

ISAIAH 48

Lesson 38: "Why Does God Put Up with Us? For His Glory and Our Benefit"¹

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MAIN IDEA

God refines his people for his glory



Refining is the process of removing impurities. When God's people are refined, they bring glory to God. God's glory encompasses the greatness, beauty, and perfection of all that he is.

SUMMARY OUTLINE

I. The Sovereign God Predicts and Works History to Win His Stubborn People (48:1-8).

- A. The LORD has shown Israel His power to declare the future in predictive prophecy. He did this because he knew that they were obstinate, knowing Israel's love of idolatry, he gave them irrefutable evidence.
- B. This means that Judah was without excuse. They remained stubborn. They knew the greatness and power of God, yet they still lived with only a religious image, without a spiritual reality. They were full of impurities.

II. The Patient God Refines His People for His Glory and Our Benefit (48:9-11).

- A. For his name's sake, God will defer his anger. Knowing how deeply sinful His people are, why would the LORD ever show mercy to his people? He does it for his name's sake. It isn't because Israel deserves mercy; indeed, mercy can never be deserved. God gives it to glorify Himself and to further his eternal purpose.
- B. God has *refined* his people in the furnace of affliction. For God's own sake he does it. Why has a disobedient Israel repeatedly experienced refining fires from the LORD? Again, it is for the sake and honor and glory of the LORD.

III. The Eternal God Will Bring Cyrus to Achieve His Purpose (48:12-16a).

- A. "The Lord's chosen" (48:14 King Cyrus) will achieve his purpose of bringing honor and glory to himself.

¹ Outline adapted from "Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Isaiah," by Andrew Davis.

- B. So, just as much as it is the love of the Lord for his people "will carry out his purpose against Babylon" (48:14)– so it is the love of the LORD that allows the *refining* fires to purify his people.

IV. The Loving God Will Send Another to Redeem His People (48:16b-22).

- A. "And now" (v. 16b) another speaker mysteriously enters the prophecy. This verse has a number of features that have mystified commentators, who have been puzzled particularly by its final couplet.
- B. Conservative commentators have argued that the new speaker introduced here (or in the whole verse) is in fact the Suffering Servant who will be introduced in the next chapter. Perhaps he is introduced here because Cyrus' work is in fact simply a harbinger of the much greater deliverance he would bring to God's people."

APPLICATION: WHEN GOD REFINES YOU

1. Recognize that God is in control of the _____ of your refining.
2. Recognize that refining is designed to _____ that God sees in your life.
3. Rejoice in that it is an opportunity for God to demonstrate his power to _____ through the entire refining process.
4. Have faith that by His grace and enabling power of the Holy Spirit, you will not only be more refined but will bring _____

