

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

THEME:

God has not cast away Israel—Israel shall be saved.

REMARKS:

This chapter brings us to the conclusion of the first minor division of the last major division of Isaiah. All three of these last sections conclude with the phrase, “**no peace to the wicked.**” 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 on a denunciation of idolatry. Idolatry is a road that leads to Babylon. God, in this book, is traveling the lonely road to Calvary.

OUTLINE:

1. **LAST CALL to the House of Jacob.** Verses 1-11
2. **LONGING CALL to the Remnant of Israel.** Verses 12-22

COMMENT:

Verse 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.**

The whole House of Israel is addressed here, all of those who belonged to the chosen line through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostate nation here is given a final injunction to turn back to God. They speak of the God of Israel as if they knew Him. Actually, they neither know Him nor serve Him. They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

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

They boast of being citizens of Jerusalem, but they only have a name to live. They are actually strangers to God.

Verse 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.

God had given them ample evidence that He was God by predicting the future and it came to pass as He had said.

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

God knew they were an obstinate people, and He piled up evidence to convince them and win their hearts. This they rejected.

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff necked people (Deuteronomy 9:5-6).

Verse 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 told them of the future lest they give an idol credit for what happened to them.

Verse 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.

This is the reason God raised up prophets not only to warn but also to speak of the future.

Verse 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.

There was always the danger that these people would say very smugly that they already knew these things.

Verse 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.

They refused to be convinced and turn to God. What a picture of obstinacy and stubbornness! What a picture of the human heart.

Verse 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.

God will not deal with them according to their sins, but He finds the reason within Himself in His mercy and grace.

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

Israel is an elect nation, but note the price of election. “**I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction,**” is a statement of historical fact and doctrinal truth.

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

It would seem here that God is no longer addressing the nation as a whole, but confines His word to the remnant labeled, “**my called.**” Our Lord applied this title to Himself.

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 (Revelation 1:17).

Verse 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.**

He is Creator and Preserver.

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17).

Verse 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.**

God will deal with Babylon in His own way, “**Vengeance is mine.**”

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

This is the heart cry of God.

Verse 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.**

Here begins the plea of God’s Messenger—the Lord Jesus Christ. The words of Delitzsch are appropriate.

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 the Lord who announces Himself as the restorer of Israel and light of the Gentiles, and who cannot be therefore either Israel, as a nation, or the author of these prophecies; nothing is more natural than that the words. **“And now hath the Lord,”** etc. form a prelude to the words of the one unequalled Servant of the Lord concerning Himself which occur in chapter 49. The surprisingly mysterious way in which the words of the Lord suddenly pass into those of His messenger, can only be explained in this manner.

Verse 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.**

Note the longing and loving plea of the Lord God to the Remnant.

Verse 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:**

Had they obeyed God, they would have experienced both peace and righteousness.

Verse 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.**

God never has been able to bless Israel to the fullest of His promise. That is likewise true of the believer. Both Israel and the Church have exceedingly precious promises, but neither have entered in experimentally to all the blessings.

Verse 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.**

God urged His people to leave Babylon after the captivity. Only a small remnant returned.

Verse 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.**

He takes them back to the deliverance out of Egypt where they are left.

Verse 22—**There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.**

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. **“My peace I give unto you.”**

~ end of chapter 48 ~

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