

GOD IS: TRUSTING GOD IN TURBULENT TIMES (STUDY GUIDE)

LESSON #8: DECLARE WITH A SHOUT (ISAIAH 48:1-22)

These materials have been prepared in order to guide you through the Scripture texts that we will be studying on Sunday mornings during our Fall sermon series on Isaiah 40-55. Each lesson includes an introduction, questions, a text for memorization, and a prayer of response. Consider using this Study Guide during your morning quiet time with the Lord. You can write your responses and your prayers in a journal. Regardless of how you use this guide, may God bless you as you dig deep into this fabulous book of Isaiah!

STEP 1: CONSIDER

The Jewish exile in Babylon would give God the opportunity to demonstrate both his sovereignty over history and his trustworthiness to fulfill his promises. Accordingly, these have been the major themes of Isaiah 40-48. Isaiah declares far in advance that God will do the unthinkable by causing his people to return from exile through the unforeseen rise of the Persian King Cyrus who will conquer Babylon. This will be neither the work of an idol nor the outcome of fate; rather, this will be the outworking of God's purpose for God's glory.

Chapter 48 can be reasonably divided into two major parts, which follow these two major themes:

- 1) God's design that the foretelling of deliverance would bear witness to his sovereignty (48:1-11)
- 2) God's desire that his people (and all people) would trust that he is the one who delivers (48:12-22)

The chapter closes with unambiguous certainty that Jews will be delivered from exile (48:20a). In their return, they are to declare to a watching world that the Lord is sovereign and that he can be trusted (48:20b). Just as God delivered his people from Egypt (cf. Exodus 17:6), so God will deliver his people from Babylon (48:21).

STEP 2: READ

Read Isaiah 48:1-22.

STEP 3: REFLECT

1. Read carefully 48:3-5. Why did God announce to the Jews what he intended to do before it came to pass? (There are at least two reasons given – one in verse 4, one in verse 5.)

Verse 4 _____

Verse 5 _____

2. Read 48:6-8. Why is it important that God's work of delivering the Jews from exile be 'unpredictable'? How can our own past experiences limit our ability to trust God during precarious times?

3. What is God's ultimate purpose in delivering the Jews (48:9-11)? How is this not selfish of him?

4. What important truth about God's character do you see in Isaiah 48:16?

5. How do you personally experience the truths of 48:17-18?

6. Following 48:20-21, list three characteristics of how the Jews are to depart from Babylonian exile:

1-

2-

3-

What parallels do you see with how Christians ought to depart from bondage to sin?

STEP 4: MEMORIZE

Isaiah 48:17

STEP 5: PRAY

God, inspire my heart to give you praise. May the circumstances of my relationship with you be a bold testimony to a watching world that you are both sovereign and trustworthy. I give thanks to you that in the fulfillment of your good purposes I find my greatest happiness and joy. Woo my heart away from trusting in counterfeits and substitutes. In Jesus name, Amen.