

In this forty-eighth chapter we have a section at the beginning of the chapter which is a bit different from almost any other section in this part from Isaiah 40 to 53. Here we find what comes very near to being rebuke for the people of Israel. It is, however, not rebuke like that that is found in the earlier chapters of Isaiah. There the prophet was constantly exhorting the people to turn from sin and obey God and declaring that if they did not do so God would send them into exile. In this case, however, he is treating the people as already in exile, suffering for their sins, and he is giving them promises for their deliverance. There is here simply a suggestion, a very strong suggestion, of rebuke rather than a direct rebuke. The suggestion is, "If I deliver you as I am going to do, I know your obstinacy, and I know that many of you will say that the idol has done it and will not give the credit to God." For this reason he finds it necessary to stress the fact in verse three and the following verses that this is something which he is preparing in advance so that when it happens no one can deny that He has done it. So the note of God's omniscience is here turned against Israel and used not merely as a means of announcing of His power and of His existence but is presented to them in response to their unbelief. This passage continues from verse one really up until about the middle of the chapter. In verse one the Israelites were mentioned as those who swear by the name of the Lord but not in truth or in righteousness. The professing believer is here criticised ^{for} toward his failure to be thoroughly true to that which he professes. Verse four and five pointed out very strongly ~~the unbelief-~~ the obstinacy and unbelief of the people. Three and six stress the note of omniscience and so does verse seven. Verse eight again stressed the obstinacy of the people and points out that they were