

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 48:6-11, STUBBORN ISRAEL, PART 2

Isaiah 48:6–8 ⁶“You have heard; look [הִזְדֵּה] at all this. And you, will you not declare it? I proclaim to you new [הַדְּשִׁי] things from this time, Even hidden [נִצְרָה] things which you have not known. ⁷“They are created [בְּרָא] now and not long ago; And before today you have not heard them, So that you will not say, ‘Behold, I knew them.’ ⁸“You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; And you have been called [קָרָא] a rebel [פְּשִׁעַן] from birth [בְּטֶוֶן].

Not only has God declared former things, but He is going to declare new things which have not been known even by the Israelites. Isaiah 46:9 relates the former things to that which is “long past;” therefore, the meaning of new things should not be restricted to the soon to occur Babylonian invasion and conquest of Judah. The revelation of new things is a prelude to the deliverance of Israel (Is. 48:12-22); therefore, we may conclude that, just as the former things relate to Israel's entire history to the time of Isaiah's prophecy, the new things relate to Israel's history in the future, near-term and long-term. I do not think this needs to be restricted to the prophet Isaiah's book. Prophecy did not start with Isaiah and it did not end with him either. God used not only him, but other prophets to record Israel's future; therefore, this must include all the inspired Scripture dealing with Israel that was yet to be recorded up to and including the book of Revelation. “[T]he ‘new things’ will embrace the redemption of Israel with its attendant circumstances, and that not merely on its outward side, but on its spiritual side as well; also the glorification of the redeemed people in the midst of a world of nations converted to the God of Israel, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth; in short, the New Testament aeon ...” [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:462]. Keil and Delitzsch are replacement theologians who do not recognize a literal Kingdom. They believe that the Second Coming ends history and begins eternity, but that is beside the point here. Here, they do recognize that the “new things” refer to Israel's history going forward from the time Isaiah was writing this prophecy.

“He also called them hidden things, not only because they were beyond the ken of human sagacity, but because prefigured in them is the last-day fall of Babylon, representing the satanic world system, and the final restoration of Israel for Kingdom blessing by Cyrus's antitype, Christ at His second advent. Those new things were guarded secrets of which Israel had never heard” [Merrill F. Unger, “Isaiah” in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1274].

Just as Israel had no excuse for ignorance concerning God's revelation of Israel's past history and how it affected them in Isaiah's time, they will have no excuse for ignorance concerning Israel's future leading up to the time when the various prophecies come to pass over the course of Israel's history that is still in the future even now.

Israel's idols were worthless. They never predicted past events that have been fulfilled, and they cannot predict future events that have yet to be fulfilled. God has done that in

the past, and He will continue to do it in the future, or at least He did that until the canon of Scripture was completed. The Israelites had heard what God had spoken in the past, and they had seen the fulfillment of some His prophecies. Therefore, they had every reason to believe that His new prophecies would also be fulfilled.

They also needed to heed the truths concerning their worthless idolatry which has replaced their reliance on the truth that comes from the God of Israel alone which is a revelation of reality, the only true revelation of reality. If they honestly examine the issue, they will be able to do nothing less than declare it. That is true even if they really do not want to do God's will in the matter. Remember, the context here is prior to the Babylonian invasion of Judah and the nation is in a state of idolatrous rebellion.

Heard is in the perfect verb form, meaning they have heard these things from God in the past. It has been done; they have heard, and because they have heard, they are to obediently respond to what they have heard. Therefore, they are to look at all of this. Look is in an imperative verb form, a command. Look, *הִנֵּה*, means to see or to perceive. The sense here is one of looking for, searching for, or selecting. This is commanded to be a deliberate, purposeful act on the part of the Israelites to understand these things as the basis for being able to declare them.

Once they have looked into these things, they are to declare them. Declare is in a causative verb form; therefore, the sense of this question is to look at, to take an honest look at, what God has predicted and fulfilled and that will cause them to declare those revealed truths. "God asks why they would not 'admit them' ... which gives the sense of confessing, acknowledging, or conceding that God was right in what he said. This also plays on the thought that the one who believes and knows what God has predicted would naturally want to announce it to others so that they will hear and believe" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 319]. Of course, Israel was created to declare these things to the world as God's created "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6), but it didn't work out that way due to Israel's rebellion.

It is ironic to realize that Israel's existence is the fulfillment of prophecy beginning with Abraham. Their presence in the world as a nation is a declaration of God's power, authority, and truthfulness to the world, but Israel as a nation has refused to tell the world what she knows as the result of that revelation even though she has been commanded to do so. "The nation's very existence is a fulfillment of the words of the prophets, from Abraham to the present. They must declare what they know to be true. The root *ngd*, *declare*, is often associated with a prophet, a messenger, or a watchman, those who speak by commission, who are responsible to report what they know; Israel does not have the option of keeping silent about what it has perceived.... [T]he Hebrews had no option but to announce the plain truth. They could not deny it. Their God knew the future and had the power to bring to pass what he had said" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 267].

New, *שֵׁנִי*, means new or fresh which is a reference to something not previously known. In this case, that which is new are things heretofore unknown, i.e., prophecy concerning Israel. It "is being used in the sense of (a) someone or something previously unknown, and

(b) especially the state of being new and different. In nearly all occurrences 'new' and 'old' are correlative and contrary ideas" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed. s.v. "חדש," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:32]. This is going to begin immediately. "From this time" (NASB) is literally translated "from now on." This is in contrast with the former things of verse 3.

The new things that are being proclaimed are new things that have been hidden but are now going to be revealed. These things are not things that any Israelite could discover for himself apart from divine revelation. No one can discover what God desires to withhold, and God never intended for man to know everything. The hidden things are God's business, and what God wants man to know concerning things that are hidden, God reveals to man, and the timing and the content of that hidden revelation is up to Him.

Deuteronomy 29:29 ²⁹"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

Oswalt made a very relevant point about the primary purpose of prophecy. "An important point here is the insight that this verse [Is. 48:7] gives as to the purpose of predictive prophecy. It is given not so we can know the future, but as confirmatory evidence that we can and should trust God" John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 268]. I wouldn't confine the entire purpose of prophecy to this issue, but it is a characteristic of God's prophetic revelations which is truth that is being revealed here in Isaiah.

In His dealing with the Israelites, God was giving them prophetic revelation that served to confirm His identity as the one, the only, true God. He gave them enough information that they should have been relying on Him for fulfillment without thinking they were independently figuring these things out on their own and then bringing them to pass. Only God can do that. God controls Israel's history; the Israelites do not control Israel's history. This verse is contrasting Israel's lack of knowledge about the future, with the omniscient God who knows the thoughts and intentions of their hearts.

Hidden, נָצַר, means to keep watch over, to protect, to keep from, to hide, or to preserve, referring to something mysterious conceived of as something hidden, and to guarding in order to keep something secret. The sense is that something is being spared and kept safe pertaining to being free from danger as an extension of keeping a valuable hidden. The point is that there are hidden things, but some of those things God desired to make known to Israel through His prophets.

The problem for Israel is that despite the revelation they had, they didn't always believe it or obey it, and they certainly did not carry God's messages to the nations. The question is, will they declare the new things as commanded? Due to the time that has elapsed between then and now, we know the answer to that question is "no." They did not change much after the return from Babylon. They may have dropped the overt idolatry, but they replaced it with more covert forms of idolatry, and their spiritual rebellion continued unabated. This situation is not going to finally change until the Lord returns to rescue the nation from annihilation at the hands of antichrist.

Idolatry is about controlling one's environment; it attempts to manipulate and control one's world. That is the only way that idolatry works; it is a one trick pony—and the pony is lifeless to boot! God cannot be controlled; He is apart from His creation. Just because He did things one way in the past, does not mean that He must continue to do the same things in the same way in the future. "Thus, Isaiah says, learn the principle being taught by fulfilled prophecy: God is in charge and he is dependable. But do not expect to box him into some system that you have devised by observing him in the past; that is for idols. This is not to say that new ways of working invalidate the old ways. Rather, God's creativity forces us to focus on the principles instead of on the details" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 267].

In terms of theology and application, this is a serious problem within Pentecostal and Charismatic theological systems. They tend to believe that whatever God did in the past must continue on into the present in the same way and for the same reasons regardless of the original context which reveals the people involved and the specific situation in which the activity occurred. That is why context is so very important in understanding what any Scripture means in the situation in which it is presented. This erroneous method of looking at how God works leads to a massive amount of false doctrine being propagated within those theological systems particularly concerning the doctrines of the sign gifts, and signs, miracles, and wonders. They frequently rely on the Scripture that says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), but that is a Scripture of affirmation concerning the attributes of God. It is not about how He reacts in any particular point in time in history. He deals with people and nations in different ways at different times according to His plan for history. That is the basis for dispensational theology, and dispensationalists intrinsically understand that situation, but other systems of theology are unable to account for God's actions in varying ways in varying situations.

The fact that these new things are something that begins now and not long ago, or in former times as verse 3 put it, is repeated. There is an emphasis here on the fact that these new things were beginning now, and they were things that were not heard before. The fact that they are newly created things does not mean that they were not thought of before. He who knows the end from the beginning (Is. 46:10) and has a plan for history knows the future. It is His decision whether or not what He knows will be revealed. It does mean that these are things the Israelites could not do and have no prior knowledge about. They only know them as they are revealed. They cannot say they already knew them. "Just as prophecy was given so as to refute the claims of idols, so not all prophecy was given at once in order to refute the claims of human omniscience. All our attempts to be independent are frustrated by our lack of knowledge. If we could just know the future, then we would not need to live in this state of helplessness—or so we think" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 268].

Notice also that these new things are created things. Create, בָּרָא, means to create, to bring into existence, i.e., to make something that has not been in existence before. This word is only used of the creative power of God; it is never used of man. The new things are all things that will be brought into existence by God. Israel will not devise and create

these new things; God will devise and create these new things. That's the point. Only God can predict the future and bring it to pass, and only God can bring things into existence. Idols are powerless, they lack divinity and divine attributes, and they can do nothing. They cannot divine the future and they cannot create something from nothing.

One of the reasons the Israelites have not heard is because their ears have not been open. They have not been receptive to truth. Because they had not heard, they did not know, but even what they heard they still did not know because they rejected it. They did not want to know; they thought they already knew everything. They thought their intelligence and their reasoning skills were all they needed. It wasn't like God was not speaking to them; they had the prophets, but they rejected the truth that had been revealed to them. They had taken advantage of their status as God's specially created people and nation appointed to His service by thinking they could rebel and sin and act any way they wanted to act regardless of God's commands governing their relationship with Him and their conduct in serving Him. Instead of being a nation set apart from the world as God's representative nation of priests to the world, Israel had become part of the world. In God's eyes they had forfeited every opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with their Creator. We, believers in this dispensation, need not get all uppity and think we aren't that way or that we wouldn't have that attitude, but we do act that way, and we do have that attitude although we should be striving to avoid being that way. In the final analysis, we are not better than they were.

Jeremiah 17:9 ⁹“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

This verse does not say the Israelite heart, the Gentile heart, the male heart or the female heart, the young heart or the old heart, it says “the heart” without qualification. We are all operating out of a basis of deceit which is beyond cure apart from faith in God which is the only answer to these things, but as long as we retain our sin nature, and until we attain to the third tense of our salvation which is glorification, we all have issues. The Israelites were no different. Of course, most of the Israelites were unbelievers at this time, with only a small remnant of believers in the nation.

In most translations, there is a word that is left untranslated in verse 8, אֲנִי, but it should be, not only because it is in the Hebrew text, but also because it is indicating emphasis. When this word is left untranslated, the emphasis it adds to the text is lost. This includes the NASB (two out of three uses, but it does translate the word as “even” for the third use of the word), which is an appropriate translation. Other translations use “Yea” (KJV, ASV, YLT), “surely” (JKJV), or “indeed” (LSV) all of which indicate emphasis.

Isaiah 48:8 ⁸Yea אֲנִי, thou heardest not; yea אֲנִי, thou knewest not; Yea אֲנִי, from that time *that* thine ear was not opened ... (KJV)

Isaiah 48:8 ⁸Surely אֲנִי you did not hear, Surely אֲנִי you did not know; Surely אֲנִי from long ago your ear was not opened.... (NKJV)

Isaiah 48:8 ⁸Indeed אֲנִי, you have not heard, Indeed אֲנִי, you have not known, Indeed אֲנִי, your ear has not opened from that time, ... (LSV)

There is another emphatic Hebrew grammatical construction in verse 8 that is also not apparent in most English translations. The word translated “treacherously” in the NASB is used twice, once as an imperfect verb and once as an infinitive absolute (a verbal noun) which used together represents an emphatic emphasis in the text. The infinitive absolute is used here to emphasize and intensify the verbal meaning of the word translated treacherously.

Isaiah 48:8⁸... Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously ... (NASB).

Isaiah 48:8⁸... For I knew you would deal treacherously, very treacherously ... (LEB).

Taking the grammatical construction into complete consideration, the verse would read something like this:

Isaiah 48:8⁸... Because I knew you would indeed act treacherously, you will act treacherously ...

“The infinitive absolute lends strength to the expression, and the imperfect is to be understood as potential, *dealing treacherously thou wouldst deal treacherously*. The infinitive absolute suggests both certainty and intensity, particularly the latter. If there is anything sure, it is that Israel would act treacherously. This treachery would manifest itself against the truth, for Israel, the sinful nation, would attribute its deliverances to idols and not to the true God” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:252].

What does it mean that Israel has been a rebel from birth? I would suggest that it refers to the birth of the nation in Egypt. The people began rebelling almost immediately and they have never stopped rebelling. Rebellion has been an identifying trait of the nation Israel; they have been nothing but rebellious from the beginning. Others think “from birth” is simply a characterization of Israel's—and humanity's—rebellious nature that is ever present, but that is a truth applicable to mankind, and this Scripture is directed toward Israel and the nation's relationship with God.

Rebel, *פָּשַׁע*, means to rebel, to transgress, to revolt, and to sin referring to being in open defiance of an authority or standard of an agreement. The basic idea of the root word is that of a breach of relationship, civil or religious, between two parties. “It means to sin, but the sin involved is one of revolt or rebellion ...” [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. “פָּשַׁע,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 926]. This definition describes the rebellious attitude of the Israelites from the beginning. Most of the older translations interpret this word to mean “transgressor,” but that emphasizes sin rather than rebellion which seems to be the more appropriate understanding of the word in this verse.

The nation has been called a rebel from birth or, literally, from the womb. Call, *קָרָא*, means to call, to proclaim referring to something that one is called. It has the sense of having a quality ascribed to or to be given a name of a common noun that reflects a quality. The verb form used here reflects intensity; therefore, calling them rebels from birth is a very emphatic statement. “In accordance with Hebrew idiom the verb *to call* is used to

indicate the true nature or character of a person" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:252].

Birth, בִּטּוֹן, means belly, womb, body, or the internal organs such as the stomach. It may also refer figuratively to the inner self. The root meaning of the word is "interior." In this verse, it is a reference to the womb representing the female reproductive organs, and it is translated as such as the KJV, NKJV, ASV, LEB. The YLT translates it "belly." It is used idiomatically to refer to "birth," which is how the NASB translates it.

God's purpose for the way He is dealing with Israel is once again revealed. This is nothing new. He has promised to preserve and restore them a number of times in a number of ways before and after Isaiah's time as a prophet. One example is the promise of the Land Covenant in Deuteronomy 30:1-10. Later promises to preserve Israel are in Jeremiah 31:35-37 and Ezekiel 36:22-38.

Isaiah 48:9 ⁹"For the sake of My name [שֵׁם] I delay [אָרַדָּה] My wrath, And for My praise [תְּהִלָּה] I restrain [קָטַמְתִּי] it for you, In order not to cut you off [כָּרַתָּה].

There is a parallel passage to this verse in Ezekiel which elaborates on the truth expressed in Isaiah.

Ezekiel 36:22-23 ²²"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³"I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

Remember, only dispensational theologians recognize God's purpose for history to be doxological, that is, for His glory. Most theologians believe God's sole purpose for history is the redemption of mankind, but that is too narrow. Here, He clearly states that His reason for not destroying Israel is for His name and His praise. His plan includes delaying and restraining the wrath that Israel deserves. Once His plan for Israel is fully consummated and the Kingdom is inaugurated, His name will be praised and glorified. God and His name are intimately associated with the Israelites and the nation Israel He created specifically for appointment to His service. If God destroyed Israel, He would show the world that His promises mean nothing. That is one reason why replacement theology is such an egregious assault on the character of God and on His name. If God destroyed Israel, Satan could claim victory because the bearer of the promised Messiah would be eliminated and God's Kingdom plan for history would be demolished, which is unthinkable, and the people of the world system could suppose that their idols were victorious over God.

"The question is not one of legality or justice, but rather what the nations will think of God when the just destruction should occur. Thus the real question is not whether God is just, but whether he is gracious. Will the nations looking at God's justice accuse him of capriciousness (like all their gods)? Or will they see a God who is unlike all the rest in his incredible patience and mercy? [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 269].

“Were Israel to be cut off, it would be completely destroyed. Were that to happen, then the promise of salvation uttered by God to the patriarchs would be seen to be null and void, and the praise of God could not be sounded by His people, nor would His Name be the Name of One that is true to His promises. If, then, Israel perishes, God's promises are seen to be of no effect.... Hence, God patiently holds back or delays the punishment” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:253].

In Exodus 32:10, God swore to destroy the Israelites at Mount Sinai after the Golden Calf rebellion, but Moses presented the case for preserving Israel rather than destroying the nation and starting over. The argument is a viable argument applicable to Israel throughout the nation's history. It was an argument that stayed the hand of judgment at the time, and it is an argument that continues to keep Israel from complete destruction. They suffer immense harm due to their actions which have brought upon them God's temporal, divine discipline promised them for rebellion, and they will suffer the wrath of the Tribulation at some point in the future, but they will be preserved as a nation to inherit the covenant promises due them.

Exodus 32:11–13 ¹¹Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²“Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people. ¹³“Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.’”

Kingdom citizens, all of them, Jew and Gentile, will finally and fully realize what God has been up to throughout history concerning both Israel and the world, and it will be the most glorious time in human history.

Name, שֵׁם, means name, but it also means reputation, standing, renown, or fame referring, in this verse, to information that one knows about another and which is implied to give high status to the one of renown. It has the sense of the general estimation and recognition of a person understood in regard to their name.

“His *name* is a summary statement (shorthand) for what he is in himself, and within that nature there is a divine logic at work whereby merited *wrath* is restrained. But his *name* is also what he has revealed himself to be, and ‘Yahweh’ [Ex. 3:14-15] is not only the holy God visiting judgment but also the saving and redeeming God” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 302].

Praise, תְּהִלָּה, praise, a song of praise or a hymn, or thanksgiving, and it also refers to the person being praised or celebrated. In that situation, the word refers to speaking positive words about the excellence of another. In this verse, praise carries the sense of the state or quality of being widely honored and acclaimed.

God's wrath is being delayed; it is not being stopped altogether. Israel's rebellion will finally feel the full extent of God's wrath, but that will not happen until His program for the Church, the body of Christ, has been completed. When the last Gentile has been brought into the Church (Rom. 11:25), and the Church has been raptured (1 Thess. 4:13-18), God will turn His attention to Israel and exercise His wrath upon the rebellious nation (Ezek. 20:33-38). His intention will be to identify the believing remnant that will inherit the covenant promises and participate in the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom, and to separate out the unbelieving rebels who will be removed and denied Kingdom entrance.

Delay, אָרַךְ, means to make long, to extend, to stretch out referring to prolonging something by lengthening in time and causing to be longer or to last longer. This verb form is causative; it is God's prerogative to delay the imposition of His wrath on Israel. This delay is part of His plan for history.

Restrain, קָטַם, means to hold in, to restrain oneself so that one refrains from doing something. It also has elements of patience and self-control.

God's patience in the implementation of His plan for history is on full display here. He has a plan for Israel and that plan will be fulfilled. The destruction of the nation is not part of His plan; therefore, it will not, it cannot, happen. God restrains himself so that Israel will not be cut off.

Cut off, קָטַע, means to cut off, to cut down, to kill, to destroy, or even exterminate referring to severing an object from its source, or cut into parts, implying a violent action. The sense is to stop or put an end to something conceived of as cutting a thing off. The verb form is causative and it expresses God's intention to restrain Himself from destroying Israel.

Just because God is not going to completely destroy Israel, it must never be presumed that the nation's rebellion will not result in divine, temporal discipline. The God of truth is not going to renege on His promises to discipline the nation for disobedience and rebellion. That did not have to happen, but if the nation acted in ways that demanded the imposition of the curses, then the curses must be imposed. It is the only thing that God can do that is consistent with His divine character.

Isaiah 48:10¹⁰ "Behold, I have refined [צָרַף] you, but not as silver; I have tested [בָּחַר] you in the furnace of affliction [עָנִי].

This is a statement of divine, temporal discipline as it was revealed in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 couched in the metaphor of purifying metal, in this case, silver. There is a purpose for discipline which may take the form of rebuke or correction or it may take the form of punishment, or both. Even punishment, properly imposed, is designed to correct and instruct.

Discipline, מוֹסֵר, means discipline, chastening, or correction, and it may also mean instruction. God's discipline is not to be understood as a negative thing. God's discipline is designed to bring, in this case, Israel into conformity with His will for the nation. Disciplining, teaching, and caring for someone's needs are all part of loving, interpersonal, familial

relationships. That is no less between God and Israel. By way of application, the concept of temporal discipline also applies to individuals in the body of Christ.

The refining of metal is an apt metaphor for God's temporal discipline. Refining metal is done by fire, representing extreme heat, yet it is a purifying process designed to transform thinking and behavior; it is not a process of destruction concerning the desired end product. After the impurities are burned out, what is left is pure. When God imposes temporal discipline on the nation, the consequences can be very harmful and destructive, but the purpose is transformation. It is not harm and destruction for the sake of harm and destruction; it is for changing minds and behavior.

Refined, *צָרַף*, means to melt, to refine (by smelting), to test or examine, and to purge. In this context, it refers to testing or examining in an effort to try to learn the information about the true nature or moral purity of an object as a figurative extension of refining metals.

The word translated "tested" here in the NASB presents an interpretive issue. Tested, *בָּחַר*, means to choose, but it also means to prove, to try, or to examine, which is the context in this verse. "To test a person's character conceived of as testing an object's quality" [s.v. "בָּחַר," Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Hebrew Bible]. "The reading 1Q is derived from the root *bhr* 'to test' which makes a good parallel to 'refine,' plus the root *bhr* in Aramaic does mean 'melt, refine, try.' This translation is often preferred (NIV, NASB)" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, 323]. Many translations use the word "chosen" in this verse, but that is not the context. God was not choosing Israel; God was disciplining Israel by means of affliction to teach them and to change their behavior. Translations using words that convey the idea of testing are NASB, NKJV, CSB (tested), TANAKH (test), NET BIBLE, ISV (purified), and ESV (tried).

The text indicates that silver is not really in view here. Israel has not become the pure end product God desires them to be. That situation is still in the future awaiting the refinement that will occur during the Tribulation. Egypt was described as an "iron furnace" (Jer. 11:4) and the concept originates there, but Israel has been undergoing testing throughout the nation's history. The process of refining has been ongoing and it continues to this day. "The LORD sought by chastisement to purify them, but they (unlike silver) were not refined in the process, because they did not respond to the intense heat as silver does, and as God's elect, redeemed people, which silver typifies, they should have done" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1274].

Affliction is a word that describes the disciplinary process to which Israel has been and continues to be subjected. Affliction, *עָנִי*, means affliction, misery, suffering, or an oppressed situation referring to a state of hardship and trouble. It has the sense of great suffering and distress. Indeed, that has been the history of Israel, and, indeed, Israel still has not learned the lessons God's discipline was designed to teach.

Verse 11 is somewhat of a reiteration of verse 9.

Isaiah 48:11 ¹¹“For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My *name* be profaned [הָלַל]? And My glory I will not give to another.

It is totally for God's sake that He has entered into this relationship with Israel and for His sake, He will see to it that His plan and His purpose by, for, and with Israel will be accomplished right down to the smallest detail according to His will.

“For my own sake” is emphasized in the text by means of repetition. God is not bound by what sinful, rebellious people do or do not do. It is inconceivable that God would allow anything to profane His name. Profane, הָלַל, means to pollute, defile, or profane referring to treating with contempt. It has the sense of violating the sacred character of someone or something. Of course, this is a rhetorical question. Nothing can besmirch God's character. People blaspheme His name all the time, but there is no truth to their claims which renders them null and void. They have no substance. God's relationship with Israel is one way in which He will prove any attack on His name to be false.

God cannot be thought of as one God among many gods. If He were to abandon His regard for Israel, the world would assume that the gods of the world triumphed over Him, which would profane His holy name. He alone is holy. He alone is worthy of praise. He will see to it that Israel realizes the promises He made to them long ago.