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and their sin is emphasized far more than in any previous chapter of our section.

Except for two brief phrases in chapter 46, every verse in Part 1 in which Israel was rebuked for sin was clearly separated from the verses in which deliverance was promised. The transition from one thought to the other was sudden and complete.

In chapter 48, the two emphases are sometimes joined in the same verse. In this chapter, two contrasted thoughts are intertwined: (1) God will deliver His people; and (2) the people are unworthy of deliverance.

(1) Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are named Israel and who came forth from the loins of Judah, who swear by the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness. (2) For they call themselves of the holy city, and lean on the God of Israel - the LORD of hosts is his name.

Nearly all of this passage sounds like an assurance that Israel is God's people, who swears by His name, leans upon Him, and will receive His blessing. Yet the last few words of the first verse change the whole effect, for these words declare that when the Israelites invoke the name of God, they do so neither in truth nor in righteousness.

This is the strongest direct rebuke of Israel that has occurred thus far in this section of Isaiah. There was nothing quite comparable to it in chapters 40-47. The contrast between the end of verse 1 and the rest of verses 1-2 is very sharp. Yet these words have been accurately preserved through centuries of copying and recopying of manuscripts. This fact provides remarkable evidence of the fidelity of the Hebrew scribes who copied exactly what they found in their manuscripts, even when it included such strong criticism of their own people.

Never before in our section have the Israelites been called hypocrites. In previous passages of rebuke, they have been criticized for past disobedience to God, which made it necessary for Him to send them into exile. Here they are accused of present and continuing sin, and are pictured as loudly