as well.

The Lord said that they would invoke His name frequently, but it was not in truth or righteousness. They just used God's name as the label of validation. It's like when businesses put the Christian fish on their sign and then proceed to rip you off. Or people who say, "Praise God, brother," while telling you lies.¹³

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

For the first time Jerusalem is referred to as the "holy city." This is repeated in 52:1.

[**holy city**] Jerusalem is called "the holy city" because the temple, ark, and worship of the true God was centered there (Isa. 52:1; Neh. 11:1,18; Dan. 9:24; Mt. 4:5; 27:53; Rev. 11:2). The heavenly Jerusalem is also called "the holy city" (Rev. 21:2; 22:19).

[**stay**] Hebrew: camak (HSN-<H5564>), to prop; lean upon; take hold of; bear up; lie hard upon; rest in; stand fast (Isa. 48:2; 26:3; Song 2:5). Regardless of their backslidings, Israel would come back to God in times of trouble (Judg. 2:16-19).¹⁴

They boast of being citizens of Jerusalem and of being children of God, but they are such only in name; they are actually strangers to God.¹⁵

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

Twelfold Omnipotence and Omniscience of God

1. I have declared the former things from the beginning (Isa. 48:3,5).
2. They went forth out of My mouth (Isa. 48:3).
3. I showed them to you.
4. I did them suddenly and they came to pass.
5. I knew you were obstinate (Isa. 48:4).
6. I knew your neck was an iron sinew.
7. I knew your brow was brass.
8. Before it came to pass I showed you (Isa. 48:5).
9. I have showed you new and hidden things.
10. These new things I have created now and not from the beginning (Isa. 48:7).
11. I knew you would deal very treacherously (Isa. 48:8).
12. I knew you were a transgressor from the womb.¹⁶

¹³ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4801.php>

¹⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

¹⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

There are two evidences offered again to his people that YHWH is the only God. No idol has been able to declare history from the beginning. God through Moses has declared even the pre-flood history of those first civilizations and the creative days that no man saw. But even more than this is offered in the next verses.¹⁷

God had frequently in Israel's past predicted what He would do, and then He did it. Sometimes the fulfillments were not what His people had expected, illustrating His sovereign creativity. Nevertheless, He had remained true to His Word.¹⁸

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

“Iron sinew” - that’s stiff-necked!

God knew that the people of Israel were stubborn. In the Bible, stubbornness is often referred to as being "stiff-necked." This is in reference to horses that won't be turned by their riders, refusing to yield to their direction. God says, "You people are worse than a stiff-necked horse. Your neck is made of iron! And hard-headed? You guys have a bronze forehead!"

But knowing this, He made sure that they couldn't steal His glory away by attributing their eventual deliverance from Babylon to their false gods. The Lord actually prophesied this would happen in advance so that the credit wouldn't go to their idols.

He dares them.... "Okay, you guys. You heard me foretell this, and it's all happened just as I said. Will you give me the credit now?"¹⁹

From the very beginning, when God took Israel out of Egypt, He knew they were stiff-necked people. My friend, God did not choose them because they were superior, nor did He choose us because we are superior. God chose them and us because of His grace and because He saw our great need.²⁰

Ninefold Rebellion of Judah

1. You are obstinate (Isa. 48:4).
2. You are stiffnecked.
3. You are mean and hard as brass.
4. You are worshipers of idols (Isa. 48:5).
5. You trust in idols (Isa. 48:6).
6. You are ignorant (Isa. 48:6,8).
7. You would not hear.
8. You are very treacherous.
9. You are a transgressor from birth.

[thy neck is an iron sinew] Stubbornness of Israel

¹⁷ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

¹⁸ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4801.php>

²⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Iron necks and brass brows are good pictures of stubbornness and rebellion. This is a new expression concerning Jews whose traits are often stated in Scripture.

Fifteen Traits of Jews in Scripture:

1. Iron necks and brass brows (Isa. 48:4)
2. Obstinate (Isa. 48:4; Dt. 2:30)
3. Stiffnecked (Ex. 32:9; 33:3-5; 34:9; Dt. 9:6,13; 10:16; 2Chr. 30:8; Acts 7:51)
4. Stiffhearted (Ezek. 2:4)
5. Stubborn (Dt. 9:27; Judg. 2:19; Ps. 78:8)
6. Rebellious (Isa. 30:9; 65:2; Jer. 5:23; Ezek. 2:3-8; 3:9,26-27; 12:2-9,25; 17:12)
7. Perverse and crooked (Dt. 32:5; Php. 2:15)
8. Faithless (Mt. 17:17; Lk. 9:41)
9. Corrupt (Ps. 14:1; 73:8)
10. Foolish and unwise (Dt. 32:6,21)
11. Hardhearted (Ezek. 3:7)
12. Blind (Mt. 15:14; 23:16-19,24-26)
13. Self-willed (Gen. 49:6; 2Pet. 2:10)
14. Haughty (Isa. 3:16; Ezek. 16:50)
15. Adamant (Ezek. 3:9; Zech. 7:12)²¹

4-5 God had done this because His people were stubborn when it came to trusting Him. If He had not done this, they would have concluded that some idol had been responsible for the turn of events. They, like all people, resisted trust in a sovereign God, preferring rather to make their gods in their own image and so control them. People are by nature like animals, in that they often refuse to go a certain way, simply because their Master wants them to go that way. The "neck of iron" pictures unwillingness to bow in submission. The "brazen forehead" represents an opinionated person with a closed mind, or a shameless person who persists in sin.²²

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

Here again God claimed power of prophecy and revelation. He gave prophecies and revealed things to Israel long before they came to pass, so they could not say such revelations came from their idols (Isa. 48:5-8).²³

Before it came to pass: God is not only telling the future before it happens but he is telling it such a way that only in the progress of time will historical events occur that will fulfill scriptures that no one suspected. The point is that God is telling things in such a way that when they come to pass no one can say "see we knew it all along." Such is the nature of the mystical vision he refers to in verse 6. There will be no way anyone can say that we knew he would be called a

²¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

"Nazarene." But God revealed it in such a way that it is obvious that the name "Nazarene" was spoken by the prophets!²⁴

“Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

Not everything had been prophesied by the days of Isaiah. There were new, amazing visions coming from God for the first time through the prophet.

And this was for the sole purpose of the Jews not being able to say, "Oh, I already knew that." This is a behavior which seems to be picked up by know-it-all children: "I knew that, I knew that." But God says, "No, this stuff nobody has known until just now, when I revealed it. I didn't tell it to you before because you would have used the information in deceitful ways. Because ever since you were born, you've been rebellious children."²⁵

6-8 Israel had disregarded the previous prophecies, so God would give her new prophecies (v. 6), predictions that God's wrath would be delayed (cf. v. 9) and that she would be freed from captivity. Those plans were created now, not that God had never thought of them before, but that they would be put into effect at that time. From Deuteronomy 30:1-5, Israel knew she would be brought back to the land after captivity, and her dwelling in the land was assured by the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:18-21). But until Isaiah's prophecies were given she did not know how God would deliver her. This was so the people would not feel smug (Isa. 48:7b), thinking their own cunning had set them free. They actually were spiritually insensitive (v. 8; cf. 42:20; 43:8) because they were treacherous and rebellious. So their physical and spiritual deliverance would come not from their goodness or their own plans, but from God's grace.²⁶

Creation, Progressive—In every generation, God has a fresh word for His people. He had predicted Israel's Babylonian Exile, and He gave the nation a new word as they prepared to return home. The history of His people is part of God's ongoing creation (Hebrew *bara'*). See note on Ge 1:1. This continuous creation gives every succeeding generation assurance that He has a message for them in their day. Prophetic preaching is not merely telling what will happen but what must happen because God is holy. It deals with contemporary issues related to the problems people are facing as the prophet speaks. It interprets God's ongoing activity as Creator of history and redemption.²⁷

This means that Judah was without excuse. They knew the greatness and power of God, yet they still lived with only a religious image, without a spiritual reality.

God directed His people to consider carefully what He had just revealed, and they would have to admit that it was true. It was important that they come to a clear understanding of His ways because He was making other predictions about the future (i.e., Cyrus, return from exile, the coming Servant). They needed to know that He is in charge and that He is dependable. What He

²⁴ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

²⁵ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4801.php>

²⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

²⁷ Disciples Study Bible

revealed was hidden, in that its time and method of fulfillment were not specific, but the content itself was clear enough, having been revealed generally before (cf. Gen. 15:18-21; Deut. 30:1-5).²⁸

Seen in a vision: The Hebrew for "see" is *chazon* which is the word for receiving revelation in a trance-like state. The word "Nazareth" in this verse was seen in a state of special revelation. Isaiah was in a trance when he received the special revelation in this verse as befits the mystical nature of what is revealed here. This extraordinary verse actually names Nazareth. The Hebrew for "hidden things" is "netsoroth" which is Nazareth!²⁹

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

What God was predicting was brand new; it was not something He had revealed previously. His people had not heard this specific prediction before. Moses or another prophet had not revealed it. God chose when to reveal it as well as what to reveal. It [predictive prophecy] is given not so we can know the future, but as confirmatory evidence that we can and should trust God. To use it for the purpose of knowing the future and thus making ourselves secure is only another form of idolatry.³⁰

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

Evil and Suffering, Testing—Israel was tested in the Exile just as silver is refined in fire. Even in Exile Israel did not learn her lesson. Israel continued to rebel against God, worshiping the gods of her captors. Punishment was due people who failed to learn from God's test, but God chose to act in saving grace for His people, so all nations could see His power. Punishment for sin is not an automatic device triggered instantly. Punishment is always God's personal choice used to accomplish His purposes with His people and His world.³¹

It is a difficult concept for our individualistic ears, but the Bible teaches that we are sinners from the womb, and that we inherited a sin nature because we descend from Adam and sinned in Adam (Romans 5:12). It isn't our individual acts of sin that make us sinners; it is our descent from Adam. Our individual acts of sin merely prove that each of us is a transgressor from the womb.³²

²⁸ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

³⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³¹ Disciples Study Bible

³² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-48.cfm?a=727001

The Israelites had not listened to the message that predictive prophecy was to teach them. They did not welcome the idea that God could surprise them and so keep them trusting Him. Instead they wanted to know the future so they would not have to trust Him. Rebellion against God is part of human nature. They did not know what He was going to do, but He knew their hearts.³³

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

For His name's sake.³⁴

Verses 9-11 give God's declaration that, in spite of Israel's hypocrisy and sinfulness, He would yet refine them for His own name's sake and for His praise, and that He would not give His glory to another.³⁵

There was nothing in the people's actions, attitudes, or accomplishments to compel God to love and to save them. But for his own sake, to show who he is and what he can do, he saved them. God does not save us because we are good but because he loves us and because of his forgiving nature.³⁶

9-11 The Lord would delay His wrath, that is, withhold it so His people could return to Judah. This would be for His sake primarily (vv. 9, 11; cf. 43:25). The Exile was to refine them so they would return to the land in belief. That refining, however, was not with silver. This means either that the refining was not accomplished with money, or that the process could not be compared to silver, or that unlike silver which becomes pure, the nation would not. Whatever the meaning, the Captivity was like being in a furnace, to test them, not destroy them. If God would go back on His word about the return, His reputation would be defamed.³⁷

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

Does it bother us to know that God allows trials and His refining fires in our lives for His own sake? We should remember that we are not at the center of the universe, but God is. Everything He does and allows furthers His eternal purpose.

Verses 10-11 have a different sense in other versions. Instead of predicting a future refinement, they seem to teach that God had already tried His people in the furnace of affliction, like silver being refined, but nothing good had come of it as yet. The Septuagint reads: "Behold, I have sold thee, but not for silver; but I have rescued thee from the furnace of affliction"; Berkeley: "Look, I have refined you, but without finding silver, and tried you in the furnace of affliction"; Moffatt:

³³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³⁴ Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, k-house.org

³⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

³⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

³⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

"I purged you, nothing came of it, testing you in the furnace, all in vain"; Peshitta: "Behold, I have refined you, but not with silver; I have purified you in the furnace of affliction"; Fenton: "I refined, -- but not for silver, I in suffering's furnace tried, for My sake -- My sake I do it, -- for is there not a hope? And I give not My heart away."³⁸

Do you find it easy to complain when your life becomes complicated or difficult? Why would a loving God allow all kinds of unpleasant experiences to come to his children? This verse shows us plainly that God tests us in the "furnace of suffering." Rather than complain, our response should be to turn to God in faith for the strength to endure and rejoice in our sufferings (see Romans 5:3; James 1:2-4). For without the testing, we would never know what we are capable of doing, nor would we grow. And without the refining, we will not become more pure and more like Christ. If you are facing adversity or suffering, seek God and his refining work in your life.³⁹

Furnace of affliction: The years of punishment are seemingly interminable. They began in earnest with Tiglath-pileser about 735 BC and have not passed through the whole of the Assyrian affliction as yet. Israel as a kingdom is lost. The period of Babylonian oppression is yet far in the future and many decades, even centuries are to be endured. this is truly a furnace of affliction out of which the nation is to arise as purged from idolatry. The period of affliction was the fault of the nation and was not necessary. According to the verse 18, the messianic age could have come sooner.⁴⁰

By allowing the Babylonian exile, God was not casting off His people, but disciplining them so they would come to their senses, and follow Him more faithfully thereafter. The difficult times Israel had been through were fires of refining, not fires of destruction. Fire was one of Isaiah's favorite figures for judgment, and often it was God's people whom he described as in the fire. Unfortunately many readers think only of hell when they read of judgment fire in Scripture. In refining silver, the craftsman burns away all the dross. If God had refined Israel that way, there would have been nothing left of the nation. Affliction is a sign that God has chosen and loves His people; it is not a sign that He has not chosen and does not love them (cf. Heb. 12:3-13).⁴¹

¹¹For 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.

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

"I am the first, I also am the last." Cf. Isa 41:4; 44:6; Rev 1:17; 22:13.⁴²

³⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³⁹ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

⁴¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴² Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, k-house.org

Ten Commands to Judah

1. Hear this, O house of Jacob (Isa. 48:1).
2. Harken unto Me (Isa. 48:12).
3. All you, assemble yourselves and hear (Isa. 48:14).
4. Come near unto Me (Isa. 48:16).
5. Hear this.
6. Go forth of Babylon (Isa. 48:20).
7. Flee from the Chaldeans.
8. Declare with the voice of singing.
9. Tell this -- utter it even to the end of the earth.
10. Say, the Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob.

[Jacob and Israel] Some that when the term "Judah and Israel" proves two separate peoples. On this basis, "Jacob and Israel" would also denote two peoples, but this is not the case. In both instances the two names refer to the same people -- all from Jacob whom God named Israel (Gen. 32:28).⁴³

It would seem that God is no longer addressing the nation as a whole but confines His word to the remnant labeled, "my called."⁴⁴

12-15 Urging the nation to listen to Him (cf. comments on 46:3), God once again spoke of His unique position as the only God. (On the First and the Last see comments on 44:6.) Isaiah repeatedly wrote about two proofs of His uniqueness: (a) His creative power (cf. 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 51:13, 16) and (b) His ability to foretell the future, in this case, the fall of Babylon by means of Cyrus, God's chosen ally (cf. "shepherd" and "anointed," 44:28; 45:1). God called him and would help him succeed. No other god could have predicted this.⁴⁵

¹³Mine 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 is also the Creator who maintains control over His creation. As such He can create history as well as the cosmos. Isaiah referred to creation in 40:12-14, 22, 26, 28; 42:5; 44:24; and 45:12, 18.

Three great works of God:

1. Laid the foundation of the earth.
2. Spanned the heavens with His right hand.
3. Sustains all things by His Word (Heb. 1:3).⁴⁶

⁴³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁴⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁴⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

¹⁴All 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*.

Concept of Babylon is linked to the Chaldeans, not an allegorical reference.⁴⁷

That the Lord would choose Cyrus as his "ally" must have shocked his audience. How could the Lord choose a pagan king, an enemy? But it was Cyrus whom God would use to free his people from their captivity in Babylon. Cyrus's mission was to set Israel free by conquering Babylon, then to decree that all Jews could return to their homeland. Who but a prophet of God could predict such an inconceivable but true story almost 200 years before it happened?⁴⁸

The Israelites needed to listen because only the Lord could reveal what He would do. Specifically, Yahweh revealed His love (choice, cf. Deut. 4:37; Mal. 1:2-3) of Cyrus, who would fulfill God's will on Babylon by defeating the Chaldeans (cf. 44:28). The Israelites, in view of who their God is, should not resist His choice of Cyrus or reject the revelation about him. The idols, "them," could not reveal this.⁴⁹

I have called him do his pleasure on Babylon: This is the last reference to Cyrus in this section that began in chapter 40 and reached its climax with the naming and detailed description of Cyrus and his actions against Babylon in the last few verses of chapter 44 and the first several verses of chapter 45. He is called "messiah" in chapter 45 so the comparison issues the extraordinary reference to The Messiah of whom Cyrus is a comparative shadow) in the next verses.

"His Arm:" Cyrus as a type of the Messiah to come has the attributes of the Messiah ascribed to him because he is the restorer of the Nation to the Zion of the second commonwealth and the initiator of the rebuilding of the temple. Because of these similarities he is called "YHWH's arm" which is a messianic reference, See notes under 51:9 But this reference is so mystic that it triggers further reference to the one who comes from eternity himself in the next few verses where he (the Arm of YHWH) is pictured as being present at the creation.⁵⁰

¹⁵I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

Six predictions -- fulfilled:

1. Jehovah will love him (Cyrus, Isa. 48:14; 41:1-3,25; 44:28; 45:1-4,13; 46:11)
2. He will do his pleasure on Babylon (Isa. 48:14)
3. His arm will be on the Chaldeans
4. I will call him (Isa. 48:15)
5. I will bring him
6. I will make his way prosperous

⁴⁷ Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, k-house.org

⁴⁸ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

[will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans] Part of this prophecy is in the future tense and part in the past; but in reality every detail pertained to the future, since it was uttered about 200 years before its fulfillment (Isa. 48:14-15; Ezra 1:1-6). God had already predicted Babylon's destruction by Cyrus several times before this, but here He spoke as if He had already loved Cyrus, called him, and brought him (Isa. 48:14-15; 41:1-3,25; 44:28; 45:1-4,13; 46:11).⁵¹

His way prosperous: Still speaking of Cyrus but now also includes the man of Destiny who has spoken from the moment of creation is announced in the next verse as being sent by YHWH and the Spirit.

¹⁶Come 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.

Who is speaking? See v. 12, "Alpha and Omega," Jesus Christ. "I have not spoken of in secret" matches Jesus' words in John 20:18.

Three people involved in v. 16: First is the speaker, Jesus. Second, "the Lord God." Third, "and his Spirit." Old Testament evidence for the Trinity.⁵²

It seems there was a change in speakers here, and yet the speaker was a Divine person who had openly, and not secretly, spoken of the plan to raise up Cyrus, from the beginning. This appears to have been the Messiah whom God and His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) had sent. Here is a clear reference to the Trinity of separate and distinct persons in the 'Elohiym (HSN-<H430>) of Scripture -- the Lord God (one person), the Holy Spirit (another person), and the Messiah (still another person) sent by the two -- the Lord God and the Holy Spirit (Isa. 48:16-17).⁵³

It is Isaiah who becomes God's messenger. He is pleading with them, and as He pleads you can hear the Lord Jesus Christ. F. Delitzsch (p. 253) appropriately says, "Since the prophet has not spoken in his own person before; whereas, on the other hand, these words are followed in the next chapter by an address concerning Himself from that servant of Jehovah who announces Himself as the restorer of Israel and light of the Gentiles, and who cannot be therefore either Israel, as a nation, or Isaiah, it can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

God has never been able to bless the nation Israel to the fullness of His promise, and you and I have never been blessed as much as God would like to bless us. Whose fault is it? Is it God's fault? No! It is Israel's fault and the fault of you and me.⁵⁴

The Lord, who is speaking, said He had not been secretive about Cyrus' defeat of Babylon. Suggestions on who is speaking in the second part of verse 16, beginning with the words And now, include Cyrus, Israel, Isaiah, and the Messiah. Probably the Messiah, God's Servant, is intended because of His association (as in 42:1; also note 11:1-2) with the Spirit. Just as Cyrus

⁵¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵² Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, k-house.org

⁵³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

would not fail in his mission (48:15), so the Messiah-Servant, sent by God with the Holy Spirit on Him, will not fail in His mission.⁵⁵

17Thus 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.

Like a loving parent, God teaches and guides us. We should listen to him because peace and righteousness come to us as we obey his Word. Refusing to pay attention to God's commands invites punishment and threatens that peace and righteousness.⁵⁶

Revelation, Commitment—God is committed to reveal Himself and His ways to His people. Though they refused to obey His revelation to Moses and the prophets, He willingly started over again bringing them out of the Exile. God wants His people to believe His revealed teachings lead to the best life possible in the Creator's world. To leave Him is to lose the way. To follow Him is to find true peace and just living.⁵⁷

17-19 The Lord, Israel's Redeemer (cf. comments on 41:14) and Holy One, had constantly been teaching and guiding Israel through the Law. But they had not paid attention to His commands. Had they done so, they would have experienced not the Exile but peace and righteousness, and none of their children would have been killed.⁵⁸

The titles of God give the reasons the Israelites should listen to Him. They should listen because of who He is and what He had done for them. Additionally, God is essentially one who teaches His people how to make a net gain of their lives (not necessarily a profit in business). He is also the one who guides His people through dangers to safety and fulfillment.⁵⁹

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

Five blessings Israel would have had, if they'd hearkened to God's commandments:

1. Peace as a river
2. Righteousness as the waves of the sea
3. Descendants as the sand of the sea (Isa. 48:19)
4. Offspring like gravel in the sea
5. Their name would not have been cut off or destroyed before God

[that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments] God's earnest desire is to bless men, not curse them. He doesn't want men to sin; He wants them to keep His laws; and He wants them to be saved instead of being punished eternally (Dt. 22:29; Ps. 81:13-16; Ezek. 18:23-32; Mt. 23:37; Lk. 19:12; Jn. 3:16-18; 1Tim. 2:4; 2Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17).

⁵⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁵⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

⁵⁷ Disciples Study Bible

⁵⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁵⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

[peace been as a river] Your peace -- the things that bring peace, as wholeness, soundness, health, prosperity, holiness, and other good of every kind -- would have been like a river flowing abundantly, even overflowing its banks.

[righteousness as the waves of the sea] Your right-doing in all things would be as boundless and powerful as the waves of the sea constantly rolling to bless men.⁶⁰

It could have been different: See notes under verse 10 above. The affliction was chosen because of the obstinacy of the nation and their predilection to idolatry that had to be purged. Hence the unusual amount of "preaching" and nagging about that sin in this whole section from 40 to 49. If they had been obedient then they would have had great blessings and the nations also would have turned to God sooner. But as it was the Babylonian captivity was now a certainty created to purge the nation from idolatry.⁶¹

Failure to listen and hear the Lord's instruction (cf. vv. 1, 4, 8) in the past had limited Israel's peace (Heb. shalom) and her right conduct (Heb. sedaqa). Things could have been far better if she had only listened and obeyed. She could have experienced a ceaseless, powerful flow of His blessings.

Every sensitive teacher knows the pain of heart that comes when he pours himself out for students who prove to be unteachable. Israel proved to be like that (cf. v. 8); and God expresses his deep concern for them, because they are themselves the losers.⁶²

¹⁹Thy 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.

[seed also had been as the sand] Your children would have been innumerable like the sand and pebbles of the vast oceans, instead of a small remnant as at the present (Gen. 22:17; 32:12).

[gravel] Hebrew: me`ah (HSN-<H4579>), a feminine word the root of which refers to intestines; stomach; bowels; or womb. The idea is that Israel's descendants would be multiplied abundantly like the creatures in the seas. Even if it means gravel, as translated here, the meaning is the same -- innumerable offspring eternally.

[his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me] Israel's name as a nation and a kingdom would not have been cut off if they had obeyed God (Isa. 48:18-19). They never were cut off entirely as a race, for a remnant always was and always will be saved (Isa. 1:9, refs.).⁶³

Israel could also have enjoyed the blessings promised to Abraham more fully, and sooner, than she has. Israel's identity as a nation among other nations ceased because of her sin, but her identity as the chosen people of God did not. This verse does not teach that the future fulfillment of the promises to Abraham was contingent on Israel's obedience. God gave those promises

⁶⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶¹ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

⁶² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

unconditionally (cf. Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 15:5; 22:17). It does reflect that the present enjoyment of those benefits depended on her obedience (cf. Deut. 28—29).⁶⁴

²⁰Go 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.

Five Predictions -- Unfulfilled:

1. Go forth of Babylon (Jer. 51:6; Rev. 18:4).
2. Flee from the Chaldeans (Jer. 51:6).
3. Declare it (redemption from Babylon) with a voice of singing.
4. Tell it and utter it even to the end of the earth.
5. Say you: The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob.

These are prophetic commands in view of a latter-day struggle between Israel and Babylon, as is clear from the fact that when Cyrus took Babylon, Israel did not flee from the Chaldeans; they did not sing of redemption to the end of the earth; and Jacob was not redeemed then as they will be at the second coming of Christ (Isa. 48:20; Zech. 12:10 -- Zech. 13:1,9; Rom. 11:25-29).⁶⁵

Do you see the captives leaving Babylon many years later? No wonder they are shouting with joy, as their ancestors shouted joyfully after they crossed the Red Sea, free from slavery at last! What is holding you captive? Be free! The Lord has redeemed his servants from slavery to sin. When you let him free you from your captivity, you will feel like shouting with joy.⁶⁶

20-21 With Cyrus' edict (2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4) allowing the Jews to return home, God urged His people to leave Babylon quickly (flee). Because this return was like being redeemed (*gā'al*, "to buy out of slavery"; cf. 43:1)—this time from Babylon, not Egypt—the people could rejoice. After the Egyptian Exodus God provided water in the deserts and from the rock (cf. Ex. 17:1-7). Here too, it is implied, God would provide for them in their second "Exodus."⁶⁷

Flee from Babylon: Those who will have lived in that future period, future to Isaiah are urged to flee from Babylon when the time came. So much has been revealed in this section that the pressure would have been great on the believer to obey and leave Babylon. In the event, when the time came, most of the nation was reluctant to leave the economic security of Babylon to return to rebuild a desolate nation. Hence the need for the urging here in verse 20 and in the next two verses.⁶⁸

In view of the new promises concerning Cyrus and return from exile, Isaiah called on the Israelites in captivity to depart from Babylon when they could (cf. Rev. 18:4-5), and to publicize the promise of the second Exodus. It was as good as accomplished. In view of this prophecy, it was wrong for the Israelites to remain in Babylonia after Cyrus permitted them to return to the

⁶⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

⁶⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁶⁸ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa48.htm>

Promised Land. Yet many did remain. This verse is, A summons beforehand to Jews who would be captives in 539 B.C. not to tarry in the pagan soil of Babylon, but to take advantage of Cyrus' permissive edict and return to Judah.⁶⁹

²¹And 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.

To encourage Jews of the future in their struggle with Antichrist, the last-day king of Babylon, the prophet cited the miraculous supply of God for Israel in the wilderness days (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11).⁷⁰

²²There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

Phrase echoed later in Isa 57:21

Then he concludes this section, as the three sections of this last major division of Isaiah conclude: This is the solemn benediction of this section where God's Servant is set over against all the idols of the heathen. He alone gives peace. If a person is away from God, living in sin, he cannot find peace in the world today. We have several thousand years of recorded history which tell us that anyone away from God hasn't had peace.⁷¹

Isaiah 40 -- Isaiah 66 is divided into 3 parts of 9 chapters each. The first 2 parts end with the same statement of no peace for the wicked (Isa. 48:22; 57:20-21). The last part ends with a statement explaining why there will never be any peace to the wicked: they will be punished in eternal hell (Isa. 66:22-24).⁷²

Many people cry out for comfort, security, and relief, but they haven't taken the first steps to turn away from sin and open the channels to God. They have not repented and trusted in him. If you want true peace, seek God first. Then he will give you his peace.⁷³

God's final word that His people needed to hear was a word of warning (cf. 57:21). For the wicked there is no peace (Heb. shalom, the fullness of divine blessing, cf. v. 18). The wonderful promise just summarized (vv. 20-21) was no guarantee that Israel would enjoy God's richest blessing if she continued to practice wickedness. The wicked Babylonians would not enjoy His shalom, and neither would they.

By way of application, God has similarly promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18). But that is no excuse for Christians to conclude that because our election is secure, we can sin with impunity and disregard God's commands.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁷⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷³ Life Application Study Bible.

⁷⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

In spite of the Jews' disobedience, God had made promises to them that He intended to keep. Through Cyrus, the Lord would deliver them after 70 years in Babylon. But... it would be their choice. Only those who wanted to be delivered would be delivered. They would have to decide that leaving Babylon was what they wanted to do.

And unfortunately, when the 70 years was over, not a lot of them wanted to leave Babylon. We read in the book of Ezra that when King Cyrus made the decree, he said,

Ezra 1:2 ..."The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem."

But there were Jews who had been born in Babylon. They didn't want to go back. There were Jews who'd found that they could be quite comfortable living in Babylon. And so they didn't return.

God tells them all to flee. But only the remnant would return. And those who chose to go back to Jerusalem to rebuilt God's temple would be provided for on the long journey back home.

But as for those who chose to stay in Babylon, God promised that they would never find peace.

Saints, the principle applies to us today as well. Those who desire to take the straight and narrow path towards the kingdom of God will be blessed and provided for. But those who choose the world with its comforts and pleasures will find no peace in that place.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah4801.php>