

# A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

*The Book of Isaiah*

Isaiah 46—48

## Verse to Remember

*For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.*

Isaiah 48:11

## Day 1 — Read Isaiah 46.

1. The gods of Babylon, Bel and Nebo, cannot compare to God (Is. 46:5). How are false gods unlike the true God? (Is. 46:1–2, 6–7)

2. Since God is — has always been and will always be — what is he able to do? Is. 46:3b–4 (📖\* Ps. 28:8–9)

Is. 46:10, 11b (📖 Num. 23:19)

3. How does God address his people? (Is. 46:8, 12)

Given God's evaluation, what hope is there for his people? (Is. 46:10, 13; 📖 Jer. 23:5–6; Rom. 3:21–24)

"Chapter 46 is about the **idols of Babylon**, and chapter 47 is about the **destruction of Babylon**. Idolatry and destruction go together"<sup>1</sup> - the one necessarily leads to the other.

## Day 2 — Read Isaiah 47.

1. What does Babylon believe about herself? (Is. 47:7–8, 10)

What is Babylon brazenly claiming in saying these things? (Consider Is. 45:5a and Is. 46:9.)

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2. What punishment has God decreed for this proud “queen of kingdoms” (47:5)? (Is. 47:1–3, 5, 9, 11)

3. In what ways will Babylon try to prevent the disaster that God has ordained? (Is. 47:11–13)

What will be the fate of the Babylonians and those they turn to? (Is. 47:14–15)

4. In the midst of the destruction brought about by God’s judgment in Babylon, what hope does Isaiah proclaim to the Jewish exiles? (Is. 47:4)

**Babylon** was a specific ancient empire that was destroyed for its idolatry, but “Babylon” also represents all individuals, cultures, and nations that will be destroyed for not worshipping the one true God. Read about the ultimate fall of Babylon in Revelation 18.

### Day 3 — Read Isaiah 48:1–11.

1. List the ways that God’s people are identified in verses 1–2.

But what does the phrase “but not in truth or righteousness” (Is. 48:1) reveal about them?

2. Why did God tell his people about the fall of Babylon and the return of the exiles before these events took place? (Is. 48:4–7)

3. God knows his people are “treacherous” and are “rebel[s] from birth” (48:8). Why does he continue to care for this stubborn nation? (Is. 48:9–11)

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4. God knows not only Israel's treachery against him, but yours as well. As you contemplate your own rebellion against God's faithfulness, what have you learned from your study of Isaiah that gives you hope?

#### **Day 4 — Read Isaiah 48:12–16.**

1. God calls his people to listen. What important truth does he remind them of? (Is. 48:12; 📖 Deut. 32:39; Is. 41:4)
2. How is God's power shown in creation? (Is. 48:13)
3. Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, is God's "chosen ally" (Is. 48:14) who will rule 150 years after this prophecy. Why will he successfully overcome Babylon? (Is. 48:15)
4. Skim through Isaiah 48:1–16. Why do you think Israel should listen to the Lord?

#### **Day 5 — Read Isaiah 48:17–22.**

1. What does 48:17 tell us about God's heart for his people?
2. What blessings did this generation of Israelites miss out on because they did not listen and obey? (Is. 48:18–19)

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3. Why does God tell his people to flee Babylon (48:20)? (Jer. 51:6, 45)
  
4. This is not the first time God's people have had to flee captivity in a foreign nation.
  - a. How did God provide for their ancestors after their flight from Egypt? (Is. 48:21; Exod. 17:1–6)
  
  - b. How is this reminder meant to strengthen them as they face a long journey back to their land?

5. As you consider God's heart for his people and his faithfulness to them, how are you encouraged?

\*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

<sup>1</sup> Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 305-306.