

“Thou Hast Heard, See All This; and Will Not Ye Declare It?”

(Isa. 48:6)

We began a new theme with Isaiah, chapter 40, where the Lord instructs His servants to “speak comfortably to Jerusalem”(40:2). The “comfortable” words they are to speak introduce the theme: “Behold your God!”, or as Isaiah states in another chapter: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isa. 52:7).

The context of these statements about God, about who God is, and that He yet lives and reigns, is relevant for the people of Isaiah’s time, as well as for our own.

Israel had consistently incorporated false worship into their worship of Jehovah. Even from the time that the temple was built by Solomon, he allowed his foreign wives to bring their “gods” to Jerusalem so that they would be comfortable in their new home (see 1 Kings 11). Jeroboam, first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, immediately set up golden calves at each end of his kingdom and called them “Jehovah” (see 1 Kings 12). Ezekiel lamented when the Lord revealed to him that priests were worshipping foreign deities in the temple itself (see Ezek. 8). Old Testament prophets continually warned against idol worship because it was a continual problem. Modern prophets have also warned us of the same pitfalls (“Zion in the Midst of Babylon,” Conference April 2006; “Them That Honor Me I will Honor”, Conference April 2001; “Lamentations of Jeremiah”, Conference October 2013, “The False Gods We Worship” *Ensign* June 1976).

The “cosmic courtroom” scene that was set in chapter 40 of Isaiah will shift it’s focus with chapter 49. To review some of the major points or principles of chapters 40-48, I have included the following subtitles and corresponding verses below. Their repetition puts a special emphasis upon their importance.

- **Ye are My Witnesses** - God calls all of His creations, together with His children, to bear witness of Him. God wants us to understand, and bear witness of, His correct attributes, characteristics, and nature.
- **To Whom Will Ye Liken God?** - This is one of the most repeated challenges in chapters 40-48. Who or what can compare to God in His omnipresent, omniscient characteristics?
- **Have I Not Told You From the Beginning?** - One of the main points of “proof” that God presents in the “cosmic courtroom” is that unlike any idol or man, He has revealed all of His works and plan from before the foundation of the world, and has repeatedly called prophets and servants to reveal those works unto man.
- **Redemption is Accomplished** - Many of the verses in these chapters speak of the Redemption as if it has already been accomplished, emphasizing the sure word of God and His Plan.
- **Covenant Promises** - I have only listed a few of the verses below that outline the many promises that come to covenant Israel.
- **The Waters of Life** - One of the covenant promises that is most often repeated in these chapters is the promise of the Lord’s provision of the Waters of Life, which are available through the redemption of the Savior.

- **For the Glory of the Lord** - The principle that all of the works of the Lord and of His covenant people are to bring glory to the Lord and to His name is repeated frequently in the “cosmic courtroom” setting. Giving glory to Him contributes to the “proof” of His supremacy, as well as contributes to the witness that He is God.

Ye are my Witnesses:

- 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
- 40:3 Prepare ye the way of the Lord
- 40:9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be to afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!
- 42:10 Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth . . .
- 43:10-11 Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was not God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior.
- 43:12 . . . therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.
- 44:8 . . . ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

To Whom Will Ye Liken God?:

- 40:12-15 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? . . . Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
- 40:18 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?
- 40:22-23 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; That bringeth the princes to nothing . . .
- 40:25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One.
- 40:26 . . . behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might . . .
- 40:28 hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

- 41:4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning?
- 41:20 . . . the hand of the Lord hath done this . . .
- 42:5 Created the heavens, spread forth the earth, giveth breath unto the people, and the spirit to them that walk therein.
- 43:13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand; I will work, and who shall let it (turn it back)?
- 44:6 Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.
- 44:8 Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.
- 44:24,26 Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself . . . that confirmeth the word of his servant.
- 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me.
- 45:6 I am the Lord, and there is none else.
- 45:12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.
- 45:18 For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.
- 45:21 . . . and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me.
- 45:22 I am God, and there is none else.
- 46:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?
- 46:9 I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.
- 48:13 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.

Have I Not Told You From the Beginning?:

- 40:21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- 40:28 Hast thou not known?

- 41:22-23 Let any one else (human, graven image) show the former things or know the latter end of them; or declare things to come.
- 41:26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none . . .
- 42:9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.
- 43:9 . . . who among them can declare this, and shew us former things?
- 44:7-8 And who, as I, shall call and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. . . . have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it?
- 45:11 Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands . .
- 45:19 I have not spoken in secret . . . I declare things that are right.
- 45:21 Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord?
- 46:10 I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.
- 48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; and I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.
- 48:5 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.
- 48:14,16 . . . who among them hath declared these things? . . . I have not spoken in secret from the beginning.

Redemption is Accomplished:

- 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.
- 43:1 But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.
- 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

- 44:22-23 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me: for I have redeemed thee. . . . for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.
- 48:20 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.

Covenant Promises:

- 40:29 Power to the faint; strength to them that have no might.
- 40:31 Renew their strength; mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.
- 40:8 Thou art the chosen seed of Abraham, my friend. I have taken thee from the ends of the earth. Thou art my servant. I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.
- 40:10 Fear not: for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
- 40:11-12 Enemies will vanish and perish.
- 40:13-14 For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.
- 40:15-16 Covenant people will become a new threshing instrument in gathering the earth.
- 42:6 I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.
- 42:16 I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.
- 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.
- 43:4-6 I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will [gather] thy seed from the [corners of the earth].
- 43:14 For your sake I have brought down Babylon.
- 43:16 [He] which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.
- 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; . . . I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

- 44:3-4 I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grasses.
- 44:8 Fear not, neither be afraid.
- 44:21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.
- 45:8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.
- 45:17 But Israel will be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.
- 45:25 In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.
- 46:3-4 Borne and carried from the womb to end of life by the Lord.
- 46:13 I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.
- 48:10 I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Waters of Life:

- 40:17-18 When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.
- 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; . . . I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.
- 43:20 . . . I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.
- 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.
- 48:21 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.

For the Glory of the Lord:

- 40:5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.
- 42:8 I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.
- 42:12 Let them glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

- 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory.
- 43:21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.
- 44:23 Sing, O ye heavens . . . for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.
- 46:13 I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.
- 48:9 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.
- 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Idols Must be Borne, But Do Not Deliver; Jehovah Bears, Carries and Delivers His People

Chapters 46-48 continue the theme that was introduced in chapter 40. The Lord mocks the fact that the Babylonian gods, Bel and Nebo, have to be carried around by their worshippers, while He carries all of his children, individually, from before they are born, through old age and death:

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth,
their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle;
your carriages were heavy laden;
they are a burden to the weary beast.

They stoop, they bow down together,
they could not deliver the burden,
but themselves are gone into captivity.

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel,
which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

And even to your old age I am he;
and even to hoar hairs will I carry you;
I have made, and I will bear;
even I will carry, and will deliver you.

To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be like? (Isa. 46:1-5)

Applying these verses to the people of Isaiah's day, who had yet to be taken captive by Babylon, the Lord is reassuring them of His care and deliverance. Even before the Babylonians conquer the city of Jerusalem, God is telling them beforehand all that will happen: it is true that they will go into captivity for having departed from their covenants, and the Babylonian kings will give Bel and Nebo honor for the victory. ("Father" and "Son" gods). But, Jehovah knows the end

from the beginning (Isa. 46:9-10), and promises that he will deliver Israel eventually from their captivity, and that he will call Cyrus, “a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country” to bring about their deliverance (Isa. 46:11).

The false gods described in these verses are “a burden to the weary beast,” as all false gods become to those who worship them. They “could not deliver,” but instead are carried into captivity along with their worshippers, as Babylon in turn is conquered. All who follow Satan are manipulated into a false sense of “freedom,” while in fact, they will follow him into captivity (2 Ne. 2:27). God calls us to become His children, in His image; worshipping idols turns us into “beasts” or animals, as we forget the purpose for which we were created.

The Savior describes Himself as having “motherly” characteristics in the preceding verses, comparing His care of us as having borne and delivered us from pregnancy, but also as continuing to “carry” us throughout our lives. This feminine symbolism is similar to His declaration that He would have gathered His children “even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings” (Matt. 23:37).

As in other passages in chapters 40-48, the Lord questions the merits of a false idol made from gold, silver or wood. He calls the men who make and worship such idols “transgressors,” and urges them to return to righteousness and remembrance of Him, the true and living God (Isa. 46:6-8, 12-13).

Babylon Revealed

Chapter 47 of Isaiah is referred to as a “taunt song” against Babylon. Similar to the Lord’s mockery of inanimate and powerless gods, and in keeping with His challenge of “to whom will ye liken God?”, the Lord now lays bare the truths about Babylon, that great kingdom that provoked such awe and admiration amongst the nations. Note that He uses a feminine symbol, the “virgin daughter of Babylon” to represent that kingdom, and contrast this to the various scriptures that refer to the “daughter(s) of Zion” (Lam. 4:22; Zeph. 3:14; Micah 4:8; Isa. 52:2; Zech 2:10; Lam. 2:18, etc.).

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon,
sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans:
for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

Take the millstones, and grind meal:
uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh,
pass over the rivers.

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered,
yea, thy shame shall be seen:
I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

As for our redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans:
for thou shalt no more be called, the lady of kingdoms (Isa. 47:1-5).

The Lord cares about His daughters, and often takes the measurement of a society by the behavior or treatment of the women who live within it. In these verses, the “daughter of Babylon” is subjected to slavery and ill-treatment; she leaves her throne, and sits in the dust. There, she is forced to perform menial labor. She is grinding corn (or meal), and in order to perform the work, her legs are drawn up, her skirts pulled up, and her nakedness exposed for all to see. Her head is uncovered; she has lost all of the trappings of her former “delicacy,” and it is implied that she may have been subject to sexual abuse or mistreatment as her nation was conquered.

The Lord does, indeed, “expose the nakedness” of Babylon, both ancient and modern, as the term “Babylon” has come to represent all that is worldly and luxurious. Through His prophets, the Lord urges His people to “flee Babylon,” and to stop being enamored with her. He exposes the false promises of Babylon’s king, who is Satan, so that the people of Zion need not fall prey to his lies.

In the phrase “I will not meet thee as a man,” the Parry brothers suggest that Jehovah will not come as the Bridegroom to Babylon, as He will to Zion. The following statement is emphasized: the only real deliverance from Babylon and all that will befall her is through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ: “our redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel.” At His appearance, the daughter of the Chaldeans (Babylonian nation) will go into darkness, and be silent, ashamed by her disgrace.

I was wroth with my people,
I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand:
thou didst show them no mercy;
upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever:
so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,
neither didst remember the latter end of it.

Therefore hear now this,
thou that art given to pleasures,
that dwells carelessly,
that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me;
I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day,
the loss of children, and widowhood:
they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries,
and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness:
thou hast said, None seeth me.
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee;
and thou hast said thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.

Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it rises:
and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off:

and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast labored from thy youth; if it be so thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

Thus shall they be unto thee with who thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee (Isa 47:6-15).

The Lord allowed His people to be taken captive and “given into the hand” of Babylon because they had “polluted [their] inheritance, in neglecting their covenants. But, Babylon treated them poorly, and took no pity upon them, and the Lord will hold Babylon accountable for that transgression against His people.

In the modern-day, we become prey to Babylon’s wiles when we disregard the covenants we have made with the Lord. Even though He allows us the agency to choose to enter within the dark world of “Babylon,” He will yet make every attempt to call us back from it, and will hold the leaders of Babylon (including Satan) accountable.

Babylon, said “I am” - a statement that pertains to the name of Jehovah, the Ever-Existent One. Babylon believed that because of her sophistication, her perceived knowledge and wisdom, that she would never fail, yet the Lord prophesied that she would fall suddenly, to the wonder of all who have bought and sold and profited from her (see Rev. 18).

Babylon will be left a widow and childless; only those who honor their covenants with Jehovah enjoy eternal marriage and eternal increase (see D&C 132-133).

The following is from the *CES Old Testament Student Manual*:

This chapter demonstrates as well as any scripture in the Old Testament the extent to which Satan has gone to achieve his eternal lie. From the beginning Lucifer said in his heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isa. 14:13-14). As Zion is the spiritual offspring of the Lord Jesus Christ, so Babylon is the evil offspring of Lucifer, who fell and became Satan, “the father of all lies” (Moses 4:4). The accompanying chart demonstrates how the Babylon of this world has sought to assume dominion over the children of men.

Babylon of the Chaldees	Babylon, or Spiritual Wickedness
Isa 47:5 Called “the lady of kingdoms”	As society is attracted to a beautiful woman, so the children of men are attracted to the glitter and power of spiritual Babylon.
Isa. 47:6 Showed no mercy to covenant Israel, but laid great burdens upon her.	Though the wickedness of Babylon may appear attractive because it is easy or pleasurable, it only enslaves its subjects.
Isa. 47:7 Boasted of being indestructible, but failed to see the judgment that would finally destroy her.	In blindness, spiritual Babylon wreaks havoc upon the world, failing to see the self-destructive nature of her acts.
Isa. 47:8 Declared her pleasures to be the end and fulfillment of life’s dream, not merely the means to it.	The Babylon of the world is enthroned triumphantly when men worship the lusts of the flesh. She becomes a counterfeit god. “They deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and . . . say unto the people . . . there is no God” (2 Ne. 28:5), and “there is no hell”; thus the devil “grasps them with his awful chains from whence there is no deliverance” (2 Ne. 28:22).
Isa. 47:10 Through Babylon’s own wicked power subjected men to her will.	The Babylon of the world, through wicked covenants and deeds, binds a man’s loyalty to the prince of darkness by the promise of secret gain (see Hel. 6:16-25).
Isa. 47:10 So great had this “lady of the kingdoms” become that her rulers gloried in the thought that they were the center of knowledge and wisdom and forced their subjects to kneel to the king, and not to God (see Dan. 3:1-6; 6:1-7).	The Babylon of the world assumes expertise in all knowledge and decrees that men should worship at her door. As men embrace this hellish doctrine, they begin to believe that they <i>know</i> where others do not, and they become self-appointed gods, even the giving and taking of life (compare the attitude of 2 Ne. 9:20). “O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. <i>And they shall perish.</i> ” (2 Ne. 9:28; emphasis added).

With a Voice of Singing Declare Ye, Tell This, Utter it Even to the End of the Earth

Isaiah 48 is the first chapter that Nephi recorded in the Book of Mormon. Think of the special context he and his people had experienced, as they had fled from Jerusalem in order to escape the conquering armies of Babylon. He introduced Isaiah 48 with this verse:

Wherefore I spake unto them, saying: Hear ye the words of the prophet,
ye who are a remnant of the house of Israel,
a branch who have been broken off;
hear ye the words of the prophet,
which were written unto all the house of Israel,
and liken them unto ourselves,
that ye may have hope as well as your brethren from whom ye have been broken off;
for after this manner hath the prophet written (1 Ne. 19:24).

Nephi states that his purpose is to bring hope to his people by recording the prophecies of Isaiah. Yet, this “introductory chapter” for his sermon begins by calling Israel to repentance:

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(or out of the waters of baptism 2 Ne. 20:1)
which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel,
but not in truth, nor in righteousness.

For they call themselves of the holy city,
and stay themselves upon the God of Israel;
the Lord of Hosts is his name.

I have declared the former things from the beginning;
and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them;
I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

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

I have even from the beginning declared it to thee;
before it came to pass I showed it thee:
lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them,
and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it?
I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things,
and thou didst not know them.

They are created now, and not from the beginning;
even before the day when thou hardest them not;

lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

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 (Isa. 48:1-8).

In the preceding verses, Israel is chastised for taking the name of the Lord in vain, for entering into baptismal (and other covenants), but not with real intent and purpose. They look to God to save and protect them in their “holy city” (vs. 2), but they do not have real faith. The first principle of the gospel is to have “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” People profess often to have faith: they have faith in themselves, they have faith in a government, they have faith in an economic foundation, but it is only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that produces real fruit.

The Lord states that He has had to send prophets and to foretell all that was going to happen, because His people were “obstinate” and would have otherwise given credit to their graven images and false idols. . . . Then, when prophecies *were* fulfilled, His people would still not lift up their voice and give credit to the Lord.

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.

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

For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it:
for how should my name be polluted?
and I will not give my glory unto another.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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:

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.

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.

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.

There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked (Isa. 48:9-22).

The Lord will keep His covenants, will continue to seek out, rescue and deliver His people because He has sworn to do so. "For [His] name's sake" He will do these things, that all may know that He is a God that cannot lie (see Enos 1:6). In order to keep those promises, His children will experience refinement and be fitted for the covenant through "the furnace of affliction." If they had freely hearkened to the commandments, and chosen to follow Him with a free heart, then they would have experienced the fruits of the covenant without chastisement.

"Come ye near unto me, hear ye this," the Lord pleads. "I have not spoken in secret," He declares. This is certainly true! As we review the principles listed in the first section of this handout - principles that are emphasized by their repetition - we see that the Lord has diligently sought to teach, and to declare, and to invite His children into a covenant relationship with Him. He has shown us, and told us Who He is, and what His work is. He has asked us to join Him as servants in His work, who will give glory to Him and to His name. In return, He has promised incomprehensible blessings upon the faithful.

Then, "[who] among them hath declared these things?" He questions, and affirms that for those who do, "the Lord hath loved [them]." Surely, by these terms, the Lord has loved Isaiah! For Isaiah gave his life to recording and declaring, demonstrating and exemplifying. May we, like Nephi, search the words of Isaiah, and then share and declare them to "our people" "that [we] might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer" (1 Ne. 19:23).