

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

### Message #70

### Isaiah 48:1-22

There is no other nation on the face of this earth who has suffered as much and survived as long as Israel. There are no other people in the world who have been persecuted as much as the Jews. When you look at Israel, it is clear they exist in a small portion of their land, but it is also clear that as a nation they are not experiencing the blessings of God. This chapter tells us and them why.

When Jeremiah spoke of the Babylonian captivity, he told Israel that they should realize this was not going to be a quick, overnight judgment. He informed Israel that they should build houses, plant gardens and eat their produce. He told them to live their lives and to marry and have children and seek the welfare of the country in which God had placed them (Jeremiah 29:4-7). However, God did not want His people to forget about the fact that they were not where they were supposed to be, in the Promised Land experiencing the blessings of God.

When Isaiah wrote this part of Scripture, Israel was just a few years away from being taken captive by Babylon. Throughout the captivity, God would take care of His people and even permit them to enjoy good things. However, He did not want Israel thinking that Babylon was where they belonged. He wanted them remembering Him and their Promised Land and when He would finally open the door for His people to go home, He wanted them to leave.

**THE SOVEREIGN GOD CALLS HIS REBELLIOUS AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL TO PLEASE FINALLY START HEARING HIM AND RESPONDING TO HIM AND TO KEEP THEIR FOCUS ON THEIR CITY AND THEIR PROMISED LAND SO THEY CAN EXPERIENCE HIS WONDERFUL BLESSINGS.**

There are many passages of Scripture that teach us that God has given us many good things in this life to enjoy. While we are here on this earth, we should enjoy the blessings God gives us. We have families and we have jobs and we have many good things in this life. But God does not ever want any of us to forget about the fact that our home is not really here; it is in heaven.

Now this text breaks down quite nicely into **four main parts**:

**PART #1** – God calls His people to realize that He has revealed His prophetic plan to Israel so that when negative things come upon her, she will realize that it is coming directly from His hand because of her rebellion. **48:1-11**

Now there are four key points that God wants to make in this section:

**Key Point #1** - God's people were talking about God and praying to God but not on the basis of righteousness and truth. **48:1-2**

These people had right theology, but they did not have righteous lives.

Look what the people said:

- 1) They swear by the name of the Lord (**48:1a**);
- 2) They invoke His name (**48:1b**);
- 3) They say they are residents of the holy city (**48:2a**);
- 4) They say they lean on God, who is the LORD of hosts (**48:2b**).

Now if you really believe that God is the Sovereign LORD of the hosts and everything, then a willingness to know this God and to understand His Word would seem very logical. Since God is the greatest sovereign power in the existing universe, then the most reasonable thing to do is to get to know this God and obey Him.

These people talked a real nice religious game. But notice carefully (**verse 1**), they were not living their lives in accordance with God's truth nor His righteousness. If any religion is not based on the truth of God's Word and on the promotion of righteousness, it is hated by God.

I cannot help but think of all the religions and denominations that talk about God. They have their rituals and their statements and creeds, but the fact is they do not promote Biblical righteousness. Their spirituality is not based on the truth of God's Word and the application of righteousness.

**Key Point #2** - God's people need to realize that the reason God told His people about the future negative things that would happen to them is so that they would know that He was their only God, not like their idols. **48:3-5**

When God started moving and doing some wonderful things for His people, they were so far removed from God that they didn't even give Him the credit for what He did. God's people were obstinate, unteachable. They wouldn't bend. According to **verse 4**, God knew how stubborn and rebellious these people were long before He chose them. He knew exactly what they would do and He knew exactly what He would do.

God told them exactly what He was going to do before He did it. When His people saw it happen, instead of standing in awe of God and turning to Him and praising Him, they kept worshipping things that meant nothing.

**Key Point #3** - God's people need to realize that God predicts new things will happen to His people like they have never seen before. **48:6-8**

Now the new things include new judgment and new grace. God predicts that there is a new terrible judgment that will come against Israel because she refuses to turn to Him. She has refused to listen to God and she has refused to know God, so God predicts there will be an unprecedented time of wrath that will hit Israel. This new thing has not happened to this day, but it is close. This new judgment will be the judgment of the Antichrist when He will target Israel with a plot of extermination. But also, God promises Israel a new deliverer and a new grace. God's Savior will come for His name's sake and He will deliver Israel and bless her.

**Key Point #4** - God's people need to know that the only reason He has not completely destroyed them is because of His name. **48:9-11**

The only reason God has not completely destroyed Israel when He did so much for her and she rejected Him because of His name. God will not give His glory to another, so He will ultimately deliver Israel. He is a God who blessed Israel so much. He called her, He has protected her, He has provided for her, He has desired to bless her and she refuses to respond to Him. When He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to Israel she flat out rejected Him. God is not preserving Israel because she has been so wonderful; He is preserving her because His name is on the line.

This is a new wonderful thing that Israel learns here. He has caused negative things to hit her because of her rebellion and yet she stubbornly refuses to respond to Him. He informs her here that in spite of that, He still will not cut her off and because of His own name, He will bring her into the land and fulfill all of her promises.

There is a similar statement made in the N.T. Grace Age about believers who just never honor God. God says, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." (II Timothy 2:13).

**PART #2** – God calls His people to realize that He is a sovereign God and He can give His people His blessings or He can bring His people His cursings depending on how they respond to Him. **48:12-19**

This text in many ways is so sad. He has to plead with His own people to listen to Him, the great and glorious and sovereign God. God totally and completely delights in blessing His people. That is His heart. He has sovereign power to bless and He has sovereign power to curse and the contingency factor is how His people respond to Him. Notice the emphasis on the sovereignty of God in this text:

**Sovereign Point #1** - God has called Israel. **48:12a**

**Sovereign Point #2** - God is the first and last of everything. **48:12b**

**Sovereign Point #3** - God has founded the earth. **48:13a**

**Sovereign Point #4** - God has spread out the heavens with one hand. **48:13b**

**Sovereign Point #5** - God commands His creation and it does what He commands. **48:13c**

**Sovereign Point #6** - God calls all people to recognize His sovereignty in blessing His people and destroying their enemies. **48:14-16**

God is the One who has decreed creation and upholds creation. God says look at my creation and see My greatness and glory. I have the power to restore My people even though they have not honored Me. Perhaps you have not been honoring God in your life. God has the power to change that today. He has the power to restore you to great blessings.

If I could tell Israel one thing, I would tell her this - you need to turn to your God for His sovereign help. Israel will not find deliverance in turning to the United States or our President. Israel will not find deliverance in trying to negotiate land deals with the Arab world. Israel will not find deliverance in turning to the United Nations or European Union meetings. Her deliverance lies in the hands of her Sovereign God. She must turn to her God.

**PART #3** – God calls His people to listen to and to obey His Word because that will lead to great blessing. **48:17-19**

The Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel is God the Son, Jesus Christ. In these three verses there are four powerful points:

**Powerful Point #1** - God's teaching leads a person in a profitable way. **48:17a**

The Bible is the best counseling book in the world. If you properly understand it and follow it, it will always lead you to the way of profit in every area of life.

**Powerful Point #2** - God's teaching leads a person in the way He should go. **48:17b**

Understand this point. Many people want to know just exactly what God's will for their life is. The best way to discover it is to follow the Word of God and God will lead you in the way He wants you to go.

**Powerful Point #3** - Obedience to God's commandments lead to an overflowing of peace and righteousness. **48:18a**

Many people struggle and do not have peace and cannot seem to get victory over sin simply because they do not pay attention to the Word of God.

I know of a place in the Rocky Mountains where there is a fresh-flowing creek in which the water is so clear that you can drink it. But if you follow this creek, there are certain tributaries that break off from the main artery. If you follow the tributaries you will eventually come to a spot where the water is gunky and dirty and stagnant. You would never know that it came from a beautiful crystal-clear, free-flowing stream. So it is with some believers. Righteousness should be flowing from them in wonderful new fresh ways. But when you look at them, their lives are filled with sinful and fleshly gunk and dirt and filth. Their spirituality is stagnant because they have moved away from obeying the Word of God.

**Powerful Point #4** - Obedience to God's commandments leads to an enduring posterity. **48:19**

One who purposes to understand and apply God's Word will discover he/she will earn a good name for himself that will forever stand.

**PART #4** – God calls His people to listen to Him and flee Babylon so they can experience His peace. **48:20-22**

God tells His people that when Cyrus would let them leave from the Babylonian captivity, they should immediately flee and go home. God tells His people that He would provide for them in every way. When God's people obey God, they can be certain that God will provide for them in every possible way. He would give them living water as they passed through the dry and dusty land.

If they would obey Him, they would have joy (**verse 20**), but if they did not obey Him, they would never have any peace for there is no peace for the wicked (**verse 22**). You cannot by wickedness cancel out God's promises, but you can cancel out His peace.

The problem with many of God's people is that they become so accustomed to the world that they do not want to go home.

One may only have peace of mind and soul when one is in a right relationship with God. That relationship comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

Listen, you and I are passing through a dry and dusty land. There is a living spring of water that can quench every thirst of your soul and it is Jesus Christ. You cultivate a relationship with Him and out of you will flow living water.