

## **“Hear Ye... Hear Ye...”**

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### Isaiah 48

Isaiah 48 and 49 begin with an exhortation hear to what God is saying.

- In 48:1 God is speaking to Jacob/Israel—“**Hear ye this, O house of Jacob...**” (48:1 cf. vs. 12, 16, 18). Twice in Isaiah 48 God tells Israel, “**Hear ye this...**” (vs. 1, 16).<sup>1</sup>
- In 49:1 God is speaking to Gentiles—“**Listen, O isles, unto me...**”

Nothing is more important than hearing what God says. Yet most people never listen—It goes in one ear and out the other.

***Someone says, “I don’t hear God speaking to me.” To hear God speak, you must be “tuned-in.”***

If there is a message that needs to be heard, it is the message of God’s grace! Grace is God’s kind and compassionate treatment of those who deserve judgment.

God’s grace is not limited to the New Testament. The grace of God is displayed throughout the entire Bible. His throne is a “*throne of grace*” (Heb. 4:16).

- Isaiah 47 dealt with God's judgment against Babylon.
- Isaiah 48 deals with God's grace toward Israel.

The grace of God is the underlying theme of Isaiah 48. This theme began in Isaiah 40:1 with the words, “*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people...*” In the succeeding chapters God comforts His obstinate people with a promise to deliver them from Babylonian captivity and eventually bring them home and show them His glory.

God bestowed more advantages on Israel than any other nation (Rom. 3:1-2). God brought Israel into being by His hand... He choose them as His people... redeemed them for His purpose... gave them the oracles of God... and established His covenants (Rom. 9:4). Yet, in spite of all these

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<sup>1</sup> v. 1—“...are come forth out of the waters of Judah...” Bringing forth children is sometimes related with water (Isa. 23:3-4). A physical birth is connected with waters (Gen. 1:20—First mention of physical life coming from water). Water pertains to a *physical* birth. The first birth is a water birth (John 3:3-6 cf. 1 John 5:4-9—Christ’s blood came from God, NOT Mary or Joseph—Acts 20:28; John 19:34-35).

advantages, Israel was rebellious and backslidden. How could God be so good to this wayward and hypocritical nation?

Because He is a God of grace. That is what God wants His people to hear in this chapter.

There is a great chorus we sing titled, “*Ain’t God Good!*”—

*Ain’t God good to give us so many blessings  
Undeserving, that’s what we are!  
We ought to thank Him, love and praise Him,  
A little more today, and whole lot more tomorrow!*

## I. **Israel’s blatant GUILT.**

- Dual names—Jacob (supplanter) / Israel (prince of God). They were acting like Jacob (devious), but called themselves Israel (prince of God). Likewise, some today call themselves “Christian” (Christ-like) but live like the world.

### A. **Guilty of HYPOCRISY—Their pretentious CLAIM** (vs. 1-2).

1. v. 1—They swore by God’s name without submitting to God! They made mention of “*the name of the Lord,*” but not “*in righteousness*” (i.e. not sincere about it. Lev. 19:12; 2 Chron. 36:13). Paul wrote of Israel, “*they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God*” (Rom. 10:2-3).
2. v. 2—“*...they CALL themselves of the holy city...*” without seeking to live holy lives. It doesn’t matter if you call yourself a “Baptist” (or whatever), and claim to believe in God, God knows if you are really saved. (2 Tim. 2:19—“*The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*”)
  - “*...the holy city*” is not Rome. It is Jerusalem (Mt. 4:5; 27:53). Israel was from Jerusalem and professed to trust the name of God, but, in reality they were not (vs. 4-8; Titus 1:16).

- v. 3—The true test of prophecy. The infallibility of God to predict the future. God tells what He is going to do and then He does it (v. 5).

## B. Guilty of HARDNESS—Their perverse CHARACTER (vs. 4-8).

➡ Their claim did not match their conduct.

- vs. 4-8— God knew Israel was/is **obstinate** [stubborn]... **stiff-necked**...and **hard-headed** (“*thy brow brass*”).
- God knew Israel would “*deal very treacherously*” and was “*a transgressor from the womb*” (v. 8 cf. Ps. 58:3—“*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*”).
- God knows we sometimes say one thing but act another way. Yet, God, in His grace, blesses us in spite of our fickleness!

### Examples of Israel’s bullheadedness (vs. 5-7).

#### 1. **Embezzlement** (v. 5). Misappropriating God’s blessings.

- God was a step ahead of Israel. He foretold what was about to happen before Israel could attribute His blessings to the works of their hands—their idols (cf. Jer. 44:17-19)
- God should get all the glory for anything good He does! How many times do men attribute God’s gracious works to some secondary cause? When do so, we pollute God’s name (v. 11).

#### 2. **Stubbornness** (v. 6)—Israel refused to testify what God foretold would come to pass.

- Likewise, we have God’s words in the Bible. He has shown us “*new things*” we could never know before we read them in His Word.
- How many “*new things*” have you learned since you started reading the Bible? God didn’t show them to you for you to keep them to yourself. We should be telling others about them (cf. Prov. 22:17-21).

3. **Arrogance** (v. 7). “Know-it-all.” Israel claimed, “Well, I knew that!” when they really didn’t (v. 8).

## II. **God’s boundless GRACE** (vs. 9-15). God, in His grace, restrains His anger. (Rom. 5:20–“*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*”)

### A. **PATIENCE of God** (v. 9). God’s patience is an attribute of His grace. He does not abandon Israel completely.

- If God executed His righteous wrath upon Israel, they would have ceased to exist. But God, in his unfailing grace, held back His anger, lest the heathen nations think their false gods defeated the God of Israel.

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➡v. 10— The “*furnace of affliction*” may be the literal furnaces Adolph Hitler used at Auschwitz and Buchenwald during WW2 to burn over five million Jews in the Holocaust. [This also is a reference to Israel in the tribulation period.]

➡v. 10—The refining process should purify the properties of silver. But the refining furnace did not produce silver. Still God did not utterly reject Israel.

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### B. **PURPOSE of God’s grace** (v. 11). Why does God put up with the stubborn disobedience of His people? Why does God treat you and I so good when we deserve judgment? ANSWER: God restrains His wrath, not for Israel’s sake, but for His own sake.

- “*For my name’s sake... for my praise...*” (v. 9). “*For mine own sake, even for mine own sake...*” (v. 11 cf. Neh. 9:30-31; Ps. 25:7, 11; 79:9; 109:21; Jer. 14:7; Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Dan. 9:17-19; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 4:32).
1. When God spares a man [or nation] who deserves judgment, He doesn’t spare them because they are righteous. He does it for His own name’s sake and praise (Eph. 2:5-7; 1 Pet. 2:9).
  2. God could not destroy Israel because of a covenant He made with Israel (2 Sam.7:13-16; Ps. 89:3-4, 20-37; 2 Chron. 21:7; cf. Jer. 31:35-36). To break His covenant would dishonor His name.

- If I ever lost salvation, God would lose something even greater—He would lose His honor.

3. God does this so His name would not be polluted. To pollute something is to contaminate it by adding a toxic substance to it. Beware of giving God’s glory to another (42:8 cf. Acts 12:23; Ps. 115:1; Luke 2:14; 17:18)! God will not allow His glory to be contaminated by giving it to another.

➡ **Reasons why Israel should have hearkened to God’s voice:**

C. **PERSON of God**—who He is (v. 12). God doesn’t save you because of who you are—He saves you because of WHO HE IS!

➡ v. 12—Repeated in Revelation 1:11, 17; 22:13 referring to Jesus Christ.

D. **POWER of God** (v. 13— “*Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth...*” God is the Creator (not evolution). “*...when I call unto them [creation], they stand up together*” (Ps. 148). Creation obeys God (the Creator).

E. **PROPHETIC nature of God** (vs. 14-15)

- v. 14— “*The Lord hath loved him*” [“*him*” is Jacob, v. 12 cf. Rom. 9:13. Some believe “*him*” is Cyrus.].

- v. 15—“*...I have brought him...*”—God brought Israel into the promised Land. God will “*make his way prosperous.*” God will bless Israel no matter what anyone else says or does (cf. Rom. 11:25-28).

➡ v. 16—Note paragraph mark.

**III. God’s bewildering GRIEF** (vs. 16-22). Verse 18—“*O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! THEN had thy peace been as a river...*”

A. God’s **LAMENT** (vs. 18-19). God grieves that Israel could have enjoyed peace *IF* they had only obeyed. If Israel hearkened to God’s voice, their future would have been much different. But alas, “*There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked*” (v. 22).

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➡ Verse 16—Allusion to **THE TRINITY**

- (1) The **SPEAKER** (cf. v. 12). “...*from the BEGINNING; from the time that it was, THERE AM I...*” (cf. Gen. 1:1).
  - “*I have not spoken in secret...*” (cf. John 18:20).
- (2) The **SPIRIT**— “...*and now the Lord God, and his spirit...*”
- (3) The **SENT** one—There is a change of speakers. “...*there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me*” (Zech. 2:8-12).

➡ Jesus is the **sent One**—Sent by the Lord God and His Spirit.

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➡ v. 17—“*Redeemer*” (49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16).

- “...*teacheth thee to profit...*”—It is always profitable to follow God’s leading (2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 3:8 cf. Ps. 23:2-3).

- B. Israel’s **LOSS** (vs. 18-19). They lost peace (v 18); righteousness (v. 18); and future generations of children (v. 19).

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The word “*bowels*” (v. 19) refers to the insides of a thing (cf. Gen. 15:4; Num. 5:22; 2 Sam. 20:10; 2 Chron. 21:15-19; Acts 1:18; Phil. 1:8). The English word “*bowl*” comes from the same word.

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➡ v. 20—Paragraph mark.

- C. Israel’s **LIBERATION** (v. 20-21). After being held in Babylonian captivity for 70 years, Cyrus overthrows Babylon and God commands Israel to “*Go ye forth of Babylon.*” As Israel leaves Babylon, they sing, “*The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.*” [See Psalm 126].

1. Redemption and deliverance are somethings to sing about (cf. Ex. 15:1, 20-21)! Hymns: “*Redeemed,*” “*I Will Sing of My Redeemer,*” “*He Is Able To Deliver Thee.*”

1. 'Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung;  
 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;  
 'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung;  
 Our God is able to deliver thee.

CHORUS: He is able to deliver thee,  
 He is able to deliver thee;  
 Tho' by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest;  
 Our God is able to deliver thee.

2. 'Tis the grandest them in the earth or main,  
 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain;  
 'Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again:  
 Our God is able to deliver thee.

2. Verse 20 is also a prophetic reference to the future redemption of Israel from Mystery Babylon, "*Mother of Harlots*" in the Tribulation (cf. Rev. 18:2-4).

v. 21—God assures the exiles of Babylon that He will provide for them with water just as He did during Israel's exodus from Egypt.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt and wanderings in the wilderness (Exodus and Numbers) are a type of Israel's deliverance in the Tribulation (cf. Ps. 78; Micah 7:14-15).

**SUMMATION:** (v. 22—"*There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.*"). Wickedness will only bring turmoil and