



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

“Wait... WHO Said That?”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Is 48:12-16; Is. 7:9; 30:15; Luke 3:21-22

LISTENING FOR THE VOICE OF THE SENT ONE. Throughout Isaiah’s message to Israel in exile, one question continues to surface: **Will you trust the LORD?** God had already declared that Babylon’s power would not last forever and that He would raise up an unexpected deliverer—*Koresh* (Cyrus)—to open the way for His people to return. Again and again, the Lord spoke in advance so that when events unfolded His people would recognize His hand and respond in trust. Yet the struggle was never about *simply knowing* what God had said; it was about **responding** to what He is saying. That is why the repeated call throughout Isaiah 48 is “**Shema**”—**hear, listen, respond**. The Lord is not merely asking for attention, but for a trust that is willing to follow Him when He speaks.

As the chapter moves toward verses 12–16, the Lord begins to reveal something His people had not fully grasped before. He tells them new things in advance so that when they happen they will recognize His work. But then the passage takes an unexpected turn. The voice speaking claims to have been there **from the beginning**, and yet says that He has been sent by ADONAI **with His Ruach**. Suddenly the reader pauses and asks an important question: **Wait... WHO said that?** In the middle of God’s promise of deliverance, Isaiah gives us a glimpse—within the Hebrew Scriptures themselves—of the profound depth of God’s *echad* – a Oneness that that is not a singularity, but a “unity.”

1. REMEMBER WHO IS CALLING YOU. (Is. 48:12)

The Lord begins with a renewed call to listen: “*Listen to Me, Jacob, Israel whom I called: I am He; I am the first, I am also the last.*” (Is. 48:12). This statement reminds Israel of something fundamental—**their identity begins with God’s calling**. They had called themselves the people of God, but their lives had not always reflected that identity. The Lord reminds them that He Himself is the One who called them into being.

The emphasis in the Hebrew is striking – The LORD declares: *Ani Hu* (אֲנִי־הוּא) **I Myself am He. ... Ani Rishon** (אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן)... **I Myself am the first.** *Af Ani Acharon.* (אַף אֲנִי אַחֲרֹן,) **Indeed/Certainly, I Myself am the last.**” The story of Israel does not begin with their failures, their exile, or even their repentance—it begins with the LORD. Remembering whose we are reshapes how we live. If Israel would remember the One who called them, they might finally live in alignment with that calling. Identity, when rightly understood, becomes the foundation for obedience.

2. REMEMBER WHO HOLDS THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER (Is. 48:13–15)

The Lord then draws attention to His authority as Creator: “*Surely My hand founded the earth, My right hand spread out the heavens. When I call to them, they stand together.*” (Is. 48:13). The imagery is remarkable. The heavens themselves are described as something God spread out with a handbreadth. The same God who calls the stars by name now calls His people to listen.

Against this backdrop, the Lord issues a challenge: *“Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them foretold these things?”* (Is. 48:14). None of the idols of the nations could predict the future or shape history. Yet the Lord had spoken in advance about the coming deliverer who would act against Babylon. Scholars often see the reference to the one whom *“ADONAI loves”* as pointing to Cyrus, whom the LORD would use to defeat Babylon and release His people. But the language stretches beyond Cyrus alone. Like a Russian nesting doll that has layer upon layer of similarity, but with ever larger impact, the particular historical deliverance points to something much larger—God’s ongoing plan to confront every “Babylon,” every system that exalts itself against Him.

The Lord emphasizes His sovereign initiative: *“I, I have spoken; yes, I called him. I will bring him, so his way will succeed.”* (Is. 48:15). The doubled pronoun—*Ani, Ani*—underscores that this is entirely God’s doing. The deliverance of His people does not depend on human ingenuity or political strategy. The Lord Himself raises up the deliverer, and He ensures that His purposes will succeed.

3. LISTEN CAREFULLY—THE SERVANT IS SPEAKING. (Is. 48:16)

Then comes the moment that stops us in our tracks. The voice says: *“Draw near to Me, hear this: Since the beginning I have not spoken in secret. From the time it existed, I was there. So now ADONAI Elohim has sent Me, and His Ruach.”* (Is. 48:16).

At first glance, it appears that the LORD Himself is speaking. But as the verse unfolds, the One speaking declares that **He has been sent by ADONAI together with His Spirit**. Suddenly the identity of the speaker becomes clear. This is not merely the voice of the prophet, nor can it be Cyrus. The one speaking claims to have been present from the beginning and now speaks as the One sent by the Lord with His Spirit.

Here Isaiah gives a glimpse of something astonishing. The Servant of the LORD—the One who will be revealed more fully in Isaiah 49, 50, and 52–53—steps forward into the conversation. **The voice that calls us to draw near is the voice of the Servant who has been there from the beginning and who has now been sent into the world.** For believers, this passage echoes the scene of Yeshua’s immersion, when the Father spoke from heaven and the Spirit descended upon the Son (Luke 3:21–22). The deliverance from Babylon was a historical reality, but it ultimately pointed beyond itself—to the greater deliverance that would come through the Servant whom God loves.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 48:12–16 brings us to a moment that is meant to slow us down. The Lord has been calling His people to *Shema*—to hear **and respond**—not merely because He wants their attention, but because He is revealing something they could not have discovered on their own. He reminds them that He is the First and the Last, the Creator whose hand founded the earth and whose right hand spread out the heavens (Is. 48:12–13). He emphasizes that He has spoken openly, not in secret, and that His words are verifiable and trustworthy (Is. 48:16).

Then the voice shifts in a way that forces the honest reader to pause: the One speaking says He was there “from the beginning,” and yet He also says, *“So now ADONAI Elohim has sent Me, and*

His Ruach.” (Is. 48:16). The text itself invites the question, “Wait—who said that?”—and it does so on purpose.

For Jewish readers who may struggle with the trusting in Yeshua as Messiah because you struggle with idea of God’s tri-unity—how the One God can be revealed as Father, Son, and Spirit—this passage offers a glimpse from within the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. Isaiah is not asking us to abandon the Shema; he is pressing us to consider the depth of what God has already shown about His own nature. The speaker is distinct from ADONAI *Elohim* and yet speaks with the language of eternity and Divine presence—“from the time it existed, I was there”—and then pairs that sending **with** His Spirit - His *Ruach* (Is. 48:16). Without forcing later categories onto the text, we can still say: here, in the Tanakh, we are allowed to see the oneness – the *echad* (a complex unity, not a singularity)– of ADONAI expressed with a complexity that is not contradiction, but mystery. And the invitation is gentle but real: draw near, listen carefully, and let the God of Israel show you who He is.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does God repeatedly call Israel to “**Shema**” (**listen and respond**) throughout Isaiah 48?
2. How does remembering that God is “**the first and the last**” shape the way we respond to difficult circumstances?
3. In what ways does Isaiah 48 contrast the power of God with the helplessness of idols?
4. Why is the identity of the speaker in Isaiah 48:16 so surprising, and what does it reveal about the Servant of the LORD?
5. What might it look like in your life today to **draw near and truly listen** to what God is saying?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI Eloheynu, ADONAI our God, Lord God of Israel, You are the First and the Last, the One whose hand founded the earth and stretched out the heavens. You have spoken clearly throughout history, calling Your people to trust You and walk in Your ways. Forgive us for the times when we have heard Your voice but failed to respond with obedience. Teach us to listen with hearts that are ready to act. Help us recognize the voice of the Servant You have sent, the One who reveals Your heart and brings Your redemption. Draw us near to You so that we may walk in the path that leads to life, peace, and righteousness. May we trust You not only in word but in truth and in the way we live.

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