

NOT A PRETTY PICTURE

Isaiah 48

Isaiah chapters 40-66 were written to the Jews when they were in exile in Babylonia. God revealed the exile would last 70 years. He also revealed that Babylonia would be conquered after which a decree would be made freeing all captives to return to their homelands. Further, God revealed that the king making this decree would pay for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. You would think these promises would bring hope and strengthen the faith of the Jewish exiles. But for the majority they did not. Here are the reasons why.

- **The majority of Jewish exiles were _____.**
- **They considered Yahweh as one god among many.**
- **They interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 B.C. as the _____ of Yahweh at the hands of the Babylonian gods.**
- **They doubted Yahweh's commitment to the covenants He had made with them.**
- **They doubted Yahweh's _____ to fulfill His promises regarding the return.**
- **Only a small remnant were faithful to Yahweh.**

To understand the spiritual condition of the Jewish exiles, please turn to Isaiah 48.

Isaiah 48:1–2 Here, Yahweh speaks to the majority of the Jewish exiles who are Jewish in name, but not in practice.

Isaiah 48:3–5 Throughout their history, from the Exodus to the Exile, they have reviled and disrespected Yahweh. If Yahweh had not revealed future events through His prophets - things like the defeat of Syria and Israel in the days of King Ahaz (Isa. 7) - the people would have given credit for the miraculous deliverance to their gods, the baals!

The Jewish exiles were as idolatrous and obstinate and rebellious as their forefathers as we see in verses 6-8.

Isaiah 48:6–8 Once again Yahweh is revealing the future; He is revealing the Return. Fulfillment of these prophecies will once again prove Yahweh is the one and only God. False gods cannot reveal future events. The idolatrous Jews should repent, throw away their idols and submit to Yahweh. But they didn't. Like their forefathers, they rejected the truth to which the evidence points. And this angers Yahweh.

Isaiah 48:9–11 Yahweh will bring the Jews home, but not because they deserve it. Yahweh will bring them home because He is a covenant keeping God. He sought to refine His people through the Babylonian Holocaust and exile, but it has failed; they are still rebellious idolators. Therefore, what He does going forward is to the praise of His character, His righteousness and His grace.

What is this new thing God is making known?

Isaiah 48:12–16 What is this new thing Yahweh is doing? Yahweh has called a man and brought him to the place where he will conquer Babylon. Actually, in chapters 44 and 45 Yahweh has revealed much more which we will study next week. In verse 16 Yahweh appeals to the Jews to listen to Him and believe what He is telling them.

But He knows their stubborn hearts. He knows they won't believe. He knows they will bring down upon themselves much suffering as did their forefathers who did not believe in the days leading to the Babylonian Holocaust.

Isaiah 48:17–19 Things could have been so different for the Jews. If they had repented and submitted to God's law under the Mosaic Covenant they would have experienced the incredible blessings of Deuteronomy 28. But they didn't and they brought down upon themselves the curses of Deuteronomy 29 including the Babylonian Holocaust and exile.

And now, here again, they are at a point of decision. Yahweh is bringing about the return to the land. Will they trust and obey Him and uproot themselves after 70 years to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple?

With indescribable grace Yahweh appeals to them once again to believe... and leave!

Isaiah 48:20–22 If they will believe and leave, Yahweh stands ready to effect a second exodus. He'll provide the water they'll need to cross the desert as He brings them home to the Promised Land.

But if they will not believe and leave, they will have no peace.

Things to Think About

- Yahweh _____ the Covenants He Makes
- Yahweh Is Gracious and Patient in the Extreme
- Fulfilled Prophecy Proves Yahweh Is the One and Only God
- Many People Simply Do Not Want to Believe
- Obedience Leads to _____

Grace News and Needs

VOM Needs for November: Bath Towels, Wash Cloths, Antiseptic Wipes.

Ramona Pregnancy Care Clinic Adopt-a-Mom: Take an ornament, bless a family.

Men's Prayer Gathering: Saturday, December 2nd, 9:00 AM.

Women's Christmas Gala: December 8th & 9th. Purchase tickets on patio.

Youth Ministry: Mexico Missions Trip Info. Meeting, Sunday, December 10th, 11:15, Youth Room.

Family Event: Cookies & Carols, Sunday evening, December 17th, 6:00 – 7:30 PM, Sanctuary.

Christmas Eve Day Schedule: Sunday services at our regularly scheduled times: 8:30 & 10:00 AM.