



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"It's STILL a Trust Issue"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): **Is 48:1-11**; *Is. 7:9; 30:15, 18-19; 46:8; 47:1-15; Gen 3:16-17; Ex 34:6-7; Hos 11*

Isaiah 48 brings us to an important turning point in the prophet's message. The Lord has already declared that Babylon will fall and that exile will not last forever. He has promised restoration and comfort for His people. Yet even as these promises unfold, the deeper issue has never really changed. The central question throughout Isaiah has always been the same: **Will God's people trust Him?**

Again and again the Lord has proven Himself faithful. He has spoken beforehand and then acted in fulfillment of His word. Yet the struggle for His people has rarely been whether God would act—it has been whether they would trust Him when the details of His plan did not match their expectations. God often reveals what He will do, but not always how or when He will do it. Isaiah reminds us that true faith is not grounded in understanding every detail of God's plan, but in trusting the character of the One who speaks. The issue has always been—and still is—a matter of trust.

1. TRUST BEGINS WITH TRULY HEARING GOD—NOT MERELY IDENTIFYING WITH HIM

Isaiah 48 begins with a command that echoes throughout the Scriptures: *"Hear this, house of Jacob..."* (Is. 48:1). The Hebrew word **shema** carries more meaning than simple listening. It means to hear in such a way that one responds—hearing that leads to obedience. The Lord addresses those who carry many spiritual titles: the house of Jacob, those called by the name of Israel, those who came from the waters of Judah, those who swear by the name of Adonai and invoke the God of Israel.

These titles point to a people with a rich spiritual heritage. They exist because of what God did for their ancestors. They publicly identify with Him and speak His name; they *"confess the God of Israel."* Yet the Lord exposes a painful contradiction: *"but not in truth or righteousness."* (Is. 48:1). The problem is not the language of faith but the lack of alignment between their words and their lives. They claim God's name but fail to reflect His character. This is why the Lord had already urged them: *"Remember this... recall it to mind, you transgressors."* (Is. 46:8). True trust begins with a heart that is willing to return to the Lord and respond to what He says.

2. WHATEVER WE TRUST INSTEAD OF THE LORD EVENTUALLY BECOMES OUR BONDAGE

Throughout Isaiah, the Lord exposes the futility of trusting in anything other than Him. When King Ahaz faced the crisis of the alliance between Aram and Ephraim, the Lord reassured him that these enemies were temporary and powerless. Yet Ahaz chose to trust the strength of Assyria instead. The Lord warned him plainly: *"If you do not trust, you will not stand."* (Is. 7:9).

This pattern repeated again and again. In Isaiah 13–23, the Lord demonstrates the unreliability of every nation that Judah might look to for help. In Isaiah 30, the people once again turn to Egypt and military strength rather than trusting the Lord. God reminds them: *"By repentance and rest you are saved; in quietness and trust is your strength—but you were not willing."* (Is. 30:15). Yet even then, the Lord's heart remains gracious: *"Therefore Adonai is longing to be gracious to you... Blessed are all who wait for Him."* (Is. 30:18). The tragic irony is that when we trust something other than the Lord for deliverance, the very thing we trust eventually becomes the source of our trouble.

3. GOD PROVES HIS TRUSTWORTHINESS BY SPEAKING BEFOREHAND AND REFINING HIS PEOPLE.

In Isaiah 48, the Lord reminds His people that He has consistently revealed His plans in advance: *"I foretold the former things long ago... Suddenly I acted, so they came about."* (Is. 48:3). God

speaks beforehand so that when events unfold, His people can recognize His hand at work. The purpose of prophecy is not merely prediction; it is to strengthen trust in the One who governs history.

The Lord explains why He operates this way: *“For I know that you are obstinate... your neck is iron sinew and your forehead bronze.”* (Is. 48:4). Human stubbornness resists submission and prefers to claim credit for what God has done. If the Lord had not spoken in advance, His people might say that their own effort, wisdom, or resources brought deliverance. Instead, God declares His purposes clearly so that His people will know that He alone is responsible. Even the exile itself becomes part of this refining process: *“Behold, I have refined you... I tested you in the furnace of affliction.”* (Is. 48:10). Yet this discipline does not arise from rejection. It arises from God’s commitment to His own character and promises: *“For My own sake, for My own sake, I act... I will not give My glory to another.”* (Is. 48:11).

CONCLUSION:

Isaiah 48 exposes the tension between religious identity and genuine trust. It is possible to speak God’s name, claim spiritual heritage, and identify with His people while still resisting His word. The Lord therefore calls His people to honest reflection. If they will truly listen—if they will *shema*—they will recognize His faithfulness throughout their history and respond with renewed trust. Yet Isaiah also reminds us that our trust in the Lord cannot depend on the details of His plan. In Isaiah’s day, God declared that deliverance would come through an unexpected instrument—Cyrus. The people might easily have questioned the method, the timing, or the circumstances. But the issue was never the details. The issue was whether they would trust the Lord Himself.

The same question remains for every generation. Our confidence is not meant to rise or fall with how clearly we understand what God is doing, but with how well we know **who He is**. Again and again the Lord proves His character—faithful, patient, gracious, and sovereign. He speaks, and then He acts. He refines, but He does not abandon. Therefore trust is not tied to the clarity of the moment but to the constancy of His character. **The question is not whether we understand the details of God’s plan, but whether we will trust the God whose faithfulness has already been proven.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you most naturally “lean” when pressure hits—God, or something you can control? What usually reveals that?
2. Isaiah 48 confronts people who carry God’s name “but not in truth or righteousness” (Is. 48:1). What might that look like in everyday life?
3. Can you identify a time when something you trusted besides the Lord eventually became a source of stress, bondage, or fear? What did God show you through that?
4. Why do you think God often speaks ahead of time and then acts (Is. 48:3–5)? What does that pattern produce in us if we receive it rightly?
5. What would “repentance and rest” (Is. 30:15) look like for you this week in one specific decision, relationship, or area of anxiety?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, we hear Your word today, and we confess that so often it is still a trust issue. We’ve lifted up Your name, but we haven’t always reflected Your character. We’ve leaned on You when it was convenient, and then leaned on our own understanding when it felt urgent. Forgive us for our iron necks and bronze foreheads. Forgive us for trusting in what we can control, and for the pride that resists surrender. Lord, teach us to *Shema*—to hear and respond, to hear and obey. Let Your kindness lead us to repentance, and let Your Spirit bring us into true rest. Refine us in the furnace without destroying us, and make our lives a true witness to Your glory. For Your own sake, for Your own sake, You act—so we come to You not to prove ourselves, but to trust You.

B’Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.