

Isaiah 48 — “Listen to Me... I Am the First and I Am the Last”

Wearing the Name without Walking in the Ways (Isaiah 48:1–2)

*“Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the name of Israel,
And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth or in righteousness;
For they call themselves after the holy city,
And lean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts is His name.”* (Isaiah 48:1–2, NKJV)

They carry God’s name (“Israel” = *governed by God*) but do not live governed by God. Title without trust, label without loyalty.

Personal application: Where am I “called by the name” but not walking in truth—public devotion, private compromise? Invite the Lord to align your life with your lips.

God Foretells to Guard the Glory (Isaiah 48:3–8)

*“I have declared the former things from the beginning... suddenly I did them, and they came to pass...
Because I knew that you were obstinate,
And your neck was an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze.”* (Isaiah 48:3–4, NKJV)

God revealed future events ahead of time so His people could not credit idols afterward:

“Even from the beginning I have declared it to you... lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them.’”
(Isaiah 48:5, NKJV)

Balanced truth: God’s sovereign foretelling and fulfilling does not make our hearts soft; we must listen. He speaks clearly; we must respond humbly.

Personal application: When God answers prayer or fulfills His Word, do I explain it away—or worship?

Refining in the Furnace of Affliction (Isaiah 48:9–11)

*“For My name’s sake I will defer My anger...
Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it...
And I will not give My glory to another.”* (Isaiah 48:9–11, NKJV)

God restrains judgment and uses affliction to refine a stubborn people—not to crush them, but to purify them and protect His glory.

Personal application: Are you in heat right now? Instead of asking “*Why me?*” ask “*What in me needs refining?*” Surrender turns pain into purpose.

“I Am the First and I Am the Last” (Isaiah 48:12–16)

*“Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called:
I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last.
Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them, they stand up together.”* (Isaiah 48:12–13, NKJV)

Only the Creator can speak this way. He summons His people to assemble and hear His unhidden counsel (Isaiah 48:14–15). Then this striking line:

*“...From the time that it was, I was there.
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit
Have sent Me.”* (Isaiah 48:16, NKJV)

The voice closely matches the Servant-Redeemer thread across Isaiah—God’s purpose centered in the One He sends. God’s plan is not vague fate; it is personal and redemptive.

Personal application: Let the sheer greatness of God re-size your problems. Begin prayer not with your need, but with who He is.

If Only You Had Listened (Isaiah 48:17–19)

*“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
‘I am the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.
Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’”* (Isaiah 48:17–18, NKJV)

God teaches and leads—and our real responsibility is to heed. Disobedience costs peace; obedience multiplies peace.

Personal application: Where has neglect of God’s Word been stealing your peace? Choose one command to obey today—promptly and gladly.

Come Out Singing—The LORD Has Redeemed (Isaiah 48:20–22)

*“Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this...
Say, ‘The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!’
...‘There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.’”* (Isaiah 48:20, 22, NKJV)

God calls for a real exit (from Babylon) and a public witness (“The LORD has redeemed”). But He warns: persistent rebellion forfeits peace.

Personal application: What “Babylon” (compromise, bitterness, hidden habit) do you need to leave behind? Plan your exit—today.

The Salvation Invitation — Peace Like a River

Isaiah 48 reveals a God who foretells, refines, redeems, and leads—and a people who must listen and leave Babylon. In Jesus Christ—the Redeemer foretold—God has come near. He bore our sins at the cross and rose again, bringing peace with God and the Spirit who leads us in new life.

How to respond:

1. Turn from sin and substitutes—leave your “Babylon.”
2. Trust Jesus Christ—crucified and risen—for the forgiveness of sins.
3. Take His yoke—learn from Him and follow His commands.

A simple prayer of faith:

“Lord Jesus, I hear Your call. I turn from my sins and my ‘Babylon,’ and I trust You as my Redeemer. Forgive me, cleanse me, and lead me by Your Spirit. Make my peace like a river as I follow You. Amen.”

A Challenge for Believers — Live What You Hear

1. Morning “Listen”: Begin each day with Isaiah 48:17. Ask, “*Lord, teach me to profit; lead me in the way I should go.*” Obey the first nudge.
2. Leave Babylon: Identify one compromise to forsake. Replace it with a concrete practice (Scripture at a set time, confession, accountability, or restitution).
3. Peace Practice: When anxiety rises, speak Isaiah 48:18 aloud and choose obedience in one small act—make the call, forgive, tell the truth.
4. Public Praise: Tell one person, “*The LORD has redeemed me,*” and share a two-minute story of His recent faithfulness.
5. Remember & Rejoice: Keep a short list of answered prayers this week. Give God the glory He guarded from idols (Isaiah 48:11).

“Listen to Me... I am the First, I am also the Last.” (Isaiah 48:12, NKJV)

Let His greatness steady your steps—and let His voice shape your week.