

## ISAIAH 48

## COME OUT FROM BABYLON!

The Lord reckoned with the Babylonians in the foregoing chapter – showing them their sins and the desolation that was coming upon them because of them. But now, in order to show that He hates sin no matter where He finds it – and also to show that He will not lightly pass over it, even in His own people – He now comes to show the house of Jacob their sins. Nevertheless, He still has mercy in store for them; in fact, the very reason why He sets their sins before them is so that they might be prepared for that mercy by their repentance and reformation.

Jehovah opens this chapter (verses 1-2) with a call upon His people. In profession, they were indeed His people; and in the light of the covenant-relationship in which they stood with God, they viewed Him as their Lord, and themselves as His holy city. But in spite of this high position and these wonderful advantages which separated them from the heathen nations, their hearts were not right with God! They had a reputation of being spiritually alive, but they were virtually dead in the sight of God. But observe the gracious expostulations of the Lord, which are contained in verses 3-8! He causes His people to see what they were, and Who He is. He takes them by the hand, so to speak; and He leads them apart into a quiet place with Himself, to consider how gracious He has been toward them, and how unworthy they have been in return. And in the close of this expostulation – in order that they might behold how greatly magnified His grace had been – He causes them to understand that there was nothing in all of their ungrateful conduct which surprised Him; for even from the womb, He knew how very treacherous they would be. Since the time when the Lord called us by His grace, how have we manifested our sense of His grace and our obedience? If the Lord had treated us in the same way as we have treated Him, where would our portion have been now? But no! Jesus has continued His love, despite all of our undeservings – and He still continues it! Surely such thoughts will cause our souls to bow down to the very dust of the earth, admiring and adoring the riches of Divine grace, which takes occasion from human misery to display loving mercy, and to constrain every child of God to exclaim, “Who is a God like unto thee?” (Mic. 7:18-20)

Beginning in verse 9, we observe how the entirety of sovereign grace and love is traced – by the Lord Himself – all the way up to its source! We must never, never forget that it is for Jehovah’s glorious name’s sake that the whole creation-work and redemption-work have been, are being, and will be accom-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Jews are reprov'd for their hypocrisy, obstinacy, and idolatry – verses 1-8
- ❖ Deliverance is promised to them, for the sake of the Lord’s name – verses 9-15
- ❖ They are shown that their deliverance would only be by His grace – verses 16-21
- ❖ Those who continued to rebel could not expect any benefit from it – verse 22

plished – even to all eternity! The Lord began by pointing out Israel’s rebellion, and then He followed up with expostulation; yet when He comes to speak of Himself and His covenant-relationship with His people, the cloud seems to be removed at once, and the brightness of His face comes forth in shining luster. In verse 12, He takes to Himself His great name: the glorious “I AM,” and “the First and the Last.” How very sweet are such views of the unchangeableness of our God! And how graciously do they serve as a preface to all the sweet promises found toward the close of this chapter! How sure these promises become, since they are given in the name of the faithful and true Promiser! Let it be our earnest study and delight to come under the teaching of this Almighty Lord, and to hearken to His commandments (verse 18); for His instructions are sure to profit us. He does not teach as a man teaches; for He teaches powerfully, His Word comes with power, and His teachings are infallible. He, the Spirit of truth, guides us into all truth; and the lessons that He teaches will abide with His people forever! Said David, “I shall never forget thy word; for by it thou hast quickened me” (Ps. 119:93).



But amidst all of these blessed promises to the Lord’s people, how solemn are the closing words of the chapter for the ungodly! There can be no peace for them, except in Jesus. Therefore, those who obstinately reject the grace of God do so at the expense of their own souls. Since they despise the blood of the cross for peace and salvation, they can find it in no other name! (Acts 4:12)

The chapter concludes with a summons to the captive Israelites to arise and go forth from Babylon. There has never been an era in history in which God’s people have not been face-to-face with a great principle of evil, embodied in a particular city, confederation, or conspiracy of darkness. It is always the same spirit under different forms – the spirit of man’s pride attempting to build a society without the Divine keystone. This great system is as strong today as it was when the massive walls of Babylon enclosed their millions and proudly dominated the world. Some people attempt to identify this system of the anti-Christ with one particular person or organization; but it is better to understand it as the element which is always working throughout human society, although it is manifested at different times and places by different persons or entities. And as the people of the living God, we are called upon to leave behind this godless Babylon of worldly human society which confronts us in every age. We are bidden to “come out and be separate.” We are told to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” We must pray for grace to come out from all fellowship with darkness, and to go forth from the captivity which has so long held us, to a freer and nobler life in the liberty of Christ Jesus!

*Lord, give us grace and strength to go forth from captivity in the Babylon of this world, and to find true spiritual liberty and freedom in our Lord Jesus. Amen.*