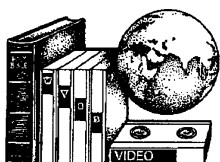


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



I S A I A H

This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.



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ISAIAH

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Isaiah

Syllabus

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: C. M. Horner.
- B. This course consists of 24 lessons on 8 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is a detailed study of the book of Isaiah, with emphasis on practical application.
- B. To understand the need for Jehovah, as a righteous God, to demand faith and obedience from mankind.
- C. To understand that Jehovah is active in ruling among the nations, even today.
- D. To understand the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.
- E. To understand the “admonitions and learning” as presented in this book and how to apply that knowledge in today’s world.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 24 video lessons.
 - 3. Spiral bound course notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on Isaiah.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire text of Isaiah at least once.

- B. View all 24 video lessons in their entirety.
- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- F. Take two written tests.
- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your VBI enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:
 - Isaiah 1:18
 - Isaiah 2:2,3
 - Isaiah 7:14
 - Isaiah 8:20
 - Isaiah 9:6
 - Isaiah 42:8
 - Isaiah 53:6,7
 - Isaiah 59:1,2
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your second written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There are two written tests for Isaiah. The first covers chapters 1-39 and the second is a comprehensive final exam.
- B. When you near chapter 39, contact us and request the first test. When you near the end, contact us and request the final test.

- C. When you receive a test, you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write a paper on ten different lessons we can learn from the book of Isaiah. Cite Scripture references from Isaiah to support each lesson you draw.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of six pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of eight pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your second test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and tests will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the tests counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any dispute VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. We hope you enjoy and profit from this study of Isaiah and that this course helps in your journey to heaven!

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROPHET:

A. His Name - Isaiah (Yeshajahu).

1. His name means “Jehovah is salvation,” or “salvation is of Jehovah.”
2. His name reflects the message of the book—trust in God for salvation, not man.

B. His Family:

1. Isaiah’s father was Amoz. This is not Amos the prophet.
 - a. According to tradition, Amoz was the brother of King Amaziah.
 - b. That would make Isaiah the cousin of King Uzziah and would explain his free access to Judah’s kings.
2. Isaiah was married. His wife is called a “prophetess” (8:3ff).
3. He had two sons. Their names illustrated and enforced Isaiah’s prophecies:
 - a. Shear-Jashub - “a remnant shall return” (7:3).
 - b. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz - “make speed” or “run swiftly to the spoil” (8:3). This had to do with the invasion of the Assyrians which would come quickly.

C. General Facts:

1. Isaiah was a prophet of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He prophesied before and during the time of the destruction of Israel.
2. He prophesied during the reigns of the following kings of Judah:
 - a. Uzziah (also called Azariah) (790 - 738 B.C.).
 - b. Jotham, as co-regent (750 - 738 B.C.); as king (738 - 735 B.C.).
 - c. Ahaz (735 - 715 B.C.).

- d. Hezekiah (715 - 678 B.C.).
- 3. He prophesied during the same time as Amos, Hosea, Joel and Micah.
- 4. There is an uncertain tradition on his death—that he lived until the reign of Manasseh who had him sawn in two (Heb 11:37).

D. His equipment and training.

- 1. Very well acquainted with the area in which he lived.
- 2. Was influenced by his contacts with Amos, Hosea and Micah.
- 3. God's compelling revelations and guidance were the greatest influences in his life.

E. His ministry.

- 1. He prophesied to and counseled kings.
- 2. He was a statesman whose advise was, "Put your faith in Jehovah."
- 3. He had deep convictions, courage, clear vision, spiritual instruction and had the strength to tell the truth without altering it.
- 4. It has been said that no other prophet compares to him.

II. AUTHORSHIP:

Until the eighteenth century it was almost universally accepted and unchallenged that Isaiah was the author of the entire book. But then "higher critics" began to devise their heretical theories of several authors.

A. Brief History of "Higher (Destructive) Criticism."

- 1. A man by the name of Doederlein published a commentary in 1775. In that commentary he:
 - a. Denied Isaiah's authorship of chapters 40-66.
 - b. Claimed a "second" Isaiah ("deutero Isaiah") as the author and claimed that he wrote before the end of the Babylonian exile (550 - 539 B.C.).
- 2. Duhm in 1892.

- a. He also denied that Isaiah was the author of chapters 40-66.
 - b. He felt there was a third author ("trito Isaiah") for chapters 55-66, who was active in Jerusalem before Nehemiah.
3. In the older writers on Isaiah, even down to the middle of the eighteenth century, the place now occupied by *criticism*, in the modern sense, the idea of more than one author of the book Isaiah is wholly blank. No one, of course, thought it necessary to defend what had never been attacked or to demonstrate what had never been disputed (Alexander).

B. Basic Arguments of "Higher (Destructive) Criticism."

- 1. Anti-supernaturalism.
 - a. These critics deny that Isaiah predicted events hundreds of years before they occurred.
 - b. They assume that a prophet could not be supernaturally given a glimpse into the future by Jehovah.
 - c. In doing this, they assume as impossible the very thing the Bible claims - inspiration (1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 1:20,21).
 - d. The early "critics" tried to show the words of Isaiah really related to something near at hand and within the reach of human foresight or they tried to convert them to some sort of vague anticipation. But they all agree that where the prophecy can be explained away it must be regarded as proof that the words in question were written at a later date (Alexander).
 - e. "All prophecies are not predictions, *i.e.* all the writings of the Prophets, and of this one in particular, are not to be regarded as descriptive of the futureAll predictions, or prophecies in the restricted sense, are not specific and exclusive, *i.e.* limited to one occasion or emergency, but many are descriptive of a sequence of events which has already been realized" (Alexander).
- (1) All the predictions of Isaiah are not always to be understood as literal, nor are they always to be understood in a figurative or spiritual sense.
- (2) "The question, under which of these descriptions any prophecy must be arranged, *i.e.* the question whether it is strictly a prediction, and if so, whether it is general or particular, literal or figurative, can only be determined by a thorough independent scrutiny of each case by itself, in reference to form and substance, text and context, without regard to

arbitrary and exclusive theories, but with due regard to analogy of Scripture in general, and other prophecies in particular, especially of such as belong to the same writer, or at least to the same period, and apparently relate to the same subject. This is far from being so attractive or so easy as the sweeping application of a comprehensive canon to all cases, like and unlike; but it seems to be the only process likely to afford a satisfactory result” (Alexander).

2. Critics claim there are differences in the style between chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66.
 - a. It is a proven fact that authors change their styles as the subjects, circumstances and even as their abilities change.
 - b. Also, the similarities between the two sections have been embarrassing to the critics.
 - c. “Be it remembered, then, that the rejection of these chapters was not forced upon the critics by a palpable diversity of style and diction, but that such diversities were hunted up, laboriously and gradually brought to light, in order to justify the previous rejection. By parity of reasoning it may be foreseen that whoever cannot be convinced of the reality of inspiration, will consider these detailed proofs of later date conclusive; while the reader who knows better, or at least has no misgivings upon that point, will as certainly pronounce them [the higher critical theories - added CMH] ‘trifles light as air.’ If we gain nothing more by this investigation, it is at least satisfactory to know that all depends upon a foregone conclusion, and that as to faith in such things no less than it higher matters, he that hath, receiveth, and from him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath” (Alexander).
3. They claim there are differences in theological ideas between chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66.
 - a. First, it is important to note that there are no contradictions.
 - b. Rather, the theological ideas in chapters 40-66 are simply broader and more elevated.
 - c. This is consistent with the basic message of the latter section—comfort from God as opposed to judgment from God in the first section.
4. Results of “Higher Criticism.”

- a. That this new method would be early carried to excess, was not only to be apprehended as a possible contingency, but confidently looked for as a natural and even unavoidable result. The causes which facilitate inventions and discoveries tend also to exaggerate their value” (Alexander).
- b. “The writers who originally undertook to separate the genuine and spurious portions of Isaiah, acted of course on the presumption, that any part might prove unsound, and therefore set no bounds to their avidity for textual reforms and innovations. The natural result was a grotesque disguise and mutilation of the book by means of numberless erasures, transpositions, combinations, and gratuitous assumptions of imaginary authors” (Alexander).
- c. “A fundamental maxim of this whole school of criticism, upper and lower, first and last, extreme and moderate, is this, that what is possible is probable and may be held as certain, if it suits the convenience of the critic; in other words, ‘things must be as they may’” (Alexander).
- d. Another proof that this whole system is uncritical or destitute of any settled principle is furnished by the absence of consistency and unity of its results (Alexander).
- e. “The use of a criterion, in the hands of these critics, is seldom to establish or confirm, but almost always to discredit, what has commonly been looked upon as genuine” (Alexander).

C. Basic Arguments For the Unity of Isaiah (i.e., one author only).

1. The testimony of the New Testament.
 - a. Isaiah is quoted more often than all other prophets combined.
 - b. That is seen in the fact that there are about 308 quotations from, or references to, Isaiah in the New Testament.
 - c. These quotations involve 47 of the 66 chapters in Isaiah.
 - d. In fact, Isaiah is cited by name 21 times and all three of the divisions are credited to him.
 - e. “We have seen already that our Lord and his apostles cite the whole book of Isaiah with more frequency than any other part of the Old Testament. It now becomes a question of historical interest at least, in what capacity and character Isaiah is thus quoted, and with what authority he seems to be invested in the New Testament. The simple fact that he is there so

often quoted, when connected with another undisputed fact, to wit, that his writings, even at that early date, held a conspicuous place among the *Sacred Scriptures (iera grammata, graphai agaia)* of the Jews, would of itself create a strong presumption that our Lord and his apostles recognized his inspiration and divine authority. We are not left, however, to infer this incidently; for it is proved directly by the frequent combination of the title Prophet with the name Isaiah (Mat. iii. 3, iv. 14, viii. 17, xii. 17; Luke iii. 4, iv. 17; John i. 23, xiii. 28; Acts viii. 28-30, xxviii. 25); by the repeated statement that he prophesied or spoke by inspiration (Mark vii. 6; Rom ix. 29); by the express declaration that some of his predictions were fulfilled in the history of Christ and his contemporaries (Mat. iii. 3, iv. 14, viii. 17; Acts xxiii. 25); and by the still more remarkable statement that Isaiah saw Christ and spake of his glory (John xii. 41). These expressions place it beyond all possibility of doubt that the New Testament describes Isaiah as a Prophet in the strictest and highest sense inspired of God. This is alleged here, not as a reason for our own belief, but simply as a well-attested fact in the history of the interpretation" (Alexander).

- f. Thus, anyone who believes in the inspiration of the New Testament believes that Isaiah was the author of the entire book.
2. Some of the details that bind together the two parts of the book (from Vine):
 - a. God's abhorrence of mere formal worship, 1:11,13 and 66:3.
 - b. The Lord's throne in the high and holy place, 6:1 and 57:15; 66:1.
 - c. His regard for the lowly soul, 6:5-7 and 57:15; 66:2.
 - d. His house and mountain as a resort, 2:2,3 and 56:7; 60:12-14.
 - e. His making every high thing low, 2:11,17; 5:15,16 and 40:4.
 - f. His overruling of human pride and violence, 10:5,7; 37:26 and 47:6; 54:16, 17.
 - g. The chastisement of rebellious Israel, 1:2,5; 31:1,2 and 63:8,10.
 - h. The sickness and healing of the nation, 1:5,6; 6:10 and 57:18,19.
 - i. People and land forsaken, 6:12; 17:9; 27:10; 32:14 and 49:14; 54:6,7; 62:4,12.
 - j. Judicial deafness and blindness, 6:10; 29:18; 32:3; 35:5 and 42:7,18.

- k. A remnant saved, 1:27 (margin); 4:2,3; 10:20,22; 37:31,32 and 59:20; 65:8,9.
 - l. A sign or covenant concerning the mercies of David, 7:14; 9:6,7 and 55:3,4.
 - m. The Spirit of the Lord resting on Messiah, 11:2 and 61:1.
 - n. Israel fruitful by the Spirit of God, 32:15 and 44:3,4.
 - o. Waiting for God, who has hidden His face, 8:17 and 64:47.
 - p. The setting up of a standard, 5:26; 11:10,12; 18:3 and 49:22; 62:10.
3. Implied references to the second part of Isaiah by prophets before the exile, thus indicating that Isaiah wrote the entire book, and before the exile.
- a. Zeph 2:15 with Isa 47:8,10.
 - b. Nahum 1:15 with Isa 52:7.
 - c. Jer 31:35 with Isa 51:15.
 - d. Jer 10:1-16 with Psa 41:7; 44:12.
4. Unbroken tradition.
- a. All early Jewish and Christian tradition speaks only of Isaiah as author.
 - b. Josephus says Cyrus (mentioned by name 200 years before he lived), “read about himself in the prophecies of Isaiah” (*Antiquities* XI: 1:1 ff; Isa 41:2 ff; 44:26-28; 45:1-6).
 - c. “For two thousand years, at least, the book was universally regarded as Isaiah’s, and no other name has ever been connected with it even by mistake or accident. It is just such a book as the necessities of that age might be expected to call forth. Its genuineness, therefore, as a writing of Isaiah, is not a fact requiring demonstration by detailed and special proof, but one attested both by its external history and its internal structure, unless positive reasons can be given for rejecting a conclusion which appears not only obvious but unavoidable” (Alexander).
5. Discovery of the “Isaiah Scroll” among the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947).
- a. Chapter 40 begins on the last line of a column which contains 38:9-39:8.

- b. This is supposed to be the first chapter of the second author's work.
- c. If it truly were, it would not continue on the same line, but start on a new column or scroll!
- d. This scroll probably dates from the middle of the second century B.C.

D. Conclusions regarding "Higher Criticism."

1. "While the rationalist therefore avowedly proceeds upon the supposition, that the book before him is and can be nothing more than a human composition, it is not only the right but the duty of the Christian interpreter to treat it as the work both of God and man, a divine revelation and a human composition, the contents of which are never to be dealt with in a manner inconsistent either with the supposition of its inspiration or with that of its real human origin" (Alexander).
2. "The attempt to explain every passage or expression by itself, and to assume the *prima facie* meaning as in every case the true one, without any reference to other parts of the same book, or to other books of the same collection, is absurd in theory and directly contradicted by the universal usage of mankind in determining the sense of other writings....The evil effect of this mistaken notion on the part of Christian writers is not merely that they often fail to vindicate the truth, but that they directly contribute to the triumph of its enemies" (Alexander).
3. "The Higher Critics of the elder race, such as Eichhorn and his followers, carried out their idea of entire corruption, and the consequent necessity of total revolution, not only by assuming a plurality of writers, but by taking for granted that their compositions had been put together perfectly at random, and could be reduced to order only by the constant practice of inventive ingenuity and critical conjecture. The practical effects of this hypothesis were valuable only as exhibiting their folly, and producing a reaction towards more reasonable views" (Alexander).

III. HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES;

A. The World In Isaiah's Time.

1. Political.
 - a. World forces were battling for supremacy.
 - b. A time of much turmoil between nations and peoples.

2. Social.

- a. Much trouble between the poor and the rich.
- b. Abuses, resentments, unrest, class tensions and profiteering was everywhere.
- c. Land-grabbing was a problem.
- d. Governments were corrupt.

3. Religious.

- a. Superstitions, customs from the east and worship of Molech broke down the moral fiber of all including Israel and Judah.

B. Events Before Isaiah's Time:

- 1. Conquest of Canaan.
- 2. Theocracy and the demand for a king.
- 3. The United Kingdom.
- 4. Division (Northern Kingdom, called "Israel" - capital in Samaria; Southern Kingdom, called "Judah" - capital in Jerusalem) and deterioration after Solomon's reign.

Note these warnings to Israel:

- a. Deut 28:15.
 - b. Deut 30:15-20.
 - c. 1 Kgs 9:6-9.
 - d. Lev 26.
5. The idea of universalism (world conquest) was taking hold.

This would be seen in the world-wide empires like Assyria, Babylon, etc.

C. The Time of King Uzziah of Judah (790 - 738 B. C.).

1. A time of material prosperity for both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms which was exceeded only during Solomon's reign.
2. Jeroboam II of Israel (785-745 B. C.) regained almost all the territory lost after Solomon's death (2 Kgs 14:25,28) as well as the wealth associated with the conquests.
3. Judah had conquered Edom and gained control of the economically important seaport of Elath (2 Kgs 14:22).
4. They developed their natural resources and military power (2 Chron 26:1-15; Isa 2:7).
5. However, material prosperity led to spiritual deterioration, e.g.:
 - a. Sudden wealth led to luxury and depravity among the upper classes (Isa 3:16-23; 5:1ff,22; 28:1ff).
 - b. Justice was perverted into a system of theft and oppression (1:23; 3:14ff; 5:23; 10:1,2; 29:21).
 - c. The leaders were drunk with false security and careless optimism (Amos 6:1,13; Isa 5:13ff; 9:11).
6. About five years before King Uzziah died, Tiglath-Pileser IV became king of Assyria (1 Chron 5:26).
 - a. He ruled for 18 years and continually tried to conquer the nations surrounding Assyria.
 - b. Three kings, Rezin of Damascus (Syria), Hiram of Tyre and Menahem (2 Kgs 15:19ff) of Israel paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria (2 Kgs 15:19ff, 29; Isa 9:1).
7. Isaiah was called by God to be a prophet in the year of Uzziah's death (6:1).
8. Generally, Uzziah was a good king (2 Kgs 15:3).

D. The Time of King Jotham of Judah. Isaiah records no prophecies during his reign.

Generally, he was also a good king (2 Kgs 15:34,35).

E. The Time of King Ahaz of Judah (735 - 715 B.C.).

1. An evil and idolatrous king (2 Chron 28:22-27).
2. Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria (Israel) planned an attack on Judah.
3. They wanted Judah to join them in opposing Assyria.
4. Ahaz refused, so they tried to place a puppet king on the throne of Judah (Isa 7:6).
5. Ahaz was frightened by this and asked Assyria to aid him (2 Kgs 16:7).
 - a. Assyria agreed and captured Samaria and Damascus.
 - b. Ahaz remained pro-Assyrian in spite of Isaiah's advice on remaining neutral while depending on God's providence.
6. Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria died in 727 B.C. His son, Shalmaneser V took control.
 - a. Hoshea became king of Israel with the support of the Assyrians.
 - b. Later he rebelled against Assyria and sought help from Egypt (2 Kgs 17:3ff).
 - c. This provoked Assyria to make the final and devastating assault on Samaria.
 - d. The result was the captivity of 27,290 Israelites. They were taken to Mesopotamia and replaced by people deported from their defeated nations (2 Kgs 17:24ff).
 - e. Thus, Assyria had taken another giant step toward capturing Judah (Isa 28:1-4).
 - f. Throughout this period, Judah remained pro-Assyrian.

F. The Time of Hezekiah (715-678 B.C.) - 2 Kgs 18:2.

1. He was a very good king who did right in God's sight (2 Kgs 18:3ff).
2. He overthrew idolatry and instituted religious reform (2 Chron 29).
3. Later Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria and refused to pay tribute (2 Kgs 18:7).

- a. He was probably encouraged by the support of Merodach-Baladan of Babylon (Isa 39:1).
 - b. Eventually this led to Sennacherib of Assyria attacking Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:13-16; Isa 36,37).
 - c. When Hezekiah finally stopped trusting in foreign alliances and sought help from God, through Isaiah, Assyria was sent away from Jerusalem (Isa 37).
- 4. But, against Isaiah's advice, he sought help in alliances with Egypt (2 Kgs 18:21, 24).
 - 5. When Assyria threatened Judah by capturing Ashdod, Hezekiah broke off the alliance with Egypt to avoid destruction.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPHECY AS REVEALED IN SOME OF ITS KEY CONCEPTS:

A. Sin and Folly of Idolatry as Opposed to Trust in God (2:18-24; 31:7).

- 1. God is the first and the last; besides Him there is no God (44:6ff,24-28).
- 2. He is the "Mighty One of Israel" (1:24).

B. Holiness and Sovereignty of God.

- 1. The phrase "Holy One of Israel" is used 25 times in Isaiah, whereas it is used only 6 times in the rest of the Old Testament.
- 2. Depending upon the response of the people, this "Holy One of Israel" sends:
 - a. Judgment (used 52 times) or
 - b. Comfort (used 18 times)—providing they do not trust in human power including foreign nations.

C. The Remnant Which Shall Bring About God's Redemptive Purposes (4:3; 6:13; 10:20,22).

"Even in the worst of times, there is reason to believe that a portion of the people held fast to the true doctrine and the true spirit of the extraordinary system under which they lived. How large this more enlightened party was at any time, and how small a remnant it was ever reduced, we have not the means of ascertain-

ing; but we know that it was always in existence, and that it constituted the true Israel” (Alexander).

D. The Idea of God as Redeemer and Savior.

1. The word “redeem” or “redeemer” is found 26 times in Isaiah out of 122 times in all of the Old Testament.
2. “Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel” (41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 54:5).

E. The Absolute Need for Righteousness (1:27; 32:17; 48:18).

1. The word “righteousness,” or forms of it, is found 58 times in Isaiah out of the 273 times it appears in the Old Testament.
2. Its basic meaning is the keeping of God’s law.
3. It is an attribute of the Messiah (9:7; 11:3-5,9).

F. The Inadequacy of Formalistic / Ritualistic Worship of God (1:10-15; 29:13ff).

G. The True Nature of the Messiah and His Kingdom.

1. The subject of Isaiah’s book is “the people of God, considered in its members and its Head, in its design, its origin, its progress, its vicissitudes, its consummation, in its various relations to God and to the world, both as a field of battle and a field of labour, an enemy’s county to be conquered, and an inheritance to be secured” (Alexander).
2. The book of Isaiah is “perfectly in keeping with the History of Israel, in which the Exile and the Restoration stand conspicuously forth as one of the great critical conjectures which at distant intervals prepared the way for the removal of the ancient system, and yet secured its continued operation till the time of that removal should arrive” (Alexander).

V. Instructor’s comment:

Joseph Alexander said in his commentary he considered it his duty “to avoid the presumption of knowing everything as well as the disgrace of knowing nothing.” I have tried to do this as well.

ISAIAH OUTLINE

- I. The Assyrian Period: Conflict and Victory..... Ch 1-39
 - A. Discourses and Prophecies Centering in Judah and Jerusalem. Ch 1-12
 - B. Oracles of Judgment Against Individual Nations. Ch 13-23
 - C. World Judgment and Deliverance of God’s People..... Ch 24-27
 - D. Jerusalem-Zion: Warning and Promises. Ch 28-35
 - E. Historical Link.. Ch 36-39
- II. Hope for Troubled Times. Ch 40-66
 - A. Introduction. Ch 40
 - B. The Contest Between Jehovah and the Idols. Ch 41-48
 - C. The Servant and the Glory of Zion..... Ch 49-57
 - D. Nation Sins, Redemption by Jehovah and Future Glory. Ch 58-66

ISAIAH EXPANDED OUTLINE

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 - 2. Jerusalem: The Ideal and the Real.. Ch 2
 - 3. Political and Social Confusion. Ch 3
 - 4. Jerusalem the Redeemed. Ch 4
 - 5. The Vineyard and Its Fruits. Ch 5
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7. The Syro-Ephraimitic Uprising.	Ch 7
8. Assyria the Overwhelming Flood.	Ch 8
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11. The King, His Subjects and the Remnant.	Ch 11
12. Rejoicing and Thanksgiving of the Remnant.	Ch 12
B. Oracles of Judgment Against Individual Nations.	Ch 13-23
1. The Oracle Against Babylon.	Ch 13
2. The Burden of Philistia.	Ch 14
3. The Burden of Moab.	Ch 15, 16
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ISAIAH EXPOSITION

I. THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD: CONFLICT AND VICTORY. CH 1-39

A. DISCOURSES AND PROPHECIES CENTERING IN JUDAH AND JERUSALEM. . . . CH 1-12

1. ISAIAH'S PERSONAL INTRODUCTION TO HIS BOOK. CH 1

Other than just being an introduction to this book this chapter shows the connection between the sins of the people and their sufferings, as well as showing the necessity of further judgments against them for purification and deliverance.

INTRODUCTION. 1:1

1. Sets the scene:

What—vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Who—Isaiah.

When—days of those kings.

THE SIN-SICK AND REBELLIOUS NATION.. . . . 1:2-9

2. God presents Himself as the Father of Israel. Cf. Hos 11:1-7.

He nourished and brought them up as children (great love, care, concern).

And yet, they rebelled against Him (thankless and ungrateful). Cf. Ezek 16:15-63.

3. Even a dumb ox and donkey know their master but Israel does not know or consider their master, God, who has been faithful to them.

4. A listing of some of their sins:

- a. Loaded down with iniquity,
- b. Evil doers,
- c. Corrupt,
- d. Have forsaken God,

- e. Thus provoking Him to anger—the *Holy One of Israel* (Lev 19:2) and
- f. Backsliders—fallen away.

5,6. God describes them as sick from head to toe!

The effects of sin are horrible!

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov 14:34).

He is amazed that all the tribulations they have suffered have not brought them to repentance.

The center of the problem is the head/heart (Prov 23:7).

When the head (mind) is corrupt, one cannot cure the heart, “for one cures the affection by knowing goodness and truth” (Hailey).

“The head represents the outward controlling power, the heart the inward emotions. The whole condition was a divine judgment” (Vine).

7,8. Isaiah now describes the land and cities as made desolate by fire and occupied by foreigners.

We do not know who these people were. *Daughter of Zion* is the city of Jerusalem.

She is left like a frail, temporary booth or hut in a vineyard or cucumber patch.

9. Yet, there remains one hope—a remnant—a small part left over—key thought (Rom 9:29).

God still had a very small group of faithful ones (Rom 11:4,5).

Otherwise, they would have been totally destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is a biblical fact the God’s faithful always comprises the minority.

CORRUPTION HIDING BEHIND HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP. 1:10-15

10. A stern warning to them and us:

- a. Hear the word of God!
- b. Be not hearers only, but doers (Jas 1:22).

- c. If we do not listen and obey we will be just like Sodom and Gomorrah!

11-15. Their formalistic sacrifices and worship.

Note God's reaction:

- a. Full of their offering—"fed up"—no delight in them.
- b. Abomination, horrible iniquity.
- c. Futile sacrifices and offerings, His soul hates them—they are a burden.
- d. Their hands were *full of blood*—they were wicked. *Blood* is a plural word and refers to many acts of violence, not just murder.
- e. Hid His eyes from them (1 Pet 3:12). Will not hear their prayers.

What a frightening picture! What are God's feelings about these things?

- a. He cannot endure their *sacred meeting*, their worship services!
- b. Thus, there is such a thing as vain worship! (Prov 15:8; Mt 15:6ff; Mk 7:7-9).
- c. As a result, God would not even hear their prayers (Prov 28:9; Psa 66:18; 1 Pet 3:7).
- d. Obviously then, they were not sacrificing and worshiping with the heart (Jn 4:24; Mk 12:33).

Their sacrifices were only a sham of formalism. This has always been and continues to be a favorite refuge for those who are unfit to come before Jehovah in spirit and truth and who know not the true character of God (Hailey).

What about us today?

God does not have to accept our worship. We must have the right attitude and obey His word. Cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24.

GOD'S CALL TO REFORMATION OF LIFE. 1:16-20

16,17. Sin and its solution.

Their sins had made them spiritually unclean.

They needed cleansing from these sins.

Notice God's solution for their problems:

- a. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean*—repent! Cf. Jas 4:8; 2 Pet 3:9; Acts 17:30, 31.
- b. Quit doing evil.
- c. Instead, learn to do well.
- d. Actively pursue justice—*judgment*.
- e. Relieve the oppressed—mistreated.
- f. Do justice to the fatherless (Deut 24:17; Jas 1:27).
- g. Plead for the widow.

Worldly people seem to always ask, "Why should we pay attention to the fatherless and widows?" Their answer is, "There is no profit in it for us!"

18-20. God's invitation and His promise.

Come now and let us reason together,

- a. A command that must be obeyed.
- b. At the same time it is a gracious and loving invitation.

Sins—as scarlet...red like crimson.

- a. Sin stains deeply—it makes impure.
- b. Contrasts with white as snow.

White as snow.

Promise that a deep stain of sin could be removed!

- a. White is the emblem of innocence / purity (Dan 7:9; Rev 3:4,5).
- b. This cleansing is possible only through the powerful blood of Jesus! Cf. Eph 1:7; Rev 7:13,14.
- c. Purification comes only through obedience (1 Pet 1:22).

Is this cleansing unconditional? No, God gave them two choices:

- a. Be willing and obedient—good result. Cf. Acts 10:34f; Heb 5:9.
- b. Refuse and rebel—bad result, be devoured.

This has been God's way from the beginning!

20. *Mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

The certainty of fulfillment!

Listen very carefully.

THE LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM. 1:21-23

21-23. God condemns and mourns the corruption of Jerusalem (*the faithful city*).

He describes Himself as the husband and Jerusalem as the wife (Hos 2:19,20).

Notice the change in Jerusalem:

<u>Before</u>	<u>Now</u>
Faithful.	Unfaithful (<i>harlot</i>) (Jer 3:8,9; Ezek 16:28ff).
Full of justice and righteousness.	Full of murderers.
Silver (represents noble and pure rulers or princes).	Dross—worthless metal left over after burning silver, gold, etc.
Wine (pure, uncontaminated).	Mixed with water (diluted, weakness).

Notice the condition of the rulers (*princes*):

- a. Rebellious (against God).
- b. Companions of thieves (evil companions - 1 Cor 15:33).
- c. Love bribes—follow rewards.
- d. Do not defend the fatherless and widows.

REDEMPTION THROUGH PURGING. 1:24-31

24,25. *Therefore*, because of the sinful condition described.

God will take vengeance on His enemies—a disobedient people (Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30).

He is:

- a. *The Lord*—master, owner, ruler.
- b. *The Lord of hosts*—applied to armies, angels, stars—God rules over all of these! (1 Kgs 22:19; Jer 33:22).
- c. *The Mighty One of Israel*—all powerful God who can and will do what He has promised.
- d. These phrases should have struck fear in their hearts (and ours!).

He will turn His all-powerful hand against Judah and Jerusalem (v. 25). This can mean two things:

- a. Turn to punish (Amos 1:8; Jer 6:9).
- b. Turn to bless or help (Zech 13:7 - *against* means “to protect”).

God was going to send judgment as punishment on the disobedient *dross*, *alloy*. But, this was to remove the impurities before “restoring” and “redeeming” the faithful ones.

26,27. After purging the impurities, God will restore faithful rulers.

This was first fulfilled in the return from captivity.

It was fulfilled completely in the righteousness and justice of the age of the Messiah (9:6, 7; 11:1-9ff; Jer 23:5,6; Ezek 34:23,24).

Notice the use of the key word “redeemed,” freed by the paying of the ransom price.

Those that are restored to a right relationship to Jehovah will constitute a new “spiritual Israel.”

28-30. God will completely destroy those who sin against Him (then and now)!

Ashamed of the terebinth trees...and gardens.

- a. Groves of trees and gardens were places where idols were worshiped (2 Kgs 16:3,4; Ezek 6:13).
- b. God forbade the Jews to do this (Deut 16:21,22).
- c. He says that those who worshiped false gods would be ashamed of their choice.

They would be like withered leaves and gardens without water—dead, destroyed!

The strong—their corrupt leaders who appeared strong like the mighty terebinth trees.

- a. *Shall be as tinder*—the coarse part of flax or hemp. It burns very easily.
- b. *And the work of it (maker in KJV)*—better translated “his work”.
- c. In other words, the corrupt leaders and their works, idolatry, etc. will be burned up, totally destroyed!

31. The strong man and the idol he made will burn together.

“This chapter certainly does represent an excellent summary of the entire book. The themes of idolatry, the sins of the rulers and the people, corruption in all areas of social life, and Jehovah’s responses—condemnation, judgment, and destruction as well as exhortation, and the provision of redemption and salvation—recur throughout the great book of Isaiah” (Hailey).

2. JERUSALEM: THE IDEAL AND THE REAL. CH 2

HEADING. 2:1

1. *Word.....saw*. To see the word is to comprehend and understand its message. When John on Patmos heard a voice as of a trumpet, he “turned to see the voice that spake with [him]” (Rev 1:12); and having turned, he saw the source of it. So Isaiah saw the vision, word, and understood both it and its source; the vision and the word came from God (Hailey).

JERUSALEM THE IDEAL. 2:2-4

A clear prophecy of Christ and the establishment of the church (Mic 4:1ff).

2. *In the latter days*—the when, in the Christian age, which is the last days (Acts 2:16,17; Heb 1:1,2; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 Jn 2:18; 1 Cor 10:11). Also see Hailey, p.46.

Mountain of the Lord's house—the what, the Lord's house, the church (1 Tim 3:15; cf. Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:5).

Established on the top of mountains—the where, Jerusalem is in the mountains, but the idea is of the loftiness of the spiritual kingdom, the church.

All nations shall flow to it—universal nature of the church, not just for the nation of Israel (Acts 2:5,6; Eph 2:15ff; Gal 3:27ff).

3. *Many shall come and say...* people would be astounded and want to investigate this (Acts 2:6-12).

He will teach us His ways—God would have His will taught, Christianity is a taught religion (Jer 31:31-34; Acts 2:14-39; Jn 6:44,45; Heb 8:8-13).

Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

- a. Law and word of God mean the same thing—the gospel (Rom 8:2; Jas 1:25).
 - b. Thus, the gospel would be preached beginning at Jerusalem (Lk 24:47ff; Acts 1:8; 2).
4. *Judge nations and rebuke many*—God and Christ do that through the word, the gospel (Jn 12:48; Jas 2:12).

Shall beat swords into plowshares—this language is symbolic of peace and describes the character of the citizens of the new kingdom (church of Christ).

- a. Shows the peaceful nature of the church, kingdom (Eph 2:14-18; Col 3:15; Jn 14:27; 16:33).
- b. The message of the church is the gospel of peace (Lk 2:10-14; Rom 10:15).
- c. Both Isaiah and Zechariah describe the character of the kingdom—it will not be extended or defended by weapons of war, its weapons are spiritual - 2 Cor 10:3,4; Eph 6:10-17 (Hailey).
- d. Compare with Joel 3:10; Mic 4:3.

CORRUPTION: THE PEOPLE HAVE FORSAKEN JEHOVAH. 2:5-11

5. Pleads with Judah to obey God's word.

6-9. The decay of their society is shown by the use of the word "full" four times. All of

these were in violation of the Law of Moses, therefore God must cast off these people.

- a. *Filled* with eastern ways and made foreign alliances.
- b. *Full* of silver and gold—they were a greedy people.
- c. *Full* of horses—see Deut 17:16.
- d. *Full* of idols.

Mean men (KJV)—poor or low in rank.

Great men (KJV)—leaders, higher in rank, therefore, God will not forgive them!

10,11. Divine judgment.

Warns them, God's judgment is coming, it will be awful! Cf. Rev 6:15-17.

Be afraid! (Eccl 12:13,14).

Because of their pride and arrogance they will be brought low (Psa 18:27; Prov 6:16, 17; 1 Pet 5:5,6).

Only God will be exalted in that day—no men, no nations! (A key thought).

JUDGMENT: A DAY OF JEHOVAH. 2:12-22

12. It will take a *day of the Lord* to remove their pride and arrogance. In that day, all people and things that were exalted above God will be brought low!

13. *Cedars*—admired by Jews (Psa 92:12; 104:16) and used in building the temple (1 Kgs 5:6).

Oaks of Bashan—were famous (Ezek 27:6) .

14. *Mountains and hills*—the highest and grandest, often used for protection and defense.

Even they will be brought low by God!

15. *High tower and fortified wall*—things built by man for refuge and defense.

God will overturn them!

16. *Ships of Tarshish.*

Ships which brought the necessities and luxuries of life (Jer 10:9).

Beautiful sloops (pleasant pictures KJV)—represented all ornaments of luxury.

17. All men and man-made objects trusted in will be brought down.

And when that happens only God and His word will be exalted or lifted up!

18-22. The fate or destiny of idols.

In that day God will literally destroy all idols (17:7,8).

In the day of the Lord, they would fear, endeavor to hide from God's wrath and they would leave these powerless silver and gold gods behind!

Shake the earth mightily means the shaking of the world of the evil-doers, not to literal earthquakes.

Quit trusting in idols:

- a. God placed the breath of life in man's nostrils (Gen 2:7; 7:22).
- b. When man dies, it will be taken away from him (Psa 146:3-5).
- c. Therefore, trust in God, quit trusting in men and their idols!

3. Political and Social Confusion. Ch 3

THE WAGES OF SIN. 3:1-12

1-4. God will cause their government to be destroyed.

Lord - Adonai—shows His ownership of everything and that He is master of all.

Lord of Hosts—shows He is the supreme commander of all forces.

This is a different Hebrew word for "Lord"—*JHWH*—God's "personal" name.

Takes away...the stock and the store—removes all kinds of support from them; all the things they relied upon. *The whole supply of bread and...water*, even the necessities of life! Cf. Jer 38:9,21; Lam 4:4.

Twelve things they relied upon will be removed:

- a. Stock and store, bread and water.
- b. *The mighty man*, etc.—all the different kinds of men in whom they had been trusting (2:22), most are self-explanatory.
- c. Man of war.
- d. Judge.
- e. Prophet.
- f. *Diviner, prudent* (KJV)—those who falsely claimed power to look into the future.
- g. Elder.
- h. Captain of fifty.
- i. Honorable man.
- j. Counselor.
- k. *Skillful artisan*—one who has skill in mechanical arts: metal working, etc. Cf. Gen 4:22; 1 Chron 29:5; 2 Chron 34:11.
- l. *Expert enchanter, eloquent orator* (KJV), *skillful enchanter* (ASV), magician.

Children to be their princes.

5-7. The result of God's removing all support—chaos, lack of order.

People would oppress or mistreat one another—lack of government.

Conditions will be so bad that if a person simply owns clothing, he will be commanded to rule.

But, that person will refuse to do so because he will not have the means to remedy the situation.

The nation will come to such a low condition of degradation that no one will want to be the ruler.

8-12. The reason for this horrible situation—the sins of the people!

Tongues and doings are against God—word and deed!

They have been open and blatant with their sins, not even ashamed! (1 Cor 5:1,2; Jude 8-16; Rom 1:32). And because of their sins, they have brought evil upon themselves! Cf. Rom 6:23.

Teach individual responsibility and accountability! Cf. Ezek 18:4ff.

- a. You reap what you sow (Obad 15; Gal 6:7,8).
- b. Be righteous and do well (Jn 5:28,29).

God's people are being led astray by their rulers.

JUDGMENT OF THE RULERS..... 3:13-15

13-15. The guilt of the rulers is condemned.

The people will not only have to contend against foreign nations, but against God!

He will condemn them ("plead...judge") for their sins.

He singles out two classes of people in v. 14:

- a. The elders—the counselors (Num 11).
- b. The princes—officials of the government, rulers.

Sins of these rulers:

- a. *Eaten up the vineyard*. *Vineyard*—the people (5:1ff; Psa 80:9-13). Thus, they had destroyed the nation.
- b. Taken advantage of the poor (*plunder*). The spoils they have taken from the people are in their own homes and, as a result, testify against them that they are corrupt in their judging and have robbed the people (Hailey).
- c. Crushed the people with their cruelty (Mic 3:2,3).
- d. *Grinding the faces of the poor*—"Taken from the action of the millstone and describing unmerciful severity" (Vine).

INDICTMENT OF VAIN AND WORLDLY WOMEN..... 3:16-4:1

16. The reason for God's condemnation of the women:

- a. They were *haughty*—proud, arrogant.

- b. *Walk with outstretched necks*—trying to draw attention to themselves and enticing men to follow them (1 Pet 3:3,4; 1 Tim 2:9,10).

17-26. God's punishment for their actions:

- a. These immodest women will be immodestly humiliated.
- b. God will take away all those things which they used to make themselves so "attractive." (Clothing, jewelry, mirrors, perfumes, etc.).

Scab—a word connected with leprosy.

"When the women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay is truly consuming the nation's heart" (Young).

The final degradation of women (3:25,26; 4:1):

- a. The male population will be made much smaller by war. Cf. Lam 2:21.
- b. It will be so bad that the city of Jerusalem itself will mourn—figurative language.
- c. There will be seven women for each man. This is figurative language meaning there will be many more women than men.
 - 1) They will be so desperate, they will beg men to marry them.
 - 2) They will even give up their right to have the husbands provide food and clothing (Ex 21:10).
 - 3) It was a reproach for a Hebrew woman to remain unmarried (Gen 30:23; 1 Sam 1:6).

"The picture is one of conduct and character that are contrary to the holiness and righteousness of Jehovah. In their pride and lewdness these women are leading the nation to ruin by exerting a far-reaching influence on its life and destiny. Why cannot today's Christian women, with the ideal of Christ's standard before them, see the inconsistency of patterning their conduct and dress after the world?" (Hailey).

4. JERUSALEM THE REDEEMED. CH 4

Keep the context in mind. Isaiah has just condemned the rulers and the vain women. Now he provides a ray of hope for the remnant! (Notice he uses symbolic and figurative language.)

1. This verse is actually a continuation of chapter three.

Chapters 2-4 are a preview of the rest of Isaiah which is:

- a. The ideal,
- b. The reality and
- c. The redemption of Jehovah.

God is working out His eternal purpose for mankind!

THE BRANCH OF JEHOVAH. 4:2

2. *The Branch of the Lord*—symbolic for the Messiah, Jesus (11:1,10; 2 Sam 23:5; Jer 23:5, 33:15; Zech 3:8, 6:12; Rev 5:5).

He will be *beautiful and glorious*—(40:5; Jn 1:14).

Fruit of the earth—spiritual fruit.

For those of Israel who have escaped—for the remnant, the faithful few.

THE ESCAPED OF ISRAEL—THE REMNANT. 3,4

3. A description of that remnant—*he who is left in Zion, he who remains in Jerusalem*.

These people will be called:

- a. *Holy*, cf. 1 Pet 1:15,16.
- b. *Washed*, cf. 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22.
- c. *Purged* or cleansed—his washing or cleansing would take place through the *spirit of judgment and...burning*.
- d. This presupposes their character of holiness and righteousness.

Blood of Jerusalem—refers either to the blood shed by murderers or to them who were deprived of the necessities of life (3:14,15).

This language is often used to refer to the Messianic age (2:4; Mal 3:1-3).

More specifically, it is applied to the sacrifice of Christ (Zech 12:10; 13:1).

PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE FOR THE NEW ZION. 4:5,6

Isaiah uses symbolic language to show God's loving protection of the remnant during this glorious Messianic age.

Mount Zion and her assemblies—Zion is the symbolic dwelling place of God.

- a. In the Messianic age, this would apply to the church in which God dwells (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21,22; Heb 3:6).
- b. The meaning is, that God will protect the church, the remnant!

Cloud...smoke...flaming fire:

- a. Symbols of God's guidance, protection and presence in the wilderness (Ex 13: 21; 14:20; 40:34).
- b. Therefore, God would guide, protect and be in the midst of the church.

This is the only kingdom to be sustained by a spiritual sword rather than a physical one. It is the only place where true peace can be found. Cf. Mt 5:9.

5. THE VINEYARD AND ITS FRUITS. CH 5

The Israelites felt they had a special relationship with Jehovah just because they were the descendants of Jacob. They also felt that as long as the temple and Jerusalem existed they were never going to be conquered because of Jehovah's covenant with them. To these people Isaiah's words must have sounded like the worst of heresies.

THE SONG OF HIS BELOVED AND HIS VINEYARD. 5:1-7

- 1,2. A picture of God's tender, loving care in dealing with His people—Israel. They are described as His vineyard (Psa 80:8ff; Jer 2:21; 12:10) and, He took very good care of them.

As a result, He expected them to produce good *grapes*—works, righteousness, etc., but instead they produced *wild grapes*—evil works, rebellion, idols, unrighteousness, etc.

- 3,4. Now God calls upon them to judge who was right in this case—*Me* or *My vineyard*. Compare Mic 6:3,4. He commands them to answer two questions:

- a. What more could He have done than already done?—obvious answer, nothing!

- b. Why, then, did they produce *wild grapes* (evil works, etc.)—obvious answer, “No excuse!” Similar to Nathan and David in 2 Sam 12:1-15.
- 5,6. Since God has done all He can, and they continue to rebel—only one thing is left, punishment and judgment.
 - a. He will remove His protection (*take away its hedge...break down its wall*, etc.) and the result will be destruction for them (*burned...trampled down*).
 - b. This tells us the same loving and tender God can be fierce and full of wrath toward the disobedient (Zeph 1:18; Heb 10:27,31; 12:29).
- 7. Lest there be any mistake, Isaiah identifies the vineyard as Israel (in the general sense as His covenant people, not as the Northern Kingdom). See that also in the identity of the “pleasant plant” as the “men of Judah.” God looked for good things from them—justice and righteousness. Instead they produced oppression and weeping—disorder and chaos.

THE HARVEST: WILD GRAPES! SIX WOES! 5:8-23

“With the pronouncements of six woes and in vivid and harsh descriptions, the prophet sets forth the features of a corrupt civilization. Modern nations that have reached a high of so-called civilization can read this chapter and see their own image reflected. Greed and avarice as well as alcoholism and sensuous entertainments characterize a people so laden with iniquity that they can no longer discern between good and evil. They have become so wise in their own conceit that they feel no dependence whatever upon God. But God is not mocked, such behavior brings down upon itself judgment and destruction” (Hailey).

“The message from this passage is clear. It is possible to become so familiar with the routine of religious exercises that, while outwardly confronted to what has been learnt from Scripture, real heart devotion to Christ Himself has waned; the first love has been lost, and with it true spiritual power. The declension may open the way for grosser forms of evil, and the Lord has to stand at the door and knock, waiting for a response from any who really desire to enjoy communion with Him, and real conformity to His will and way” (Vine).

WOE TO GREEDY LAND-BARONS. 5:8-10

- 8. Covetousness. *Join house to house...add field to field*—greedy, not satisfied with their own land, but want all the land and houses around.
- 9. God’s promise—their houses will be empty!

In my hearing—in Isaiah’s hearing.

10. Their land will not produce what it should! Moses had promised the people that if they did not keep God's laws this judgment would come upon them. Cf. Lev 26:20; Deut 28:16-19.

a. One *bath*—7 1/2 gallons, a very small yield for 10 acres.

b. *Ephah*—1/10th of a *homer*, thus the amount of seed that should have been produced 1 homer would produce only 1/10th of that amount.

WOE TO HEAVY DRINKERS. 5:11-17

Undisciplined reveling.

11,12. The evil of alcohol and associated activities (22,23; 28:7; 56:10,12; Prov 20:1; 23:29ff; Hos 4:11; Eph 5:18). They do not rise up in the morning to do the Lord's work, but to drink and party.

"Drinking seems always to have been the curse of the affluent and prosperous..... The difference today is that in addition to consuming alcohol, the youth of the nation are wasting away on drugs and narcotics. And the abominable 'rock concerts,' which epitomize the hedonist morality of a socially depraved nation, have become the current feasts of thousands of young men and women who are to be the parents and leaders of tomorrow" (Hailey).

13. Isaiah speaks of their captivity as having already occurred! The reason for captivity—they refused to have God in their knowledge. Cf. 1:3; 5:12; Hos 4:6; Rom 1:28. They would suffer famine and drought.

In reality they are already in captivity to their own sins and passions!

14. *Sheol, hell* (KJV)—the unseen place of departed spirits (the dead).

a. Corresponds to Greek word *hades* (Lk 16:23).

b. His point is that all their glory, pomp, etc., would be swallowed up in death and destruction.

Compare Psa 9:17; Prov 27:20.

15-17. All their pride will be brought low and God only will be exalted.

The land and property coveted by the rich will soon be the domain of foreigners and their animals will graze on it.

WOE TO THEM THAT ARE ENSLAVED TO SIN. 5:18,19

Despising God.

These people continue to sin and defy God to execute the judgment which He has promised! This is frightening! They despise *the Holy One of Israel*. Prov 1:7—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*. These were foolish!

This is spoken in derision and haughtiness by those who are living in sin. Such taunts were the height of defiance. Notice how similar they are to the taunts thrown at Jesus while on the cross.

Vanity—not pride, but lying and seductive teaching.

Sin as if with a cart rope—“The figure is that of beasts of burden roped to a wagon. Iniquity was the burden they dragged by their vain delusions, and sin the wagon to which they were roped” (Vine).

WOE TO THEM WHO CONFUSE MORAL DISTINCTIONS. 5:20

Perversion of truth. This is rebellion against God and is an effort to substitute man’s moral standards for His. This is brought on by lust and the desires of the flesh and mind (1 Jn 2:16).

WOE TO THE SELF-DECEIVED. 5:21

Wise in their own eyes, false pride. Cf. Job 28:28; Prov 3:7; Rom 1:22; 12:16.

WOE TO PERVERTERS OF JUSTICE. 5:22,23

Drink intoxicating drink and take bribes.

A TERRIFYING JUDGMENT. 5:24-30

24. Their sins brought the wrath of God. His judgment on them would be like a “flame of fire.” Why?:

- a. Cast away the law of the Lord of hosts.
- b. Despised the word of the *Holy One of Israel*.

25. There was no repentance, therefore there is more to come!

26-30. A frightening picture of a foreign invader! *He will lift up a banner*—a standard or flag used by armies. God will call in armies from foreign nations against them. Nothing will stop their fierceness!

6. THE VISION AND CALL OF ISAIAH. CH 6

ISAIAH’S VISION OF THE LORD. 6:1-5

1. Isaiah’s call and vision took place in the year King Uzziah died.
2. *Seraphim*—the only mention of them in the Old Testament.
 - a. Six wings rather than four as in cherubim (Ezek 1:11,23).
 - b. Two wings cover faces—reverence and awe for God.
 - c. Two wings cover feet—humility and unworthiness.
 - d. Two wings; he did fly—busy doing God’s will.
 - e. That they stood *above* merely indicates they were in attendance, not superiority.
3. Their message, the holiness of God—one of the important themes of the book.
4. In the vision the power of their message shakes the entire building and it is filled with smoke. A very striking and eye-opening vision for Isaiah, them and us! God is awesome, Holy, powerful and to be praised and worshiped!
5. “Having been brought face to face with the King, Jehovah of hosts, who is absolute in holiness, the prophet realized that even the purest person is unclean when measured by the divine standard” (Hailey).

“The effect on Isaiah was to bring him down before the Lord in the realization of his own natural state and in acknowledgment of his identification with his nation in their evil condition....So should it ever be with us. The more we apprehend the facts and character of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the glories of His Person the more deeply we realize our own sinfulness. The nearer we are to the Lord the greater the sense of our utter unworthiness. Further, in this our own rightful attitude before Him we learn to identify ourselves with the condition of those fellow members of the Body of Christ who have proved unfaithful and lapsed into evil ways, and to confess their sins as ours. Only so can we really be prepared to give an effectual testimony. It is one thing to condemn the saints, it is quite another to take upon ourselves the confession of their sins as ours. It is that which causes the Holy Spirit to use us for real blessing amidst them” (Vine).

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PROPHET.. 6:6,7

On the basis of Isaiah's confession and God's mercy, he is cleansed of his sin, and he is set apart as God's prophet, to speak His word.

All sin, in its final analysis, is against Jehovah, for only He can forgive sin. It is not the seraph or the hot coal that forgave Isaiah's sins.

THE PROPHET'S COMMISSION FROM JEHOVAH. 6:8-13

8. God asks who will speak for Him (be His prophet).

Notice the use of the plural, *us*—a hint at the Godhead (Gen 1:26; 11:6,7).

- 9,10. God instructs Isaiah to go preach the truth to the people.

Notice *this people*, not *My people*.

Hearing, but do not understand, etc. Though the people will hear what Isaiah is preaching to them, in their frame of mind they will not understand the truth nor be able to apply his message (Hailey).

Make heart of people dull, ears heavy. How would Isaiah do that? By preaching the truth which they did not want to hear! Their reaction would be to close their eyes, ears and hearts and more (Zech 7:11-14) rather than *return and be healed*.

Jehovah is telling Isaiah that His message should produce one result, but, in fact, will result in another....the point Jehovah is trying to make clear to the prophet is that He intends to harden the people's hearts completely if they do *not* listen to Him! The hardening will be complete and will be accomplished by the word of God which was actually intended to save them. "This people" is the nation as a whole which will reject His message. But, Jehovah has already stated that there will be a remnant (1:9); the individuals who make up this remnant will hear and obey! (Hailey).

"Where there is not faith, evidence is merely unwelcome, something which needs to be explained away" (Oswalt).

- 11,12. Isaiah asks God how long?

- a. How long to preach?
- b. Or, how long until the final hardening of their hearts comes? Then it would be until the land is *utterly desolate* and God has removed them far away (captivity).

13. A small remnant will be preserved. A *tenth* or small group will *return* from captivity. Yet, that small group will be reduced even further (*consumed*). The final result will be the *holy seed*.

The idea here is that out of the remnant that will escape there will be a smaller remnant. That original whole remnant will not endure. God always has a remnant within a remnant!

7. THE SYRO-EPHRAIMIMIC UPRISING. CH 7

This chapter begins a series of prophecies (Ch 7-12) given during Ahaz's reign. Their general subjects include deliverance of Judah from Syria and Israel, Judah's later subjection of Assyria (and other powers), the final destruction of Judah's enemies, the appearance of the Messiah and the nature of His kingdom.

THE SYRIA-ISRAEL CONFEDERACY. 7:1,2

Key characters in this section:

- a. Ahaz—reigning king of Judah.
- b. Rezin—king of Assyria.
- c. Pekah (son of Remaliah)—king of Israel (Northern Kingdom), also called Ephraim.

Rezin and Pekah waged war against Judah.

- a. They wanted Judah to join them in resisting Syria.
- b. They were unable to convince Ahaz and Judah to join them, but their alliance against Ahaz caused him to be afraid.
- c. Great men of faith, such as David, would never have been afraid! Why?
 - 1) Because they understood that the power of any nation, or nations combined, could not compare to the absolute and perfect power that only Jehovah has.
 - 2) Perfect love casts out all fear (1 Jn 4:18)—Ahaz and the people had no such love for Jehovah.

CONFRONTATION BETWEEN BELIEF AND UNBELIEF.. . . . 7:3-9

- 3,4. God says, *Do not be afraid of these kings, for what they want will not happen!*

5-9. Another form of God's reassurance to Ahaz.

- a. Isaiah says: Damascus was and would remain the capital of Syria, therefore it shall remain as it is.
- b. Samaria was and would remain the capital of Ephraim (Israel).

Within 65 years, Israel (Samaria - Ephraim) would be broken as a nation, but until then it shall remain as it is, therefore there was no need to fear their conquering Judah.

- c. But, if Ahaz refused to believe this prophecy and trust in God, things would not go well with him.

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL. 7:10-17

10-12. Apparently Isaiah's words did not convince Ahaz, so God asks Ahaz to request a sign from Jehovah to prove the prophecies would come true.

- a. Ahaz refuses to ask God, claiming he does not want to tempt Him.
- b. No one tempts Jehovah when they do what He has commanded or directed!
- c. "To request this sign from Yahweh would have been a manifestation of faith, an evidence that Ahaz believed in the power of the Lord to fulfill the word which He had spoken already through His servant the prophet" (Young).
- d. Ahaz wanted to trust in Assyria for help, not God.
- e. "He knew well enough that if he were to ask for a sign, it would be granted to him, and as a consequence he would have been compelled to believe the Lord and to place his trust in Him. This he did not wish to do....In his refusal Ahaz deliberately set himself up as wiser and better informed than God" (Young).

13. Isaiah's angry response is to the *house of David* — all the rulers, not just Ahaz.

- a. These men represent all of Judah. The sign is not just for them as individuals, but for all of the nation.
- b. The plural form of the word does not imply that Isaiah turned away from Ahaz, but that those present were already implicated in his unbelief.
- c. "You not only try the patience of men (God's prophets), but now you are trying God's patience, and wearying Him."

14-16. God is going to provide a sign anyway!

- a. "In fearing that Syria and Israel could actually depose him, he is expressing disbelief that 'there shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel.' (1 Kings 8:25). A son of David is willing to reject the covenant. God therefore must take over, and give a sign of the greater deliverance, as well as of the proximate deliverance from Syria and Israel" (Young).
- b. "A *sign* is not necessarily a miracle, nor necessarily a prophecy, but a sensible pledge of the truth of something else, whether present, past, or future; sometimes consisting in a miracle (Isa. xxxviii. 8; Judges vi. xxxvii.; Exod. iv. 8), but sometimes in a mere prediction (Exod. iii. 12; 1 Sam. ii. xxxiv.; 2 Kings xix. 29), and sometimes only in a symbol, especially a symbolic name or action (Isa. xxxviii. 18, xx. 3; Ezek. iv. 8)" (Alexander).

Each of the parts of this prophecy is important to be understood correctly.

- a. There are several interpretations as to what the word *virgin* (young maiden) means.
- b. And there are several interpretations as to who this *virgin* (young maiden) is.
- c. There are also different interpretations as to who the *son* is.
- d. Each part of the prophecy needs to be understood correctly in order to answer the following questions:
 - 1) Does this refer to people and events which will occur only in the days of Isaiah?
 - 2) Does this refer to two distinct sets of people and events (*i.e.* two distinct births and children)?
 - 3) Does this refer exclusively to the Messiah's birth and childhood?
 - 4) Or, does this have reference to events in Isaiah's time and in the first century?

"All interpreters appear to be agreed that these three verses contain a threatening of destruction to the enemies of Judah, if not a direct promise of deliverance, and that this event is connected, in some way, with the birth of a child, as the *sign* or pledge of its certain occurrence" (Alexander).

The solution to all of the problems rests in looking at the prophecy from Ahaz's point of view. How did he and his court understand Isaiah's words? What could they rely on for a means of action, or inaction, in their national security?

Then we must look to Matthew to see how God, the Holy Spirit, intended the word "virgin" to be understood in Ahaz's day as well as in our day.

Isaiah gave Ahaz a sign from Jehovah which consisted of a time element; *For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.*

- a. This is not the only sign, based on a time element, Isaiah gives like this:
 - 1) *This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows by itself, and the second year what springs from the same; also in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this (37:30).*
 - 2) Isaiah told Hezekiah that in the space of three years the Assyrian threat would be gone.
- b. This sign tells Ahaz that within the time it takes for conception, birth and enough growth for a child to *refuse the evil and choose the good* the threat of Rezin and Pekah will be gone.

Another part of this prophecy is: *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

- a. Remember, capital letters, punctuation and italics are supplied by the interpreters, they are not in the original Hebrew text.
- b. Also remember that the prophets did not always understand what Jehovah was saying through them: *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.... To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven— things which angels desire to look into (1 Pet 1:10-12).*
- c. Great controversy exists over the use of the word *virgin* in this passage.

- 1) The Hebrew word used by Jehovah is *almah*. The following are some of the meanings given for this word by lexicographers:
 - a) “Feminine of *elem*; a lass....damsel, maid, virgin” (Strong).
 - b) “Noun, feminine, young woman” (Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius).
 - c) “Since *betula* is used many times in the OT as a specific word for ‘virgin,’ it seems reasonable to consider that the feminine form [*almah*] of this word [*elem*] is not a technical word for a virgin but represents a young woman, one of whose characteristics is virginity. This is borne out by the fact that the LXX translates it as *parthenos* in two of its seven occurrences, and that its use in Isa 7:14 was quoted to Joseph by the angel as a prediction of the virgin birth....Some translators interpret Mt 1:22,23 as being simply a comment by Matthew, but it is more reasonable to consider that the argument that convinced Joseph was the fact, pointed out to him by the angel, that such an event had already been predicted by Isaiah” (Theological Workbook of the Old Testament). [] supplied CMH.
 - d) Under the word *bethulah*—“Here we may deal briefly with Isa. 7:14 because of its importance in the history of interpretation: ‘Behold, a (the) young woman (*almah*) is pregnant (will become pregnant): she will bear a son and call him Immanuel’ (or in the pl.: young women are pregnant,’ etc.). *almah* does not mean ‘virgin,’ although, of course, an *almah* can be a ‘virgin.’ The translation ‘virgin’ goes back to *parthenos* in the LXX.... The LXX says simply: ‘The virgin will become pregnant (future) and bear a son.’ The pregnancy lies in the future (cf. Jgs. 13: 3,5); nothing indicates that the woman is also a virgin after the conception.... Neither the word nor the concept of ‘virgin’ and ‘virginity’ is of any importance in the religious thought of the OT and in the earliest history of the interpretation of the idea” (Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament).
- 2) Ahaz, and his court, when addressed by Isaiah, would have understood that within a short time (two or three years) Judah would be free from all threats from Pekah and Rezin.
 - a) To say more than this is to add to God’s word!
 - b) We do not know from scripture that Ahaz would have understood this to be a virgin birth or
 - c) That the actual child was to be born many years in the future, thereby guaranteeing the continuance of the line of David until that time.

d) We do not know that the name *Immanuel* is the literal name of the child, for it certainly was not Jesus' formal name any more than *Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father* or *Prince of Peace* was His formal name.

(1) A very informal reading of the Old Testament reveals many with descriptive names. Some even included the name of Jehovah within them:

- (a) Isaiah = Jehovah Saves.
- (b) Jeremiah = Jehovah Appoints.
- (c) Ezekiel = Jehovah strengthens.
- (d) Jezreel = God will scatter.
- (e) Lo-Ruhamah = No Pity.
- (f) Lo-Ammi = Not my people.

e) Matthew settles the matter forever on what the word *almah* meant to those in the first century and for all time since: *Now all of this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Mt 1:22,23).*

(1) Matthew has shown us that Isaiah's prophecy has a meaning that those in Old Testament times did not understand. Other examples Matthew uses are:

(a) *"When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Mt 2:14,15).*

[1] Matthew is telling us that when Hosea was referring to the exodus from Egypt under Moses (Ex 4:22,23), it prefigured Christ's coming back from Egypt.

(b) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping,

and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they were no more" (Mt 2:17,18).

[1] Matthew then tells us that Jeremiah's speaking of the Babylonian exiles actually prefigured the weeping in Bethlehem when Herod killed the male children under two years of age.

(c) Matthew in this passage is telling us that the *young woman* of Isaiah 7:14 prefigured the virgin Mary and the miraculous conception of Jesus in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit.

[1] Jesus the Christ is the only person in all of history who was virgin born!

[2] Mary is the only person in all of history who remained a virgin even after bearing a child because she still at that time had never known a man in a sexual relationship.

CONCLUSION:

We can look at all the words of Isaiah's prophecy and analyze the nuances of each word and all the possible physical actions of Isaiah and his hearers and theorize the many implications and suppositions of the passage. Volumes of works have been written on this without truly settling the many questions that have been raised. We can get totally inundated with all of these theories and details until we begin to lose sight of what Jehovah was communicating to Ahaz and to us. It is your instructor's conclusion that there are only two parts of the prophecy that have any true import and therefore are of value to us. They are:

a. The time element of Isaiah's prophecy had direct application to Ahaz and Judah at that time.

- 1) The threats of Rezin and Pekah were going to be taken away by Jehovah in a very short period of time.
- 2) This assured the promise made to David that the Messiah would be his descendant, therefore securing a lineage in the house of David at least until that time.

b. The Messiah's virgin birth was predicted, as proven by Matthew when he spoke by inspiration of this prophecy.

- 1) No one today, if they believe in the inspiration of the Bible, can doubt that Isaiah predicted the virgin birth of Jesus!

- 2) We have the same proof today that Joseph had when the angel appeared to him to allay his fears about Mary being with child.

SPECIAL NOTE: See enclosed section by Charlie DiPalma for a slightly different presentation of this section. Notice his conclusions agree with these presented.

THE DEVASTATION FROM ASSYRIA..... 7:18-25

- 18,19. When it is time for that to happen, the Lord will *whistle* (call) on Egypt and Assyria to trouble Judah and they will be as thick and harmful as swarms of bees and flies!
20. The Lord will use Assyria to punish and humiliate Judah. The King of Assyria is spoken of as a hired razor. Ahaz had determined to hire him for help. God would hire him for destruction. Judah would be shaved in a manner bringing the utmost shame (Vine).
- 21,22. Very few people will remain then and all that they will have are a few animals. They will be forced to live from their products instead of the land's produce.
- 23-25. A picture of the desolation of the land. Where formerly there were vineyards, briars and thorns will grow. Even the hills, which were once fertile, will become ranges for the oxen and sheep to trample.

8. ASSYRIA THE OVERWHELMING FLOOD..... CH 8

"He builds his hope of the remnant on the few faithful disciples gathered about him. The prophet earlier looked from the political house of David to the Immanuel to come; now he looks from the decadent nation to a few faithful individuals. It is in these, Immanuel and the faithful few, that God will eventually accomplish His purpose" (Hailey).

THE SIGN: MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ..... 8:1-4

God instructs Isaiah to write a message on a large scroll.

With a man's pen—in common characters, for all to read without difficulty.

The message is to be about his coming second son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.

- a. He has witnesses verify God's message that he records.

He and his wife (*prophetess*) have that son and the Lord tells them to name him "Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz" which means "make speed to the spoil."

Explanation and significance of the name:

- a. Before the child can cry, “Father” or “Mother” (denoting speed and quickness) Assyria will take the spoil of Damascus and Samaria (defeat them).
- b. Thus, the birth of Isaiah’s son and his special name would be a more visible sign that God’s prophecy of Immanuel (7:14) would be fulfilled.

Commentators feel she is called a prophetess because of her relationship to Isaiah. There is no other indication in scripture that she is a prophetess, however we must take the scripture at face value.

THE OVERWHELMING FLOOD: ASSYRIA. 8:5-8

God speaks another prophecy to Isaiah and uses highly symbolic language! The message is that Judah had rejected God for foreign nations, therefore He will use a foreign nation, Assyria, to punish her. Meanings of some of these symbols are:

- a. *Waters of Shiloah*—a pool very near the temple. (Neh 3:15; Jn 9:7,11). They represented the governing of God, which the people had refused.
- b. *Waters of the river*—the king and nation of Assyria.
- c. *Over all his banks*—the overwhelming power of Assyria.
- d. *Pass through Judah*—Assyria will cover the land as a flood would.
- e. *Reach up to the neck*—they would cover Judah even up to Jerusalem.

“The head that extends above the neck and thus escapes the flood is Jerusalem-Zion, to which Immanuel will come as the great Redeemer (59:20). Thus, neither the land nor the city will be completely destroyed, for the God who has promised the birth of Immanuel (7:14) will preserve the land in which He will be born and the Zion to which He will come. Assyria and all the military powers to follow it cannot thwart Jehovah’s purpose” (Hailey).

ONLY JEHOVAH SHALL BE YOUR FEAR. 8:9-15

9,10. Even though God will use foreign nations, their power will be only temporary! They will “come to nothing” and “not stand.” And why not? Because “God is with us” (Immanuel, Jesus!).

11,12. God instructed Isaiah not to do as the people were doing (*walk in the way of this people*).

- a. *Do not say “a conspiracy”*—This is not a reference to Pekah and Rezin. Isaiah and the faithful were being accused of a conspiracy against Ahaz and the nation of Judah because of his denunciation of the alliance of Judah with Assyria.

This is always the case when godly people point out the errors of false teachers and those they have led astray!

- b. Not to fear foreign powers (*threats*).
- c. This shielded him from their actions and their charges against him.
 - 1) He was not to fear their charges that he was guilty of conspiracy or treason.
 - 2) He was not to fear what the people feared.

13-15. Rather, set God apart in your heart (*hallow*) and fear Him! (Lk 12:5). If you do He will be a *sanctuary*, a place of safety, but to some He will be something to trip over and fall—a *stone of stumbling*, a *rock of offense*, a *trap* and a *snare*.

- a. Because of their hard hearts and rebellious attitudes.
- b. This is quoted and applied to Christ in the New Testament (Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:8). The result for those will be destruction.

The fear of God which He deserves has been neglected by the entire world except that remnant within the remnant which belongs to Jehovah.

“Throughout the history of the church, those who have sought to call the church back to her God-given mission and away from her man-made ‘programs’ have been treated as troublemakers” (Young).

The consequences of rejecting Immanuel (Christ):

- a. Stumble,
- b. Fall,
- c. Be broken,
- d. Snared and
- e. Taken!

This can also happen to those who do not remain faithful after becoming a part of the remnant (the church)!

BIND UP THE TESTIMONY. 8:16-18

A contrast between true and false teaching.

Isaiah tells his disciples to *temporarily* seal the scroll containing the prophecy for some future time.

Isaiah says he will wait patiently, and hope until the Lord finishes His work. Meanwhile he and his family are signs to Israel that Jehovah will keep His word.

- a. A sign does not necessarily mean a miracle.
- b. The names they bore were signs and pledges that Jehovah would accomplish all that He has said.

Verse 18 is quoted in Heb 2:13 as applying to Jesus.

TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY. 8:19-22

- 19. These people sought help from mediums and wizards (“fortune tellers”) rather than God. This has always been forbidden (Lev 20:6; Deut 18:10,11).
- 20. They should have gone to the law and the testimony—the word of God. And if they did not speak according to this word, ...*there is no light in them*—falsehoods (1 Pet 4:11).

This should be the rallying call of all faithful Christians—To the law and to the testimony!

- 21,22. The result of rejecting God and consulting false teaching (wizards, etc.):
 - a. They will be hard pressed and hungry.
 - b. They will curse God and their king.
 - c. They will look to heaven (upward) and find a great void instead of help (Hailey).
 - d. After finding no help from Jehovah they will look to the earth (their own works and devisings) and end up reaping the wages of their sins.

9. THE DAWNING LIGHT. Ch 9

“Judgment does not always bring repentance or effect conversion; more often it only hardens (see 8:19-22). The darkness the people experienced consisted not only of the hopelessness of their physical condition, but also of the darkness of sin and ignorance” (Hailey).

LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS. 9:1-3

- 1,2. This darkness and trouble would not last forever. A great light would be made to shine. This light is Jesus! Cf. Mt 4:12-16; cf. Jn 1:4,5; 8:12; Eph 5:8,14.

Jesus, the light of the world, began His work in the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali where the gloom had first settled centuries earlier.

3. This would also be a time of great rejoicing. They would rejoice as when the harvest is reaped, and as those who are victorious in battle *divide the spoil*.

THE BASIS OF THIS JOY. 9:4-7

- 4,5. The cruel hold of oppressors, foreign countries (sin, Rom 6), will be broken by God—fearful enemies, foreign countries, will be defeated—Satan, sin, death. Cf. 1 Cor 15: 57; Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8.

Day of Midian—was the time of Gideon’s victory (Jud 6 & 7). God saved them in His way, not any way men might devise. So it will be in that day, the victory then can only be attributed to Jehovah.

Military weapons and clothing will not be a part of this new economy. These things shall be done away with—2:2-4; Hos 2:18; Zech 9:10. In the spiritual kingdom coming their weapons and clothing will be of a spiritual nature also—Eph 6:10-12.

- 6,7. Here is the reason for the light, the rejoicing and the victory—the Child! This obviously refers to the child to be born of the virgin (7:14)—Jesus, the Messiah. He would be a “son:”

a. Son of man—humanity (Mt 16:28).

b. Son of God—deity (Mt 8:29; Psa 2:7ff; Heb 1:5).

1) He would be *given*—the beautiful gift of God (Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 9:15).

2) *Government on His shoulder*—rule, reign, sovereignty (Eph 1:18-23).

3) *Name shall be called*—Isaiah is not saying the Christ will actually wear these names. These five names describe His characteristics, His nature:

- a) *Wonderful*—He would cause people to wonder and be amazed because of His greatness (Mt 7:28,29; 13:54). He will be *the* wonder of the ages, the full revelation of the God the Father Himself.
- b) *Counselor*—adviser, one with great wisdom (11:2; Col 2:3; 1 Cor 1:24). As the King in His kingdom He will be a Counselor to all of His subjects.
- c) *Mighty God*—this identifies Him with the godhead and shows His omnipotence (Mt 28:18; Jn 16:33; Phil 4:13). This destroys the Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine that Jesus is a god, not God!

(1) They claim that God is always referred to as “almighty” while Jesus is referred to as only “mighty.”

(2) Read 10:21! The same words are found in this verse! Therefore, Jesus is God! (Jer 32:18).

(3) The Hebrew word used here for “God” is El, not Elohim. El is *never* used of lesser gods—only of the God! Therefore, Jesus is God. He is Immanuel—God with us.

d) *Everlasting Father*—literally “the Father of eternity.” Two things are involved here:

(1) Not a created being, but eternal (Jn 1:1ff; Col 1:16ff; Rev 1:18; 3:14).

(2) Eternally watches over His people as does a father (Jn 10:11-15).

e) *Prince of Peace*—He would be a ruler bringing a message of peace and His kingdom would be peaceable kingdom (2:4; 11:6,7; Lk 1:67-79; Eph 2:14ff; Col 1:20ff).

“Government,” “throne of David,” “kingdom” all refer to the reign of Christ as King over His kingdom. Does this mean premillennialism or is He reigning on David's throne now?

- a. His kingdom was established on the day of Pentecost in the first century (Mk 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,41,47).

- b. He was raised from the dead to rule on David's throne in the first century! (2 Sam 7:12,13,16; Acts 2:29-33).
- c. He has been reigning since He ascended to the Father (Dan 7:13,14; Eph 1:20-23; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).
- d. Christ could not rule on David's throne on earth (as required in premillennialism.) (Jer 22:24-30 cf. Mt 1:12).
- e. Christ would be a priest while ruling on David's throne (Zech 6:12,13; Heb 2:17), but He could not be a priest on earth (Heb 7:14). Therefore, He is *not* coming back to rule as king and priest on earth.

Premillennialism is *false*! From *every* standpoint!

Justice is being right and fair in making decisions.

a. *Zeal.....will perform this*—His jealousy has two objects:

- 1) It is the fire of indignation against all who maltreat His people and
- 2) A fire that burns with intense love for His people and great zeal for their welfare that it must consume all unfaithfulness in their midst (Vine).

THE ARROGANCE OF EPHRAIM. 9:8-12

8-10. Ephraim—Israel, Samaria, the northern kingdom.

God sends a word (a message) to the northern kingdom.

Reason for the message—their arrogant pride.

It cannot be determined from this context whether this was an actual boast or Isaiah's summation of the people's attitude.

- a. Regardless of what their circumstances were and had been they had not learned from their experiences.
- b. God must still punish them.

11,12. The message—God will use the Syrians and Philistines to devour Israel. And because the people still will not repent, God's anger would remain!

ISRAEL TO BE CUT OFF, HEAD AND TAIL. 9:13-17

13. The problem is that the people will not repent and seek the Lord.

Jehovah was the one who had smote the people, but still they refused to learn.

14. To cut them off in one day shows the swiftness of the destruction.

15,16. The result is that God will remove the elders (rulers) and the lying prophets.

Notice that the elders are condemned, but so are these who follow their errors! Cf. Mt 15:14.

Also notice that the lying prophets were not only following their leaders but encouraging them in their error.

Political leaders, as well as religious leaders, bear a heavy responsibility for what the people of a country think and how they live their lives, for the people are largely molded by these two groups (Hailey).

17. The Lord's anger is against all classes of evil doers (young men, fatherless and widows).

Jehovah's anger and judgment are as absolute as His love and mercy. When will we in the church learn this message?

THE DEVOURING FIRE: WICKEDNESS AND CIVIL WAR..... 9:18-21

18. It would destroy them as a fire.

19. Through God's wrath their land would be burned up (*darkened* KJV). Even brothers would fight against one another (*no man shall spare his brother*). Wickedness carries within itself the seed of its own destruction.

20. Conditions will be so bad that they will try to devour each other. Cf. 2 Kgs 6:24-31; Jer 19:9.

21. Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph (Gen 46:20). Those two tribes had always been united, but in this instance they are predicted to be against each other and would unite only to fight together against Judah. All of this incurred God's wrath, anger.

10. THE USE AND DOOM OF ASSYRIA..... CH 10

VISITATION AND DESOLATION!..... 10:1-4

1. They made unfair laws.

2. They mistreated the needy, poor, widows, fatherless. Cf. Deut 27:19; Lev 19:15.
3. God asks them what they will do when destruction comes from afar (foreign nations).

Their glory was their political system and their wealth. Where could they put these for safekeeping when the enemy comes? The answer—no where!

“The presence of the Lord in the midst of His people is their highest glory, their highest privilege. It is the secret of blessing, of power in testimony, of strength against the spiritual foe. At the same time His presence is intensely solemn. It is designed to enable us to live in His fear, not the fear that shrinks from Him, but the fear that shrinks from grieving the Holy Spirit. Failure to apprehend this leads to spiritual declension” (Vine).

4. Without God’s help these unjust people will bow down among the prisoners and fall among the slain in the invasion.

Their conduct as a nation and as individuals asked for Jehovah’s judgment and indignation. They were about to receive what they had been begging for.

ASSYRIA: JEHOVAH’S ROD..... 10:5-11

- 5,6. Jehovah says that Assyria is *the rod of His anger*. God is using Assyria to work out His wrath on His hypocritical or profane nation. He will command Assyria what to do (*give him charge*).

- 7-11. But Assyria did not recognize that God was in control.

Their king wanted to capture more nations and establish his princes as kings.

A list of cities which Assyria had conquered or would conquer—boasting!

The king is saying, “I conquered all these lands which were protected by their idols and I will do the same thing to Jerusalem”—boasting!

The Assyrians were not serving God’s purposes intentionally, God was using them as His rod of punishment for Judah because it was already in their hearts to be the world rulers.

Oriental rulers judged the strength of their idols by whom they conquered or were conquered. The idols of Samaria were many and very beautiful, therefore Assyria felt Judah would be an easier prey because she had not fallen as far from Jehovah and she had fewer idols.

THE ASSYRIAN'S BOAST AND JEHOVAH'S RESPONSE. 10:12-19

12-14. God will punish Assyria, but not yet. Jehovah has work for her to do before He punishes her. It will come after God uses Assyria to punish Jerusalem. And the reason will be the arrogance of Assyria (*arrogant heart...haughty looks*).

Assyria claims victories because of her own strength and wisdom, not God's. Cf. Deut 32:8; Dan 4:17; Acts 17:26.

15-19. Arrogance consumed as a forest.

Assyria (*the ax*) had the nerve to boast against God (*him who chops with it*).

Notice the terms for God in these verses: Lord, Lord of hosts, Light of Israel, Holy One. God will destroy the proud glory of Assyria like a fire through a forest! This may be a reference to destruction of the Assyrian army in one night as she camped against Jerusalem.

A REMNANT SHALL RETURN (SHEAR-JASHUB). 10:20-23

Even in the midst of this consuming fire a remnant will return unto the *Mighty God*.

This remnant will depend upon the Lord, *not* on Assyria (*him who defeated them*).

"Jehovah never promised that all the descendants of Abraham would be saved; those who would be saved were always spoken of as a remnant. Paul quoted this passage and applied it to the Jews saved under Christ: though the nation be brought to a full end, a remnant will be saved (Rom 9:27).....Not only will the Assyrians be destroyed, but there will be also a complete destruction of the Jewish nation.....it will be a righteous judgment" (Hailey).

Be Not Afraid!

Though on His Way, the Assyrian Shall Be Brought Low. 10:24-34

24-27. Zion's deliverance when Assyria falls.

In a short time God will deliver the remnant from Assyrian oppression.

"Though the period between the assaults of Tiglath-Pileser and the defeat of Sennacherib will be some thirty years, that is a very short time in the whole history of the nation. When Jehovah determines that the time has come, He will provide the means for Assyria's destruction" (Hailey).

God says to His people, "Do not be afraid even when Assyria treats you cruelly as Egypt did."

Their humiliation being complete, His anger will end their destruction.

God will punish (*scourge*) Assyria as He did Midian (Jud 7:24,25) and Egypt (at the Red Sea—Ex 14:26ff).

The burden and yoke of Assyria will be removed.

Because of the anointing oil—“The anointing of the kings and priests in Jerusalem as those who were consecrated to God, on account of which God would destroy the foe” (Vine).

28-32. War bulletin of Assyrian Invasion.

God describes the future invasion by Assyrians as if it were already happening. They are pictured as advancing rapidly through city after city until they reach the outskirts of Jerusalem and threaten it.

32-34. Proud Assyrian forest cut down.

Assyria is pictured as a forest and the Lord cuts them down in all their pride and arrogance. *Lebanon* represents the king of Assyria (Ezek 31:3).

Jehovah will take away the glory of the king of Assyria and put great fear in its place.

11. THE KING, HIS SUBJECTS AND THE REMNANT. CH 11

This chapter promises the restoration and deliverance of God’s remnant. It guarantees their peace and safety as compared to the ruin and sorrow of their enemies.

THE SHOOT OF JESSE. 11:1-5

1. Another prophecy of the branch or rod, the Messiah—Immanuel! Cf. notes on 4:2. He will come out of the stem of Jesse (David’s father). Note the contrast with the Assyrian forest.
2. One of the characteristics of the Messiah would be His possession of the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16; Jn 1:33,34; 3:34; Acts 10:38). Notice there are six categories listed as a result of His possession of the Holy Spirit:
 - a. *Spirit of wisdom*—insight into the underlying causes of things and their consequences—ability to use knowledge properly (Lk 2:52; Jn 2:25; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:17; Col 2:3).
 - b. *Spirit of understanding*—ability to make sound judgments based on wisdom.

- c. *Spirit of counsel*—having or giving direction in formatting plans and solutions and then being qualified to give advice and teach others (Jn 1:49; 3:2).
- d. *Spirit of might*—the strength or power to carry out plans and solutions (9:6; Lk 24:19; Acts 2:22).
- e. *Spirit of knowledge*—full comprehension of God and man (Mt 11:27).
- f. *Spirit of the fear of the Lord*—reverence, piety due the Father (Prov 1:7; Lk 12:5).

3-5. More characteristics of the Messiah.

And His delight is in the fear of the Lord—Immanuel will enjoy doing the will of God, being reverent. Cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 14:31.

He will judge with righteousness, not on externals (Jn 7:24). Contrast this with the rule of their leaders. He will punish the wicked with His words. Cf. 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 1:16.

He will be merciful and faithful. Cf. Heb 2:17.

He will do all of this by the Holy Spirit, not using His own attributes as deity.

The earth—the worldly minded.

There are two realms the Messiah is to rule over:

- a. One is made up of the poor and meek (Mt 5:3,5) and
- b. The other is made up of the earthly-minded and wicked.

Righteousness—conformity to God's divine standard in all things.

Shall be the belt of His loins—which will support Him in every contest.

And faithfulness—firmness and stability from which He never waivers.

The belt of His waist—in this confidence and strength He challenges and meets the wicked. (Hailey).

THE CHARACTER OF THE CITIZENS.. 11:6-10

A beautiful, symbolic picture of peace, associated with the time of the Messiah—the Branch. Isaiah uses the symbol of animals, normally hostile to one another, now

living together in peace. The problem that disrupts peace in life, and in this book, is man's separation from God because of his sins (1:2,4,24; 59:1,2). Only through Christ, the Prince of Peace, can this separation be bridged and peace with God come (9:6; Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:19ff), and this is available only through *the knowledge of the Lord*.

Isaiah is describing the animal nature of men which will be brought under Jehovah's control in the Messiah's kingdom—the church.

Jesus, the Messiah, *the Root of Jesse*, will draw many people to Himself. Paul quotes this verse as fulfilled in Christ. Cf. Jn 3:14; 12:32; Rom 15:12.

We who are Gentiles have no hope at all if this passage is not fulfilled in the church!

THE REMNANT. 11:11-16

A picture of the universal nature of "the remnant," the church.

Jehovah will bring a remnant back to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel and then He will bring a second remnant into the new Jerusalem under His Messiah.

Isaiah uses highly figurative language to illustrate the victory of the remnant over the enemies of God (Philistine, Edom, Moab, Ammon, etc.) Remember, this is all in the time of the Messiah, the Branch, the Root!

13. Tribal and national boundaries will be broken down within the remnant—the church. Cf. Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11ff.

14-16. Victory over the enemies of God through Christ. Cf. Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; Rev 12:11.

The new kingdom will include the descendants of Abraham plus descendants of their former enemies (Gentiles).

These events signify the removal of obstacles and national boundaries.

12. REJOICING AND THANKSGIVING OF THE REMNANT. CH 12

1,2. In the age of the Messiah, people will praise God for the salvation available through His mercy and His dear Son (Rom 15:6). Three of the great themes of this book are seen in these verses:

a. *God is my salvation...trust and be not afraid...is my strength*—God as Redeemer and Savior!

- b. Great is the Holy One of Israel—sovereignty and holiness of God.
 - c. The ones rejoicing are those in Zion—the dwelling place of God, the remnant, the church.
3. *You will draw water from the wells of salvation*—shows the abundance of spiritual water for those in His remnant. Cf. Jn 4:10,14; 7:37,38.
- 4-6. *Declare His deeds*—preach the word (Mt 28:18ff; Eph 3:8; 2 Tim 4:2).

This verse points out a weakness in Christians today—we do not, as a people, declare to the lost world the joy of our salvation, the rule of God in our lives and the nations of the world.

Make mention—speak out, tell the world how you feel about your salvation!

All are to be evangelistic!

B. ORACLES OF JUDGMENT AGAINST INDIVIDUAL NATIONS..... CH 13-23

1. THE ORACLE AGAINST BABYLON..... CH 13

THE CALL TO ARMS. 13:1-5

- 1-3. God is calling His warriors against Babylon to execute His anger.

Isaiah probably wrote this section about 730 B.C.

Babylon was not a world power until approximately 606 B.C. (about 124 years).

Babylon was not conquered until approximately 536 B.C. (about 200 years).

How could this be? Inspiration of the Bible—God working through Isaiah.

- 4,5. Description of the warriors.

Noise of a multitude gathered by God.

Come from a far country—actually they would come from Persia—Medes.

My sanctified ones—Those chosen (set apart) for God's purposes in punishing Babylon.

Those who rejoice in My exaltation—This does not necessarily imply they are conscious of Jehovah's choosing them for this purpose.

The Medes are called Jehovah's *weapons of indignation*.

The Terror of the Day of Jehovah. 13:6-16

6-8. Terrors of the day of the Lord.

When the day of destruction comes people will wail, be limp, their hearts will melt, they will be afraid and be sorry. Notice that this is from the Almighty!

"The day of Jehovah (day of the Lord) is always a day of judgment and the fierce anger of Jehovah. As such, it is a day of destruction for those upon whom it falls, although it may be a day of deliverance for the faithful" (Hailey).

9,10. When God destroys Babylon the destruction will be complete!

This type of language is used frequently to predict the destruction of cities and nations. Therefore this does not necessarily point to the judgment day. Cf. Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Micah 3:6; Mt 24:29.

Here, Isaiah is speaking of the destruction of Babylon, the end of the Babylonian world. Again, this is not speaking of the end of this earth, but is speaking about the end of the world as the Babylonians knew it.

11,12. Jehovah now broadens His prophecy to include other nations motivated by evil.

13-16. It should be noted that nations are judged in time, on this earth, but souls will be judged on that day at the end of time.

THE COMPLETENESS OF THE DESTRUCTION. 13:17-22

17-19. The Medes—God's Instrument to Destroy Babylon.

God will use the fierce Medes of Persia to destroy the glory and pride of Babylon and the destruction will be as complete as that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

How great will be the fall of Babylon! From all of her glory to total defeat.

Notice how Jehovah describes Babylon:

The glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride.

Shall not regard silver. This simply means they were driven by the lust of power and revenge, not for the spoils of war.

20-22. Destruction of Babylon.

It will be so complete that no one will ever live there again! This was fulfilled remarkably. (See *Barnes* for specifics.)

2. THE BURDEN OF PHILISTIA. CH 14

COMPASSION ON JACOB. 14:1,2

1,2. When the destruction is complete, God will allow Judah to return from captivity.

The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. This prophecy is fulfilled in Esther 8:17—Then many people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

THE TAUNTING SONG AGAINST BABYLON. 14:3-11

This is a picture of Judah rejoicing over the defeat of their captor—Babylon.

Notice that the Lord is responsible for the victory and release!

They rejoice that the proud persecutor (Babylon) is now the persecuted.

Golden city may refer to Babylon as:

- a. A haughty city or
- b. A city where great stores (treasures) of gold was kept.

A scene from Sheol (Hades). All the dead rulers of the past remark that Babylon's glory has been brought low by the great equalizer—death.

- a. "This passage demonstrates the fact of the conscious state of the souls of the dead in hades, their power to exchange thoughts, and their vivid recollection of their past circumstances on earth. There is no Scripture to support the supposition of the unconsciousness of the soul" (Vine).
- b. They ask the question, "Have you become as weak as we?"
- c. The answer is YES! This is the ultimate end of all countries and men who leave God out of their lives.

Babylon's was proud. She wanted to be above all others, even like God—*the Most High*.

THE FALL OF THE MIGHTY..... 14:12-20

Lucifer, in verse twelve, is not in the Hebrew text! It should read “day star” and refers to the king of Babylon, not to Satan as some claim. Cf. v. 4.

- a. “This verse has been the ground of no little misunderstanding and controversy among Bible students. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star* (“Lucifer,” King James), *son of the morning!* On the basis of Luke 10:18, this verse was interpreted by some early church fathers as referring to Satan’s fall and ejection from heaven together with his angels. Derived from a Hebrew word meaning “to shine,” the term translated *day-star* refers to the morning star, the harbinger of a new day, which is at its brightest just before the dawn” (Hailey).
- b. The entire context demands that we understand that the phrase “day-star” refers to the king of Babylon! He is called a “man” in verse sixteen.

Instead of being exalted, Babylon’s king is pictured as not even being fit for a common burial. See especially vvs. 19,20.

Like the garment of those who are slain refers to clothing covered with blood, clothing that has been thrust through by a sword.

“His thirst for conquest and glory had destroyed his land and slain his people; the resources of the land had been expended on war.” (Hailey).

It is the Vengeance of Jehovah!. 14:21-27

21-23. God’s verdict against Babylon.

God will make Babylon utterly desolate, the destruction being so complete that the Babylonians will never be able to rise up and be a force again.

When a nation, any nation, becomes unfit to continue through corruption and wickedness, Jehovah will bring it to its end!

24-27. Against Assyria.

Isaiah shifts from the distant future (Babylon) to the near future (Assyria) and says it is certain that Assyria will be broken because it is God’s will (10:5ff).

This is an immediate sign to these people. When Jehovah brings Assyria to her knees it will be further proof that He will keep his promises concerning Babylon and His remnant.

THE ORACLE AGAINST PHILISTIA. 14:28-32

28-32. Against Philistia.

The ancient and constant enemies of Israel (Philistines, Jud 14-16; 1 Sam 4-6), are told not to rejoice at the destruction of Assyria because they are also going to be destroyed and Zion will be saved.

Who the “rod,” “viper,” and “flying serpent” are is not stated. It is possible that:

- a. The *rod* is Assyria and out of her roots is
- b. The *serpent*, Babylon and a third power
- c. The *flying serpent* is unknown.
- d. Beware of over applying figurative speech!

3. THE BURDEN OF MOAB. CH 15,16

CRYING, WEEPING AND TREMBLING OVER DESOLATION. 15:1-4

Moab was the son of Lot and his older daughter (Gen 19:31ff). The Moabites opposed Israel during her journey to Canaan (Num 22:24). During the time of the judges, they persecuted Israel for 18 years (Jud 3:12) and later they rebelled against Israel (2 Kgs 3).

The last mention of Moab is made by Zephaniah in his prophecy (2:8,9).

1-4. Moab’s desolation.

Arrogant, rebellious Moab will be *laid waste* and as a result the people will weep, wail and mourn.

THE PROPHET’S LAMENT. 15:5-9

In these verses Isaiah cries out in anguish for the people.

- a. People are fleeing the destruction.
- b. Rivers dry up and plants die.
- c. They take what little they have and hide with it.
- d. The rivers are filled with blood and lions catch those who try to escape.

Jehovah's judgment is total destruction of the nation!

MOAB'S HOPE. 16:1-5

1,2. Moab's predicament.

Isaiah's advice to Moab in their trouble: send a lamb to Judah—*daughter of Zion*. Moab had done this once before when they sought Judah's help and protection (2 Kgs 3:4ff). If they do not do this, they will be like a bird without a nest.

3,4. Isaiah's plea.

Now Isaiah asks Moab to deal fairly with Judah and to provide a temporary hiding place or place of refuge for some of Judah who were fleeing from persecution.

5. The Promise.

A promise that if Moab cooperates they will have a share in blessings. Many see this passage as Messianic. Note the terms that suggest:

- a. *Mercy*—associated with Christ (Eph 2:4ff).
- b. *Throne*—throne of David associated with Christ, the Messiah. Cf. notes on 9:6, 7.

Sit upon it in truth, in the tabernacle (house) of David—Jn 14:6.

Judging and seeking justice—2:4; 9:6,7; 11:3-5.

MOAB'S REJECTION OF THIS HOPE. 16:6-12

6-8. Moab's arrogance.

Moab's great problem—pride, haughtiness. Thus, they would refuse to listen to Isaiah's plea and promise and they would howl and mourn because of the destruction that will result.

Jer 48:14—Moab had magnified himself against Jehovah. "Today nations and individuals also allow pride, arrogancy, and reliance on self and human wisdom to become stumbling blocks that lead to their destruction" (Hailey).

9-12. Moab's agony and abasement.

Again, Isaiah mourns because of Moab's coming punishment.

Their great vineyards are destroyed. No more joy, gladness or singing.

“The treading of destruction will replace the treading of the wine vat—every planting brings its own harvest” (Hailey).

They will pray to their false gods until they grow weary, but it will avail nothing because:

- a. Their gods are no gods at all and
- b. The true and living God has declared their destruction within three years.

The Fixed Time of the Visitation on Moab. 16:13,14

“The phrase *the years of a hireling* indicates a definite period, for the hireling wants to work not a day longer than the agreement, and the one who hires him wants him to work not a day less. Therefore, without any doubt the devastation of Moab will come within three years” (Hailey).

4. THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS. CH 17

THE JUDGMENT AGAINST DAMASCUS.. . . . 17:1-3

Damascus was the capital of Syria. The Syrians had joined with the Northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) to fight against Judah (Chs. 7,8; 2 Kgs 16:5). Thus, both countries had made themselves enemies of Judah.

Damascus will be destroyed, ruined and cease to be a city. Some of its surrounding cities will be good only for flocks of animals to pasture, undisturbed by men. Assyria did this, just as predicted.

Also see Amos 1:3-5; Jer 49:23-27; Zech 9:1.

The Leanness of Jacob. 17:4-11

The strength of Ephraim (Israel) and Damascus will be brought low. They will be like the former glory of Israel—lean, faded and tarnished, and there will be just a few people left.

When God brings this destruction some will turn to God, the creator and Holy One, and they will give up their false gods and altars made with their own hands.

Israel trusted in her strong cities, but in that day there will be very few cities left.

Notice the description of the true God they had forgotten:

- a. God of their salvation (Mic 7:7; Hos 2:15).
- b. Rock of their strength (Deut 32:4,15,18,30,31,37; Psa 18:31,46; 28:1; 30:1,2).

Since they left God, their harvest would be spare, causing grief and sorrow.

“Those who reject God for the empty vanities of the world will find that, when they need the help which only God can provide, they must bear their grief and sorrow alone. Just as Wisdom refused to listen when calamity came to the foolish who had responded to her earlier calls with deaf ears (Prov 1:24-31), so Jehovah refused to hear those who have spurned and rejected His call” (Hailey).

The Destruction of the Invader. 17:12-14

Here, Assyria is presented like a great multitude and rushing waters: a picture of their invasion of Syria, then Israel and then Judah (37:36; 2 Kgs 19:35). But God will rebuke them and chase them away (2 Kgs 19:36). They would appear as a great threat or trouble in the evening, but the next morning they would be gone. This is exactly what did happen to Sennacherib’s army! (37:36,37).

5. ETHIOPIA. Ch 18

THE AMBASSADORS AND THE PROPHET’S WORD TO Them. 18:1-3

Ethiopia is pictured as sending out messengers to other nations. Apparently, they are doing this to seek help to attack Judah.

Jehovah is in Control. 18:4-6

Isaiah calls this plot to the attention of all. He relates how God patiently watches this plot from heaven, but when God is ready, He will destroy them.

Ethiopia’s Homage to the Lord. 18:7

When God exercises His mighty power, some who fought against Him and His people will bring “presents” or gifts to Him (will worship Him.) When Assyria defeated Israel many brought gifts to God (2 Chron 32:23). Many see this passage as Messianic:

- a. Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8).
- b. In a Messianic context, Ethiopia is shown to bring gifts to God (Zech 3:10).
- c. This passage makes reference to Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God’s name.

- d. God's dwelling place in the New Testament is in Christians—the church (1 Cor 3:16; 6:9; Eph 2:19ff).
- e. Christians have come to Mount Zion (Heb 12:22ff).

6. AN ORACLE CONCERNING EGYPT. CH 19

THREATS. 19:1-17

INTERNAL DISCORD: THE FAILURE OF IDOLATRY. 19:1-4

Egypt was a constant and powerful enemy of the Hebrews (Ex 1,2). Also, in Isaiah's time, many advised seeking help from Egypt rather than God (Isa 30-32). Thus, it was necessary to show God's superiority over these foreign people.

God is pictured as riding on the clouds to strike fear in the heart of Egypt and her idols. (Psa 18:10ff; 104:3; Dan 7:13; Mt 24:30). At that time there will be great civil strife, and they will be discouraged, without wisdom and will turn to wizards, magicians, etc., for advice.

The Lord of hosts will allow Egypt to be overtaken by cruel rulers—probably referring to foreigners (Ezek 29-31). History tells us that beginning in 722 B.C. Egypt was ruled by such a series of foreign powers as Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, etc.

Also see Jer 46; Ezek 29-32; Joel 3:19.

NATURAL AND ECONOMIC DISASTER. 19:5-10

Even the necessities that give and sustain life for Egypt will fail! Notice the vital resources that will be affected:

- a. The waters of the Nile River.
- b. The reeds and rushes (papyrus).
- c. Everything that depends on the River.
- d. Fishermen. Cf. Num 11:5.
- e. Those who work with flax and fabric. Cf. Ex 9:31; 1 Kgs 10:28; Ezek 27:7.
- f. All workers and pillars of society (ASV).

Notice the affect these calamities will have:

- a. The people will mourn,
- b. Lament and languish,
- c. Be ashamed,
- d. Will be broken and
- e. Troubled in soul.

FOOLISH COUNSEL. 19:11-15

The Egyptians were well known for their wisdom (1 Kgs 9:5ff; Acts 7:22a), but this passage tells us that when God punishes them their rulers and counselors will give foolish advice! Isaiah taunts them (1 Cor 1:17-25). These leaders cause Egypt to go astray.

No work will be accomplished—not by the leaders nor the common everyday workers (9:14).

NO SPIRIT — ONLY FEAR AND TERROR. 19:16,17

The mighty power and wisdom of God will cause Egypt to fear Him and, because of God's association with Judah, they will fear for it also (Deut 2:25).

PROMISES. 19:18-25

THE TRANSITION FROM THREATS TO PROMISES. 19:18

"Isaiah seems to be saying in verse 18 that amid idolatry and confusion there will be some who swear to Jehovah while they continue to speak the mixed language of error and truth—the language of Canaan—until the pure spiritual language of Jehovah comes. As they do so, the center of Egyptian idolatry in their midst will be destroyed" (Hailey).

JEHOVAH TO BE KNOWN TO EGYPT. 19:19-22

This passage speaks of a time when some in Egypt will turn and worship the Lord.

"Those who offered sacrifices somewhere other than at the door of the tent of meeting were to be cut off (Lev 17:8,9). Other than the altar erected by Noah and the two erected by Moses, there is no record of an altar being erected to Jehovah outside the land of Israel. This clearly prohibits us from interpreting verse 19 as an indication that an actual altar of Jehovah will be set up in Egypt" (Hailey).

...Savior, a Mighty one, He will deliver them—very Messianic language.

...Lord will strike Egypt...and heal it—similar to Heb 12:5ff.

UNIVERSAL WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH. 19:23-25

Egypt, Assyria and Israel had been enemies for ages but, in this passage, are spoken of as united, working together, and as being God's people. Historians note that this took place in a limited extent during the time of Alexander the Great of Greece. But the ultimate fulfillment is in the universal kingdom, Christ's church (Acts 2:5ff; Eph 2:11ff; Col 3:11).

7. EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA. CH 20

THE TRUST THAT FAILED. 20:1-6

1,2. The sign of Isaiah.

Sargon was king of Assyria at this time. Assyria had captured Syria, Damascus and Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9ff). Sargon sent Tartan to fight against the city of Ashdod and was successful. *Tartan* is not a name, but a title of one of the three highest positions in the Assyrian government. This was a threat to both Egypt and Judah and, as a result, some in Judah wanted to trust in Egypt and Ethiopia for aid (5:30-32).

Shortly before this, God told Isaiah to remove his sackcloth and sandals and walk *naked* and barefoot as a sign to His people. He was not literally naked, because men wore a linen cloth garment under their outer clothes (Jn 21:7), but it was a shame for one to have to walk thus.

According to ancient monuments this type of garb was worn by captives (Hailey).

"What Isaiah was directed to do, therefore, was simply opposed to common custom, and not to moral decency" (Delitzsch).

3-6. The meaning of the sign.

Isaiah's walking naked and barefoot for three years was *a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia*.

Assyria will capture Egypt and Ethiopia in an embarrassing way. These two countries will be ashamed, just as Isaiah was ashamed in removing his sackcloth, and those who wanted to trust in these two countries for protection will also be ashamed and embarrassed.

8. BABYLON, DUMAH AND ARABIA. CH 21

BABYLON, THE WILDERNESS OF THE SEA..... 21:1-10

The Hard Vision..... 21:1-5

The vision refers to the downfall of Babylon. God will cause the Elamites and Medes to come upon Babylon like whirlwinds. Just thinking about the vision made Isaiah hurt. The Babylonians will be taken by surprise. Cf. Dan 5.

This judgement against Babylon is deliverance for God's people.

The Watchman and His Mission. 21:6-10

God uses the figure of a watchman to predict what will happen to Babylon. It is depicted as already having occurred. The watchman sees an army about to attack the city and then gives this message:

- a. Babylon is fallen (Jer 1:32; 51:8; Rev 18:1,2).
- b. Her false gods have been destroyed.

"After Judah has been threshed and winnowed by Jehovah, and He thus gets His grain, the floor (Babylon) will be destroyed." (Hailey). Cf: Jer 51:33.

THE BURDEN OF EDMON..... 21:11,12

Dumah—Edom. *Seir*—a mountain in Edom (Gen 36:8,9). The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Gen 25:29-34) and are denounced by the prophets for fighting against Israel and rejoicing at Israel's defeat at the hands of other nations (Obad 1-18; Amos 1:11; Joel 3:19).

Here they cry out, asking how much longer will the night last? *Night* represents affliction, oppression, calamity (Job 35:10; Mic 3:6), while *morning* represents relief from these problems. Isaiah says relief will come to those who seek God and repent. *If you will inquire, inquire. Return! Come back.*

Night after night comes upon Edom (Assyria, Babylon, Rome) until about 70 A.D. there is no more record of them as a people (Hailey).

THE BURDEN UPON ARABIA.. 21:13-17

The Arabians were descendants of Ishmael, the half-brother of Isaac. Ishmael began mocking Isaac (from whom the Jews were descended) at an early age (Gen 21:9). The Arabians were wanderers (nomads) who lived in the desert (Jer 49:28-33). Here they are shown hiding in the forest where food has been brought to them.

They were in hiding because they had to flee from an invading army and they will be reduced to a very small number.

9. THE VALLEY OF VISION: JERUSALEM. CH 22

REBUKE OF THE PEOPLE'S SPIRIT OF FRIVOLITY.. . . . 22:1-14

1-4. A frivolous and frightened city.

Isaiah talks to the city as if it were a person. This section is probably a prophecy of the final destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Apparently there is a lull in the battle and the people in the city go to their housetops to observe the events. There people were dying, but not in battle—probably from famine (v. 2, cf. 2 Kgs 25:3; Jer 52:6; Lam 1:19, 20). Yet, there is rejoicing and much noise—careless, reckless indifference. Their leaders have abandoned them and Isaiah weeps at this prophetic vision of destruction.

5-7. Foreboding.

Isaiah sees a terrible day of destruction from God. The walls are broken down. Cf. 2 Kgs 25:10. This happened at the invasion of the Babylonians. The destroyers include people from Elam and Kir and the city is pictured as surrounded by foreign armies.

8-11. Folly.

Judah is pictured as an uncovered woman, which is a disgrace (47:2; Nah 3:5). Yet, in that disgrace, they turned to material weapons for deliverance—armor (v. 8 cf. 1 Kgs 7:2-6; 10:17; Isa 39:2) and to their own feeble strength, but not to God!

12-14. Fatalism.

The Lord's actions and words should have brought weeping and mourning. Instead the people rejoiced and partied as if there was no tomorrow. God does not forgive such unrepentant attitudes.

THE FAILURE OF THE STEWARDS.. . . . 22:15-25

15-19. Shebna's rebellion.

Shebna was the treasurer, or steward, over the house. Thus, he was probably the chief of staff over the king's household (1 Kgs 18:3). He is a prime example of the irreverence and insolence of these people. He had abused his position to have his own sepulcher built *on high* above others, where the kings were buried (2 Chron

32:33) displaying selfish pride and self glory. But God had other plans for this vain man!

20-25. Shebna's replacement.

God would replace Shebna with Eliakim, *God's servant*—not proud, selfish or vain. This was done as prophesied (36:3,22; 37:2). God will give Eliakim all the privileges and power of Shebna's office—robe, belt, etc. In contrast to Shebna, Eliakim will use these to help the people and not himself. But members of his family will try to use him to obtain glory for themselves. Verse 25 is a prophecy of Eliakim's removal or abolition of the office.

"It is more probable that what Jehovah is stressing here is that the entire system of which Shebna and Eliakim are parts (some serve in this system honorably and others dishonorably) will eventually come to an end" (Hailey).

10. THE BURDEN OF TYRE..... CH 23

THE JUDGMENT OF TYRE AND THE EFFECT OF HER FALL. 23:1-7

Tyre was a great city of Phoenicia, usually mentioned in connection with Sidon or Zidon (Mt 11:21,22; Mk 3:8). Although it was allotted to the tribe of Asher (Josh 19:29) it appears that the Jews never really conquered it (2 Sam 24:7; 1 Kgs 7:13, 14). One part of Tyre was on the coast and one part was on an island about one mile from the coast. It was a great seaport and power, noted as a center of commerce, luxury and magnificence (Ezek 26-29, esp. 27). Tyre had taken advantage of Jerusalem's affliction in the past (Ezek 26:1,2). They were a proud and self-exalting people (Ezek 27:1-3) and their king blasphemed against God (Ezek 28:1-10).

1-3. The world's market place.

This great center of commerce is described as *laid waste*, destroyed and this causes those who deal with Tyre to wail; places like Tarshish (v. 1 cf. Jer 10:9; Ezek 27:12,25), Cyprus (v. 1 cf. Ezek 27:6) and Shihor (the Nile River in Egypt) (v. 3 cf. Josh 13:3; 1 Chron 13:5; Jer 2:18).

This section is not a condemnation of business and making a profit! What this is condemning is when men let greed rule their business practices.

4-7. Wasted memory.

Since Tyre was a colony of Sidon, Sidon is shown as ashamed; like a mother who has lost her children. The island of Tyre was a stronghold in the sea (Zech 9:3), but

is shown here as not bringing forth any children. The news of her fall spreads throughout the world.

“The fall of a commercial power affects not only itself, but also all the nations associated with or dependent upon it” (Hailey).

JEHOVAH, THE EXECUTIONER OF THE JUDGMENT. 23:8-12

Some might ask, “How could this happen to such a strong, ancient city? Who has done this?” The answer is, God will destroy their pride. With Tyre destroyed her colonies, like Tarshish, will have more freedom. God’s mighty hand shakes and destroys even the strongest of human forces! Surely, God rules in the kingdoms of men! (Dan 4:17, 25,32; 5:21; Psa 83:18; Jer 27:5).

THE FATE OF PHOENICIA: THOUGH CAST DOWN, TYRE’S PROSPERITY SHALL BE RESTORED. 23:13-18

12-14. The agent of the Judge.

Just as God would use the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to destroy Assyria, He would use them to destroy Tyre and no matter where they went they would find no rest. Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city in 585 B.C. and subdued it in 572 B.C.

Many commentators feel this is not talking about the physical origin of the Chaldeans, but that they were brought to power by Assyrian aggressions.

“It was the constant conflict with Assyria which brought Babylon to the position of the dominant world power” (Hailey).

15,16. Tyre’s subjection.

Tyre will be destroyed and forgotten for 70 years. This is the length of the reign of the Babylonians. After that, she will draw attention to herself to be remembered again.

17,18. Restoration.

After God’s purposes have been fulfilled during the 70 years, He will restore Tyre. Part of her will return to her old practices, but part of her will be dedicated to God. This may be seen in two fulfillments:

- a. Tyre supplied goods to help rebuild Jerusalem and the temple after captivity (Ezra 3:7).

- b. In the early days of the church (Acts 21:3-6). (See also Barnes' notes on this verse.)

There are many interpretations of these verses. Note the following opposing view:

"There is no evidence that Tyre used her gain to help Israel when the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, nor is there any evidence that the prophecy applies to events in the New Testament. Inasmuch as Jehovah judges and brings to an end and also restores and builds up, might not the prophecy mean simply that whatever the motive of traders, Jehovah uses commerce for the good of mankind, consecrating it for that purpose?" (Hailey).

C. WORLD JUDGMENT AND DELIVERANCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE..... CH 24-27

In chapters 13-23 we saw the following points brought out constantly:

- a. God's judgment in some form (wars, famine, etc.) which breaks down human pride, with specific nations mentioned (e.g. Babylon, Assyria, Israel).
- b. Purification of God's people by means of these judgments (remnant).
- c. Restoration of God's people (victory of the remnant).
- d. Blessings available as the final outcome (mainly Messianic—Lord's house—church, Child, Son, Branch).

Now, in chapters 24-27 Isaiah extends these themes to a universal scale—world-wide:

- a. Mostly undesignated cities, nations and defenses are cast down (e.g. 25:2; 26:5, 6; 27:10,11).
- b. Unnamed rulers and tyrants brought down (24:16: 25:2,4,5; 26:10,11; 27:1,4,5, 7,11).
- c. Universal judgment including Judah (entire world, 24:1-13,15,16,18-23).
- d. Salvation to be available to the remnant universally—obviously pointing to the Messiah (25:6-8; 26:9,21; 27:1-6).
- e. Praise to God from the remnant all over the world for His wisdom, power, protection, salvation (24:15,16; 27:13).

In the final analysis this section is Jehovah's judgment against what the world adores. The apostle John gives a threefold description of the world's desires:

- a. Lust of the eyes,
- b. Lust of the flesh and
- c. The pride of life (1 Jn 2:16).

“It must be emphasized that the cities and nations of chapters 24-27 are not to be identified with specific cities and nations of a particular time, with the possible exception of Jerusalem (27:10); they symbolize the world of the profane” (Hailey).

1. A WORLD JUDGMENT. CH 24

DESOLATION OF THE EARTH AND THE WORLD CITY.. . . . 24:1-13

1-3. Extent of judgment.

In exaggerated language, Isaiah sees God bringing judgment on the world and scattering its inhabitants (Gen 11:1-9, scattered at Babel). It affects all classes of people, none shall escape, and it is certain.

4-6. Reason for judgment.

The world and its inhabitants are pictures as *languishing*—drooping, withering and fading.

Man has *defiled* (polluted) the earth by continually breaking God’s laws.

Therefore, God’s wrath burns the guilty until only a few are left (purging to obtain the remnant).

The earth is defiled by its inhabitants (Gen 3:17,18; Num 35:33).

7-13. Sorrow in the cities.

Festivities and merry-making will end! This is because of the destruction and desolation in the land. The few houses left are locked to keep out intruders.

“The world depends on alcoholic drinks, sports, revelings, sensuous music and entertainment for its pleasures and joys; when these are gone, its shallow joy likewise perishes” (Hailey).

PREMATURE REJOICING AND MORE JUDGMENTS. 24:14-23

14,15. The remnant glorifies God.

In that time, just a faithful remnant will be left. They will sing to, praise and glorify God. They now realize that it is God who rules in the world's affairs.

16-20. Judgment: complete and inescapable.

Isaiah shifts abruptly from the future rejoicing and singing of the remnant to his present grief at the thought of the judgment which must come first. There is no escape from this judgment. The earth is portrayed as being *shaken exceedingly*.

This is not a prophecy of the end of the world, it is the complete ruin and collapse of pagan powers.

All of the imagery is very similar to that associated with the establishment of the kingdom, the church (2:4; 11:4; Dan 2:44; Joel 2:28-32; Hag 2:6-9; Heb 12:25-28).

21-23. God reigns after judgment.

In this day of judgment, God will win a victory (*punish on high*) spiritual and earthly rulers who oppose Him. He will bind them up (*gathered together*), place some kind of restraint upon them and the Lord will gloriously reign in Zion and Jerusalem.

Remember that the phrase *in that day* always refers to the events being discussed in that context.

Again, notice the following passages for the remarkable similarity between this scene and God's victory, through Christ, over Satan; binding him and reigning gloriously after His resurrection:

- a. Psa 2.
- b. Acts 4:25-27.
- c. Rev 1:15b; 17:14.
- d. Jn 12:31,32.
- e. Mt 12:28,29.
- f. Heb 2:14,15; 1 Jn 3:8b.
- g. Col 2:15.
- h. Eph 1:19-21.
- i. Acts 2:30-33; Dan 7:13,14.

2. HYMNS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE DIVINE MERCY..... Ch 25

“Chapter 25 is made up of three hymns of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah for victory over the world forces that stood in opposition to His spiritual people. Jehovah is likewise praised for His mercy toward and offer of salvation to the heathen nations as well as for His reward to those who wait for Him. A fourth song follows in chapter 26. The prophet continues to speak in terms of spiritual forces rather than actual cities or particular nations. God’s people are thought of as a spiritual remnant redeemed and spared by mercy and grace, not as a political nation. The triumph of righteousness grows out of the great and terrible judgment described in the previous chapter” (Hailey).

A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY OVER THE TERRIBLE ONES. . . . 25:1-5

Praise for overthrow of ungodly cities.

Isaiah bursts into praise and exaltation to the Lord, his God. Notice the reasons why God is to be praised and glorified:

- a. He has done wonderful things (Num 23:23; Psa 31:19; 44:1; 98:1) and has taken care of His people.
- b. His words are faithful and true (Psa 19:9; 119:86,90,138,142,151,160, 172; Titus 1:2; Rev 3:7).
- c. He defeated cities which exalted themselves against Him.
- d. He has provided shelter and refuge for His people (Psa 23:1ff; 17:8; 27:8ff; 31: 20; 32:7; 50:15).
- e. He has *been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress*—these are some of the very things the kings of Judah should have been doing, but were not.
- f. He promises victory to His people (Mt 10:22; Jn 16:33; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Tim 4:6-8; 1 Jn 5:4,5; Rev 2:10; 14:13).

“The blast of the strong against the people protected by the Lord is like fierce rain against a wall; it washes the wall but cannot destroy it” (Hailey).

JEHOVAH’S FEAST FOR THE NATIONS..... 25:6-8

Blessings for God’s People.

Notice that these blessings are *in this mountain*. This is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ (2:2-4; 4:5; 8:18; 11:9; 18:7).

- a. The blessings include a *feast* available universally (v. 6 cf. Lk 2:10; Mt 22:1-14) — spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3; Col 2:10).
- b. Another blessing is that in this mountain, He will remove the *covering* and the *veil* over all nations. What is the covering and veil?
 - 1) The darkness that covers the earth and its peoples (60:2).
 - 2) Paul speaks of the Gentiles and says they are alienated from God because of darkness and ignorance (Eph 4:18, cf. 2 Cor 3:14-16).
- c. There is a third blessing and that is the removal of the fear of death!

Death will be swallowed up in victory! Paul applies this to the resurrection of Christ and His followers (Jn 11:25; 1 Cor 15:54-57; 2 Tim 1:9,10; Heb 2:14, 15; 10:19,20).

THE JOY OF THOSE WHO WAIT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PROUD. . . 25:9-12

Moab, a typical enemy, overthrown.

When these abundant blessings are made available, people will rejoice in the long-awaited salvation provided by God. This was fulfilled in Christ, the Messiah (Lk 1:67-69; 2:10,11,29-35).

Moab represents the haughty enemies of the people of God and she is brought low by God.

The *hand of the Lord will rest* permanently on those who reject Him.

3. GLORY TO GOD FOR HIS RIGHTEOUS DEEDS! CH 26

This chapter has a song of praise and thanksgiving to be sung after their deliverance.

PRAISE FOR THE STRONG CITY. 26:1-6

1,2. These verses are Messianic. We believe the *strong city* represents the church for the following reasons:

- a. God is the builder (...*God will appoint for walls*...). God built the church — 2:2-4; Dan 2:44; Psa 2:6,7; Mt 16:18; Eph 1:19ff.

- b. It is a *strong* city. The church is strong (Dan 2:44; Mt 16:18; Rom 8:31ff).
- c. Salvation is associated with the strong city and with the church (Acts 2:47; 4:12; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 5:23).
- d. A righteous nation occupies the city. This is spiritual Israel, the Israel of God, the church (Acts 10:34,35; Rom 2:28,29; 9:6-8; Gal 6:15,16) and
- e. Those who keep the truth, the word of God. Cf. Mt 7:21; Jn 3:5; 14:15; 15:14; 17:17; Rom 6:17,18; 1 Pet 1:22ff.

“For I,” says the Lord, “will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst” (Zech 2:5).

3,4. The solid Rock.

God is the only source of true peace (Rom 15:33; 1 Cor 14:33), but there are conditions to receiving this peace. We must:

- a. Keep our minds centered on Him (Prov 23:7; Phil 4:6,7),
- b. Trust in the Lord forever (Job 13:15; Psa 25:2; 31:1; 40:4; 62:8,9; 118:8; Prov 3:5,6; 1 Tim 4:10) and,

In New Testament times:

Be in His Son, The Christ, the Prince of Peace (9:6; Lk 1:79; 2:14; Jn 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom 5:1; 10:15; Eph 2:17; Phil 4:9; Col 1:20). Our God is an everlasting strength (*rock* ASV) in contrast to the false gods.

5,6. The Sovereign victor.

They could, and we can, trust in God forever because He will always bring down those who exalt themselves against Him and His people (Psa 75:5-10; 138:6; Prov 3:34; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5,6).

Those who are oppressed for His sake will be victorious (Rom 8:17,18; 2 Tim 2:11,12; 1 Pet 4:13).

The poor and the needy will walk where the proud once ruled.

THE EFFECTS OF JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENTS..... 26:7-10

These verses tell us that one purpose of God's judgments is to govern His creation—the world—and all in it. For example, through His judgments righteousness is learned. Cf. 9b; Psa 119:67,71; Jer 31:18,19; Heb 12:10,11.

Note the two classes of people portrayed in these verses:

- a. The just, they:
 - 1) Walk upright in God's ways.
 - 2) Wait patiently for and desire God day and night, even in the midst of His judgments.
- b. The wicked, they:
 - 1) Do not learn righteousness, even when treated with favor.
 - 2) Deal unjustly.
 - 3) Refuse to see the majesty of God.

When wicked people prosper they take advantage of God's righteous.

"*Soul* and *spirit* used parallelly refer to the whole inner man" (Hailey).

THE LORD JEHOVAH VERSUS "OTHER LORDS". 26:11-15

Another purpose of God's judgments is to glorify Him. The wicked refuse to see God's hand lifted up in judgment, but they will see it when His wrath devours them.

In contrast, the righteous have peace through God's providential care.

Others had ruled over Israel (the period of judges and kings) but only God was truly worthy of mention.

- a. He is eternal while all the other rulers have died.
- b. He is the one to be glorified for His care and protection, even in the midst of all the judgments!

There are two views of who the *other masters (Lords)* are:

- a. Foreign rulers or

- b. Idols (gods) the people had served.

FROM FAILURE TO VICTORY. 26:16-19

In the midst of these judgments, Israel is seen as praying to God in great pain but, as yet, they had not fulfilled God's divine purpose in giving birth to a new order of things (the Messiah!) and had not been able to deliver themselves. But, there is hope in the resurrection of the dead. Cf. 25:7,8—death swallowed up in victory.

They poured out a prayer—literally a whisper.

Verse 18 is a powerful condemnation upon Israel—*We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth. Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen*—the world has not been defeated nor converted by Israel. Israel has failed!

What about the congregation where you are a member? Have you and they failed?

What is the resurrection referred to in verse 19? There are at least three views:

- a. Figurative resurrection of physical Israel and their return to Canaan,
- b. Final resurrection of all at the end of time and
- c. Spiritual resurrection in the Messianic age.
- d. It would seem by the context it is referring to the spiritual resurrection. Cf. Jn 5:25; Eph 2:1-6; Dan 12:2.
- e. For alternate views see Hailey's commentary.

WAIT FOR JEHOVAH. 26:20,21

Isaiah exhorts the people to be patient until God's indignation passes for He will punish the wicked.

No more cover her slain—"Murder unpunished by a society must be expiated by the death of that society" (Hailey).

4. THE OVERTHROWING OF WORLD POWER AND INGATHERING OF ISRAEL. CH 27

THE NEW VINEYARD. 27:1-6

- 1. Overthrow of hostile world powers.

Almighty God is shown winning a great victory over fierce beasts. Throughout the Bible vicious, frightening beasts represent the enemies of God and His people (Ezek 22:2; 29:3-5; Psa 74:13,14; Dan 7; Rev 13-20).

Thus, this verse is reassurance that God and His people will win against all His enemies; no matter how strong, no matter where they are—like Egypt, Assyria and Babylon.

The Lord's sword is described as:

- a. *Severe* (hard)—unbreakable, well tempered and well able to retain its keen cutting edge.
- b. *Great*—mighty and powerful.
- c. *Strong*—not susceptible to wear, but ever able to execute God's punitive and destructive judgment. (Hailey)

2-6. God's mercy on, and protection of, the vineyard.

A beautiful picture of God's protecting and caring for His vineyard which, *in that day*, will be the church. God's enemies (*briers and thorns*) will be burned. His enemies have a choice—that is to make peace with God, but it must be on God's terms, not man's.

Jacob and Israel are used here in poetical parallelism to sum the whole of spiritual Israel. The first vineyard was national Israel in the past; the new vineyard is spiritual Israel (Hailey).

This vineyard will be productive throughout all the world, obviously referring to the spread of the gospel into all the world.

Contrast this with the vineyard of chapter five.

EXPIATION AND DESOLATION..... 27:7-11

7-9. God's Purpose—Israel's purification.

God has been merciful to Judah in that they have not been afflicted as much as those nations which afflicted them.

God's judgment of sending them forth into captivity would be *in measure*. That is, it was moderate; not so severe as it could have been and tempered with mercy.

God's design in doing this would be to bring them to repentance so their sins could be *covered* or cleansed and to remove idolatry, their worst sin, from them.

After the captivity Israel was never again guilty of idol worship. They fell from God's grace through Greek philosophy, but not from idol worship.

10,11. God's stern dealing with the fortified city.

Apparently these verses apply to the capital of the Northern Kingdom—Samaria. Her people have chosen to have *no understanding* of God (11; Hos 4:6) and, as a result, they will be destroyed without mercy.

“As a people of no understanding (cf. 1:3; 5:13; Hos 4:6), they seem to have never understood the true nature and character of Jehovah—His righteousness and holiness, which demand obedience to His divine will, and His judgment and destruction of that which is contrary to them” (Hailey).

THE INGATHERING OF THE OUTCASTS. 27:12,13

After the Babylonian captivity the remnant will be regathered and worship in Jerusalem once again.

Gathered one by one shows the care and love Jehovah has for His remnant—they are not gathered in groups but as individuals.

Heb 12:22-24 shows this as the heavenly Jerusalem and that we now come to the blood of Jesus.

D. JERUSALEM—ZION: WARNING AND PROMISES. Ch 28-35

Setting the scene for these chapters.

- a. Probably written in the early years of Hezekiah's reign.
- b. Most of Israel (Ephraim, Northern Kingdom) conquered by Assyria.
- c. Only its capital, Samaria, remained.
- d. Therefore, intense pressure was put on Hezekiah to form alliances with Assyria and/or Egypt to protect Judah.
- e. It is with this pro-Egyptian party that Isaiah (God) will contend.

1. DRUNKARDS—AND THE STONE OF ZION.. Ch 28

WOE TO THE DRUNKARDS OF EPHRAIM. 28:1-6

False crown versus crown of glory.

Samaria, the crown and pride of the arrogant and rebellious Northern Kingdom will be:

- a. Brought down to earth,
- b. Trampled underfoot and
- c. Eaten up, destroyed!

Notice how Isaiah describes Israel:

- a. Proud,
- b. Drunkards,
- c. Overcome with wine and
- d. Having a glorious beauty which is fading. Cf. Rom 9:33; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4-6.

God would use a *mighty and strong one* (Assyria) to cast them down (*destroying storm, flood of mighty waters*). Then all that would remain is the true crown of glory and diadem of beauty—the Lord. That would be *to the remnant of His people*.

The remnant will be strengthened by Jehovah, not by any heathen alliances.

WOE TO THE DRUNKEN RULERS IN JUDAH. 28:7-13

7,8. Judah has the same problem—wine and intoxicating drink. Therefore, the same warning is applied to them. Even the priests (man's spokesmen to God) and the prophets (God's spokesmen to man) are effected by it.

Notice the affects strong drink had in these verses. It caused them to:

- a. Err,
- b. Go out of the way,
- c. To be *swallowed up* by it,

- d. Err in vision,
- e. Stumble in judgement and
- f. Experience physical effects.
- g. This is a great endorsement for the liquor industry and for “social drinking!”

9,10. The people mock and show contempt for how God was teaching them. They say He is treating them as children and teaches the same, dull, elementary, basic messages over and over.

They feel they are beyond the need for revelation from Jehovah and that their human wisdom is well sufficient for them.

11-13. They would not hear God’s message pointing out the way of rest and refreshing, so God would speak the same message through foreign invaders (the Babylonians) and Judah will be *broken, snared and caught* in captivity.

“In their rebellion against God, trusting in their own strength and the help of Egypt, they rose up against Assyria. Falling backward, they were eventually broken as a nation, snared in a trap of their own setting, and taken captive by Babylon. They learned slowly; however, a remnant did eventually learn, but it was precept upon precept, line upon line, little by little. The thundering message of deeds and judgment is the only language that some—whether nation, individual, or the church of God—will hear or understand. The school of experience is a hard one, but it is God’s only alternative when ears are closed to His message in word” (Hailey).

Drunken rulers contributed to the fall of these nations—Israel and Judah. If they contributed to the fall of these nations, they will contribute to the fall of others as well.

THE RULER’S COVENANT WITH DEATH AND JEHOVAH’S FOUNDATION STONE IN ZION. 28:14-22

14,15. Judah’s scornful rulers stood on the shaky foundation of thinking that death and destruction would avoid them. They were sure their own cleverness, not trust in God, would save them.

The people of Jerusalem had *made a covenant with death* and *made lies their refuge*.

16. But the foundation which God had laid in Zion was the *tried and precious corner-stone*.

Inspiration tells us this foundation is Jesus the Christ (Mt 21:42,44; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4-6).

However, to the people of Isaiah's day Jehovah was the true and tried stone in whom they should have trusted.

17-22. Announcement of doom.

The judgment to come upon them is described as destructive hail and flood waters that will overflow without ceasing. These will utterly destroy their shaky foundation.

Their dependence upon foreign powers for protection was like depending upon a bed that is too short and a covering too narrow to protect them from the cold—not enough, because they had incurred God's wrath. So, rather than mock Isaiah's message they accepted it as being from the Lord God of Hosts.

His awesome work...His unusual act—the awesome and unusual thing is that Jehovah will act against Judah because she has become His enemy.

A PARABLE FROM AGRICULTURE..... 28:23-29

The farmer does not just continue to plow, he also sows the seeds and reaps the harvest. He uses various sowing methods for different types of soils, and differing reaping techniques for different grains. These principles are from God and He will use them in dealing with the different soils of men's hearts. The message: make your heart right with God, and trust in His "wonderful counsel" and "excellent guidance."

This parable teaches that Jehovah's judgments have a purpose; God always acts according to divine wisdom. Whatever He does looks to the bearing of spiritual fruit according to His eternal purpose. (Hailey).

2. WOE TO ARIEL—AND TO THOSE WHO HIDE THEIR COUNSEL FROM GOD..... CH 29

WOE TO ARIEL..... 29:1-14

1,2. God will distress Jerusalem and bring heaviness and sorrow.

3,4. They will be surrounded, besieged and brought down. This refers to the threat against the city by Sennacherib of Assyria (cf. vs. 36,37).

Ariel—altar, a reference to where God was worshiped and David dwelt, Jerusalem-Zion.

5-8. These verses talk about Jerusalem's deliverance by God from Sennacherib. They will disappear suddenly by God's mighty power. The Assyrians will dream of a mighty victory, but in vain. This is exactly what happened! (cf. vvs. 36,37).

9-12. Jerusalem's spiritual blindness.

"Since they have rejected Jehovah and His word, the prophet now commands them to continue in that condition. He has known all along that this is what they would do (cf. 6:9,10)" (Hailey).

The prophets and rulers, learned and unlearned, have made themselves spiritually blind by rejecting God's word. The result is that they are like a man in a drunken stupor (quoted in Rom 11:8, cf. 2 Thess 2:10-12).

Blind....be blind—That is to say, "Go on and continue to live in your careless ways."

13,14. Blindness in formalistic worship.

Since they taught the precepts of men, and the people did not worship God with all their hearts, God would punish them by allowing the wisdom of their rulers to disappear (quoted by Jesus in Mt 15:8,9; Mk 7:6,7).

Hypocrisy is a fruit of spiritual blindness and darkness.

"Paul applies the thought of this passage to all human wisdom that omits God and His way (1 Cor 1:19). In his own wisdom apart from God's wisdom, man is bound to fail; this failure will be exposed" (Hailey).

WOE TO THOSE WHO HIDE THEIR PLANS FROM GOD. 29:15-24

15,16. Pro-Egyptian politics denounced.

Many were guilty of advising the seeking of help from Egypt (e.g. 28:15-22; 30:1ff) and were trying to conceal these plans from God. In doing so, they insulted God (quoted in Rom 9:19-21).

When men try to hide their counsel from Jehovah, they are, in effect, saying that God is no wiser than they. Pure blasphemy!

17-24. Future transformation.

God predicts a drastic change coming in His people. It will be a spiritual awakening when people rejoice in God and evil is not appreciated.

It will be a time when Jacob will no longer have to be ashamed because his descendants will sanctify and fear God. Notice that they returned by means of the understanding gained through teaching.

A very little while—in God's eyes!

3. WOE TO THE PRO-EGYPTIAN POLICY..... CH 30

This chapter exposes the sin and folly of foreign alliances against their enemies. They should not have neglected Jehovah who is their only real protection.

ANY ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT IS BOUND TO FAIL..... 30:1-17

1-5. Proposed alliance with Egypt denounced.

God pronounces a woe on the *rebellious children* of Judah because they seek protection from Egypt rather than from God. Notice the cumulative nature of sin; one sin leads to another (cf. Heb 3:12,13). They will be ashamed and confused for sending for aid from Egypt—a nation that could not profit them (cf. Hos 7:10,11).

6,7. Futility of this alliance.

Even though Judah sent great treasures to the South (Egypt), Egypt will not be able to help them.

Beasts of the south—"The prophet probably has in mind the beasts that pass through the Negeb ("South") into the wilderness of Zin and Shur bearing the gifts to Egypt" (Hailey).

Rahab-Hem-Shebeth—Lit: "Storm (arrogance) that sits still," or "The boaster that sits still."

"A Big-mouth that is a Do-nothing" (Leupold).

8-14. Bad attitudes and consequences.

God instructs Isaiah to permanently record the message that He is about to give.

The tablet would have been for public use and the scroll for preservation.

The first part of the message has to do with the sinful attitude and behavior of Judah:

- a. Rebellious (v. 9 cf. v. 1).

- b. Lying—broke covenant with God.
- c. Refused to hear the law of the Lord.
- d. Wanted the prophets to preach *smooth* things—deceits, not the truth (cf. 1 Kgs 22:13; Mic 2:6-11; Jer 6:10-19; 11:21; Ezek 2:3-7; 3:4-11; Amos 7:13; 2 Tim 4:3,4).
- e. Wanted the prophets to leave the old path of righteousness (cf. Jer 6:16).
- f. Did not want to hear any more about the Holy God of Israel (cf. 2 Thess 2:10). “Surely they were not so honest as to come right out and say these things, but this verse very graphically reveals their true feelings” (Hailey).

13,14. The second part of God’s message was His reaction to their sinful attitudes. They would be destroyed as if they were trapped under a high wall which had suddenly and instantly collapsed upon them.

“In their dealings with Jehovah, they act like stubborn, rebellious children who refuse to obey their parents, thereby becoming worthy of death (Deut 21:18-21)” (Hailey).

15-17. God says the way for them to be saved is to return to Him in peace and trust (*rest, quietness, confidence*) but they refused. Instead they wanted to trust in the swift horses of Egypt to flee from their enemies. God says as a result they will flee before a swift enemy (irony) and the few who will be left will be a warning (a *pole*, a *banner*) to others who would choose the same course.

“Destruction was averted in Isaiah’s time because Hezekiah pleaded to Jehovah and because Jehovah’s honor was at stake (37:14-29). Also, no doubt the preaching by Isaiah and Micah and the influence of their lives turned enough hearts to the Lord that He could spare the city for their sakes. Destruction did come, but at a later date” (Hailey).

Flee on horses—refers to their chasing their enemy with horses from Egypt (Cf. Deut 17:16).

Compare verse 17 with Lev 26:1,8 where Israel will pursue their enemies, but here the numbers are reversed and Israel will do the fleeing.

PROSPERITY THROUGH GOD’S GRACE (MESSIANIC) 30:18-26

18-22. God will show His mercy and justice in waiting for them to repent (cf. Hab 2:3; Rom 2:4; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:9). Although they will suffer adversity, they will eventually return to Jerusalem from captivity. This will come after they begin to listen to their teachers again, and throw away their idols.

23-26. A time of relief and restoration is coming, symbolized by earthly blessings.

“In a rather startling manner the prophet injects a contrasting thought: *in the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall*. There are at least two possible explanations of the passage: (1) the great slaughter when the towers fall will precede these blessings (cf. vv 13,18); or (2) there will be a slaughter and collapsing towers in the world of the ungodly even while those in Zion-Jerusalem enjoy abundant gifts from God. In the light of the context, and especially the following verse, the second seems preferable” (Hailey).

JEHOVAH’S VENGEANCE ON ASSYRIA. 30:27-33

The Lord’s burning anger is coming against the nations who oppose Him. Those who worship the Mighty One (*mountain*) of Israel will rejoice at that time. This Mighty God will just speak His will and Assyria will be defeated. Everywhere He executes judgment on the Assyrians, His people will rejoice. Assyria will be like a great pile of wood in Tophet (the Valley of the Son of Hinnom—Jer 7:31) that the Lord sets on fire with His very breath.

Tophet — “After being defiled by Josiah, it became a place for the burning of refuse. The New Testament word *Gehenna*, the place of eternal burning, is derived from the Hebrew “Valley of Hinnom.” Jehovah has made Topheth deep and large enough for the destruction of a nation as great as Assyria” (Hailey).

Assyria was a rod for punishment in Jehovah’s hand, now Babylon will be that rod to punish Assyria.

The joy in verse 32 is not for the suffering of people, but for ungodliness being judged and the righteous being delivered.

4. WOE TO THEM THAT GO DOWN TO EGYPT. CH 31

GOD ALSO IS WISE. 31:1-3

God declares woe is coming to those who trust in Egypt’s many chariots, horses and very strong horsemen. Judah’s sin was in not seeking for and looking to the Holy One of Israel for strength. They believed themselves wise in doing that, but God is wiser (*He also is wise*) in the following ways as shown in these verses. God knows:

- a. What evil is—going to Egypt for aid.
- b. Who the evildoers are—Judah.
- c. How to bring woe upon the evildoers to encourage them to repent.

- d. He never needs to retract His words.
- e. The futility of trusting in mortal men and material things rather than the eternal and all powerful God.

Jehovah, being omniscient and omnipotent, does not make errors in His plans or His words, therefore *He will not call back His words* (v. 2).

GOD'S PROVIDENCE: FIERCE YET COMPASSIONATE. 31:4,5

Judgment and Deliverance of Judah.

The purpose of these verses is to give reassurance to trust in God rather than Egypt. He will be as a fierce lion and a swift, powerful bird in protecting Jerusalem. Thus Assyria will not take the city.

Notice the following:

- a. Lion = Jehovah.
- b. Prey = Jerusalem.
- c. Shepherds = Jewish politicians and the Egyptians.

God's providence here includes:

- a. Defending,
- b. Deliver it,
- c. Passing over and
- d. Preserve it.

CALL TO REPENTANCE. 31:6,7

In turning to idols and other countries Judah had *deeply revolted* against God. God calls them to throw away their handmade idols and return to Him—repent!

DESTRUCTION OF ASSYRIA. 31:8,9

When Judah repents, the Assyrians will be defeated and flee. Not because of man's doings, but by God's. This was literally fulfilled! Cf. 37:36ff.

5. THE NEW ORDER: WARNING, JUDGMENT AND BLESSEDNESS. Ch 32

The New Order. 32:1-8

THE RIGHTEOUS KING AND SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION.. . . . 32:1-4

1. We take this passage to be primarily Messianic, pointing to Jesus for its ultimate fulfillment. This king reigns in righteousness, characteristic of the Messiah (9:5ff; 11:1-5; 53:11; 1 Jn 2:1).

His princes will rule with justice:

- a. Possibly the apostles, through speaking the inspired word of God (Mt 16:19; 18:18; 19:28; Lk 22:30; Jn 20:23) or
 - b. They could be Christians in general (Cf. 1 Pet 2:9; Heb 2:11; Rom 5:17; Rev 5:10).
2. He will provide protection and comfort for His people (Mt 11:28ff; Jn 14:27; 16:33; Heb 6:18-20) *as rivers of water* (Jn 4:10-14; 6:35; 7:38,39) and *as the shadow of a great rock* (1 Cor 10:4).
 3. During that time people will see, hear and obey spiritually (29:10-12).
 4. The people who were formerly *rash* will take time to understand God's word and those who stammered in drunken stupors (28:7,8; 29:9) will speak clearly (Cf. 1 Pet 3:15; 1 Cor 1:10).

MORAL DISTINCTIONS ARE NOW CLEAR. 32:5-8

5. These people are going to be recognized for what they are, not for what they claim to be.
- 6,7. The *foolish person* or the *schemer*..."spends time devising wicked purposes and ways; he employs dishonest methods in an effort to become rich. To accomplish his end he would destroy the poor, the meek who cannot resist him. He achieves his goal by lying; and even when the cause of the needy is right, he contradicts and opposes them by perversions of truth and equity. Everything about his character is evil; he is void of feeling and compassion" (Hailey).
8. The generous person will be established with God by the generous things he does.

WARNINGS, JUDGMENT AND BLESSEDNESS. 32:9-20

Warnings to Careless Women. 32:9-12

This section begins with a rebuke of the women who are *at ease* and *complacent*—unconcerned (9-11; 3:16-4:1; Amos 4:1,2; 6:4-6). Previously Isaiah had accused these women of vanity and love of display (3:16-24).

Isaiah exhorts them to hear his words of warning, telling of the trouble that will come when the harvest fails. He commands them to tremble and put on sackcloth as a sign of mourning—repent!

The Judgment to Come. 32:13-15

People will mourn the loss of the productive fields and their replacement by thorns and briars. Jerusalem will become deserted and the people taken into captivity.

This is the price Judah will pay for her sins.

This new king and kingdom would begin with the outpouring of the Spirit from on high, language definitely associated with Christ and His kingdom, the church (11:2; 61:1; Joel 2:28ff; Zech 12:10; Mk 9:1; Lk 24:49; Jn 3:34; Acts 1:8; 2:1ff; 11:15,16).

Rest and Quietness At Last. 32:16-20

16-18. This age would be characterized by justice and righteousness (v. 16 cf. notes on 11:3-5) and the affect of that justice and righteousness will be peace, quietness or tranquility and assurance or confidence (26:3,4; Phil 4:6,7; 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 3:14).

“Quietness and confidence will ensue forever; that is, as long as the reign of the righteous King and the blessing of the Spirit endure and the people abide in them” (Hailey).

Verse 18 - “The words do not characterize the life of those who returned from Babylon, but of those who became the heritage of God’s people under the Messiah” (Hailey).

19. This verse apparently refers to the defeat of the Assyrians who were earlier represented by a figure of a forest (10: 18, 33ff).

20. Then the people will be happy because they could cultivate their land securely.

“The meaning is that the people, living in such peaceful surrounding (v. 17), will pursue productive occupations in the Lord” (Hailey).

6. THE DEFEAT OF ASSYRIA AND VICTORY OF JERUSALEM. Ch 33

WOE TO THE DESTROYER!.. . . . 33:1-6

1. Sennacherib, after being defeated at Jerusalem, was treacherously killed by his own sons in his own city.
- 2,3. This is a prayer offered to God in the face of the Assyrian threat against Jerusalem, asking Him to be gracious, their salvation and their *arm*, a symbol of divine strength, protection and power. (Ex 15:16; Job 40:9; Psa 44:3; 77:5; 89:21; 98:1). This recalls God's help in the past (30:27-30; Dan 10:6; Rev 1:10).

The *us* probably refers to Isaiah and the faithful.

- 4-6. After God defeats the Assyrians, His people will gather the spoils like locusts. Because God dwells on high, has won these victories, and is just and righteous, He is exalted. The fear of God brings the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, stability and powerful salvation (Prov 1:7; 8:13; 10:27; 14:27; 15:32, 33).

THE BROKEN COVENANT AND THE DEVOURING FIRE.. . . . 33:7-16

- 7-9. Desolation of Judah first.

The *valiant* may refer to the proud and overbearing language of the Rabshakeh.

A picture of widespread destruction in the land of Judah at the hands of Sennacherib of Assyria. When he invaded Judah, Hezekiah sent valiant ambassadors with gifts from the temple to endeavor to seek peace (2 Kgs 18:14-16). Those ambassadors are shown here, crying bitterly because Sennacherib decided to invade in spite of their pleas (2 Kgs 18:17).

- 10-16. God's intervention.

God Himself will rise up to defeat Assyria and be exalted, and when He does Assyria will be consumed like chaff, stubble, lime and thorns burning in a raging fire.

God commands all people *afar off* and *near* to acknowledge His great power and might. Those who see God's wrath and judgment on Assyria should be both warned and assured by it. If Jehovah has this kind of power to destroy, He can also preserve.

Notice here the remnant, in contrast to the sinners and hypocrites:

- a. Walks righteously (Psa 119:138; Prov 14:34; 21:21; Titus 2:12).

- b. Speaks uprightly—tells the truth (Zech 8:16; Eph 4:14,25).
- c. Despises the gain of oppressions—hates profit acquired by taking advantage of others.
- d. Gestures, stops, shuts—hates every appearance of evil (Amos 5:14,15; Rom 12:9,21; 1 Thess 5:22).

The results of this kind of life? Safety from the fiery wrath and judgment described in verses 11-14.

THE GLORY OF ISRAEL'S KING AND JERUSALEM-ZION. 33:17-24

17-19. Crisis in retrospect.

Isaiah says they will see the King in His beauty. This probably refers to God's rising up to defeat the Assyrians (10ff). They will look back on the terror of the Assyrian threat and then ask with astonishment and gratitude, *Where is...where is...?*, but the threat will be gone.

"The Zion which God protects is unconquerable and indestructible; but when He withdraws, it is defenseless" (Hailey).

20-24. Future security of God's city.

Jerusalem is pictured in the future as a secure, peaceful city, where God will comfort and protect His people. This is because His people recognize and accept Him as their:

- a. Judge,
- b. Lawgiver,
- c. King and
- d. Savior.

"This description fits only the Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem with God in its midst, to which the saints come under the Messiah (Heb 12:22). It became the permanent dwelling-place of God among His people after the removal of those things that were shaken and the reception of a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:27,28)" (Hailey).

Zion—Jerusalem is pictured as protected by rivers and streams. No ship will cross them to destroy it.

- a. Galley = large war ship.
- b. Majestic ships = seaworthy ships (river boats, etc.,).

“God teaches us, as He will teach them, the impossibility of delivering ourselves by our own strength. He sends us weakness that out of weakness we may be made strong. Jacob had to learn this. Made physically lame, he proved more than ever the almighty power of the Lord. Paul learned to glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest on him (‘spread a tabernacle’ over him), 2 Corinthians 12:9. In our trials and difficulties we are made to know the love of Christ in a way impossible without them. ‘In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us’ (Rom. 8:35-37)” (Vine).

7. JUDGMENTS OF THE NATIONS AND EDM..... CH 34

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS. 34:1-4

Background Information on Edom

Descendants of Esau who were denounced by the prophets for hostility toward Israel. (See notes on 21:11,12.)

Some examples of that hostility:

- a. Refused Israel safe passage through Edom on her way to Canaan (Num 20).
- b. David had to fight against them (2 Sam 8:13; 1 Chron 18:12).
- c. Revolted against Judah’s rule in the days of Jehoram (2 Chron 21:8-10).
- d. Joined with enemies of God to oppose Israel and Judah, and to rejoice in their defeat (Jer 49:7-10, 12-18; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:3-15; Joel 3:19; Obad 2,3,8,10-12,17).

“In the final analysis, all of Edom’s envy, anger and hatred against his brother was against Jehovah, for it was He who had determined which nation would receive the birthright and bring forth the Messiah” (Hailey).

1-4. Worldwide judgment predicted.

Isaiah calls all to hear a universal announcement: what will happen as the result of the Lord’s wrath and fury. The event is so certain that it is spoken of as if it had already taken place. There will be utter defeat of all hostile powers.

The judgment, which affects even the heavens, can be interpreted at least three ways:

- a. Victory of God over opposing worldly and spiritual enemies through the sinless life, death and resurrection of Christ (see notes on 24-27). The context favors this view.
- b. The final judgment (Psa 102:25-27; Heb 1:10ff; 2 Pet 3:10,11).
- c. The end of the world as the heathen sees it. "When God's wrath and indignation come against the nations that oppose and fight Him, their world comes to an end" (Hailey).

JUDGMENT AGAINST EDM — A SACRIFICE..... 34:5-7

God's sword of judgment and punishment is pictured as coming down on Edom as a representative of all nations hostile to God (cf. Gen 27:40; Lev 26:25; Deut 3:41,42; Psa 7:12; Rom 13:1ff; Heb 11:37).

Bathed in heaven (hath drunk its fill - ASV)—made furious with wrath—patient long enough! God's sword is seen as overflowing with the blood and fat of sin offerings.

Bozrah was one of the chief cities of Edom (Jer 49:13,22; Amos 1:12).

Wild oxen — animals with strong horns (Deut 33:17; Job 39:9ff; Psa 22:21; 92:12).

THE JUDGMENT: TOTAL DESOLATION. 34:8-15

8-12. Permanent desolation of Edom.

This will be a day when God executes His vengeance upon His enemies and the enemies of His people (cf. Deut 32:35; Prov 24:29; Rom 12:17-19; Heb 10:30).

Edom will become a vast wasteland; *pitch...brimstone...smoke*—language similar to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:25-28; Jer 49:17,18). See Barnes for a good description of this fulfillment. It will be suitable only for animals, and there will be no nobles or princes left to rule.

13-15. Their capital city of the future.

Edom's palaces and fortresses in the capital will be empty as seen in thorns, nettles, brambles and jackals living in them. It will become a dwelling for wild animals and birds.

THE CERTAINTY OF THIS DEVASTATION. 34:16,17

Isaiah exhorts all to verify the accuracy of these predictions (search from the book of the Lord and read—Jn 5:39; Acts 17:11). God has spoken these words and has given this land over to the animals. It has been over 2,000 years and this is still true!

8. THE WAY OF HOLINESS. CH 35

“The wilderness through which the redeemed come singing to Zion is not the road from Babylon to Judah, but the spiritual desert which led to the Babylonian captivity, and eventually to the coming of the Messiah. For after Babylon came the Medo-Persian rule and oppression; it was followed by Alexander, whose empire was totally void of spiritual values. Then came the Egyptian Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucids oppressing the people and at times desolating the land. There followed the Maccabean wars and the rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees, religious leaders who corrupted the spiritual life of the nation. In the midst of the troublous times the Romans overtook the country. It is obvious that the glorious picture in chapter 35 was not realized in the period between Babylon and the coming of Jesus. Only a messianic interpretation of the chapter fits the text” (Hailey).

THE NEW SONG. 35:1-4

1,2. Transformation of Judah.

The age discussed in this chapter will be one of rejoicing, gladness and remarkable, dramatic changes.

The desert here represents the spiritual life of both Jews and Gentiles.

This desert land will blossom and receive:

- a. *The glory of Lebanon*. Its glory was its beautiful and majestic cedar trees and vegetation (10:34);
- b. *The excellence of Carmel*—a mountain representing beauty;
- c. *...and Sharon*—representing beauty and fertility (1 Chron 5:16; 27:29).

Again, all this is symbolic of great changes in beauty and productivity, and in this remarkable age people will recognize the glory and excellence of God (cf. Lk 2:14; Jn 1:14).

3,4. Exhortation to trust in God.

On the basis of coming blessings, Isaiah exhorts the people to be strong and not to be afraid (Lk 12:32ff; 1 Cor 16:13; Phil 1:27,28), because God would come to save them —Jesus, *God with us* (Mt 1:21; Lk 19:10; Jn 3:17; 1 Jn 4:14). Verse 3 is referred to in Heb 12:12,13.

Fearful-hearted - “The heart is the workshop in which all of our deeds are wrought. The heart must be bold and courageous, fearless and strong, if the hands are to be strengthened and the knees made firm...Fear is a sign of unbelief. Today’s fears of spiritual failure, of Satan’s power, of economic collapse, and of moral defeat must be overcome” (Hailey). Cf. Heb 13:5; Phil 4:5; 2 Thess 1:6.

CAUSE FOR THE REJOICING... 35:5-7

Relief from disabilities.

Then—at that time, the time of the Messiah.

A time of great healing, obviously referring to the miraculous powers of Christ and His apostles:

- a. The blind (cf. Mt 9:27; 20:30; Mk 8:23; 10:46; Lk 7:21),
- b. The deaf (cf. Mt 11:5; Mk 7:32,37; 9:25),
- c. The lame (cf. Jn 5:9; Acts 3:2ff; 8:7; 14:10),
- d. Those who could not speak (cf. Mt 9:32,33; 12:22; 15:30,31; Mk 11:17; Lk: 1:20-22, 59-64).

THE HIGHWAY. 35:8-10

A highway of safety.

In all of these descriptions, God is not saying...”that the way will be so simple that an inexperienced or unlearned person cannot miss it, but that the man who despises wisdom, being wise in evil instead, will not make the mistake of walking in it” (Hailey).

In this great day there will be a *highway...a road* (v. 8 cf. Mt:7:13,14; Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; 9:2; 19:9,23; 24:22).

This highway is described as follows:

- a. *The Highway of Holiness*. Christianity is the way of holiness (Eph 1:4; Col 1:22; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 1:15,16). The unclean (sinners) shall not pass over it.

- b. The way will be clearly marked. The Christian way is clearly marked (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 2:21).
- c. It will be the safe way. Christianity is the safe way (Mt 11:28-30; Jn 11:25,26; Rom 8:37-39; 2 Pet 1:8-10; 1 Jn 1:7).
- d. The redeemed and ransomed will walk there. Christians are the redeemed! (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18,19).
- e. Those on that way come to Zion. Christians have come to Zion (Heb12: 22ff).
- f. The redeemed come with singing, everlasting joy and gladness. These are blessings associated with the Christian way (Jn 15:11; 16:22-24; 17:13; Acts 8:39; Rom 14:17; Phil 3:1; 4:4; 1 Jn 1:4).

“The prophets knew that these glories were not for their day, but for ours (1 Pet 1:10-12). Under the Messiah we now come unto Zion (Heb 12:22; Rev 14:1) by this very way, a new and living way (Heb 10:19,20). And as we come, let us come in that spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving so beautifully pictured by Isaiah; for we are heirs of all that to which the prophets pointed (Acts 3:24-26; Heb 1:2). Let us not be deceived by a materialistic mirage of a sensuous millennial period here on earth” (Hailey).

E. HISTORICAL LINK..... CH 36-39

Chapters 36-39 are an historical appendix to this first part of Isaiah’s prophecies. Note that 2 Kings chapters 18 and 19 are almost identical with chapters 36 and 37.

1. THE THREAT TO JERUSALEM..... CH 36

THE EMISSARIES SENT BY SENNACHERIB..... 36:1-3

God would use Assyria to bring judgment upon Israel and Judah for their disobedience and idolatry (7:17-25; 8:1-22; 10:28-32; 17:12-14).

- a. Assyria would sweep through Israel and Judah like flood waters and vicious beasts.
- b. They would come right up to the neck of Judah—Jerusalem.
- c. These judgments were to encourage repentance and purification of the remnant (27:7-9).

But God also promised, through Isaiah, that Assyria would be defeated when Judah repented (e.g. 10:1-34; 14:24-27; 17:12-14; 31:8,9; 33).

- a. Assyria would be stopped suddenly overnight (17:12-14).
- b. But, it would not be by trusting in foreign nations like Egypt (28:15-22; 30-32).
- c. Rather, it would be through God's intervention (33:10-16).

Keep in mind that all these prophecies were given years before chapters 36-39 were written.

- a. Thus, their precise fulfillment as recorded here would make it absolutely certain to them and future readers that Isaiah was God's spokesman—one to be listened to very carefully and
- b. Further strengthen the authenticity of the astounding and soaring message of comfort Isaiah would deliver (40-66).

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, has conquered most of Judah's strong cities and approaches Jerusalem. This is in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. A good parallel to these chapters is 2 Kgs 17-20; 2 Chron 32. Sennacherib sends the Rabshakeh (a position, not a name) and a large fighting force to Hezekiah, who sends a delegation out to meet him. (Note Eliakim and Shebna 22:15ff).

RABSHAKEH'S DEFIANT SPEECH. 36:4-10

He wants this message passed from Sennacherib to Hezekiah: "What is the basis of your trust?" Whom do you trust in who gives you confidence to rebel against me? Surely, not on weak, undependable Egypt! Surely not God because Hezekiah has removed all altars.

"With all his knowledge of the Jews and their faith Rabshakeh erred here, mistakenly believing Hezekiah's reforms in cleansing the temple and destroying idols to be acts against Jehovah" (Hailey).

Surely not yourself! You probably do not have even 2,000 able horsemen. You cannot even hope to defeat the smallest and weakest part of the Assyrian army. The Rabshakeh claims the Assyrians have God's approval and support to do this.

"The claim was partly true; Jehovah had brought the Assyrians against Jerusalem (10:5,6), but whether Jehovah had spoken to Sennacherib on the matter is very doubtful" (Hailey).

THE JEWS' REQUEST. 36:11,12

Eliakim asks the Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic so the people on the wall can not understand what he is saying. He arrogantly replies that his master has sent him to speak to them also.

RABSHAKEH'S SECOND SPEECH. 36:13-20

13,14. The Rabshakeh restates the message of Assyria's "great king" so all can hear:
Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.

15. A boast: Do not believe Hezekiah's promise that God can deliver you!

"Rabshakeh is a master at the art of diplomacy, which in reality is the art of deception and intrigue. Destroy a nation's faith in their ruler, their God, and then themselves, and there is not much left. This is Rabshakeh's objective" (Hailey).

How about disguising the truth in "politically correct" language?

16,17. He goes on to say, "Rather, make peace with me. You will have safety in your land until I come to take you to a land like yours."

18-20. "None of the gods of the other countries helped them, how can God help you?"

The Report to Hezekiah. 36:21,22

Eliakim follows Hezekiah's command to remain silent.

In their grief Eliakim and others report to Hezekiah—the nation and Jehovah had been insulted. What can we do now? Where can we go for help?

2. VICTORY THROUGH FAITH. CH 37

DESPERATION, AND AN APPEAL TO ISAIAH. 37:1-7

1-5. Hezekiah's request of Isaiah.

Upon hearing the report, Hezekiah mourns and goes to the temple. He then sends representatives to Isaiah. It is a horrible day and there is no strength to deliver themselves from danger. Isaiah is asked to pray for the remnant and that God will defend his honor.

The Lord your God—This is not saying Hezekiah and his court do not believe in God, but that he is acknowledging Isaiah's faithfulness to Him, and their lack of faith.

6,7. Preliminary reassurance.

Isaiah tells the representatives to return to Hezekiah with God's message:

- a. Do not be afraid of Assyria's blasphemous words,
- b. Sennacherib will have reason to return home and
- c. He will die by the sword there (31:8,9).

SENNACHERIB'S RENEWED EFFORT TO PERSUADE HEZEKIAH. 37:8-13

- 8. Rabshakeh's return to Sennacherib. Rabshakeh returns to Libnah—about 25 miles west of Jerusalem.
- 9-13. Blasphemous letter.

Sennacherib hears that the king of Ethiopia is coming to war against him and sends a letter to Hezekiah to persuade him to surrender. The message is, "Do not let your God deceive you into believing that I will not conquer you." After all, Assyria has destroyed other nations and their gods have not delivered them.

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER BEFORE JEHOVAH. 37:14-20

- 14. Hezekiah receives the letter, takes it into the temple, and lays his case before God.
- 15-20. His prayer:

- a. Praises God as creator of the universe and ruler of kingdoms.
- b. Pleads with God to notice Sennacherib's reproach of the living God.
- c. Recognizes Assyria's victories over other nations and their gods of wood and stone, which in reality *were not gods*,

"Shall Jehovah, the living and all-powerful God, be numbered among such nonentities? The contest is clearly between Jehovah and the heathen deities" (Hailey).

- d. Pleads with God to save them so all may know that He is the only true God (Deut 32:39; Neh 9:6; Psa 46:10; 83:18; Dan 9:18, 19).

JEHOVAH'S RESPONSE — AN ANSWER TO SENNACHERIB. 37:21-29

- 21-25. Notice the tremendous power of prayer (cf. Psa 34:15; Jas 5:16; 1 Jn 3:22; 5:14).

Jerusalem will laugh scornfully at and rebuke Assyria. Assyria is guilty of reproaching, blaspheming and exalting herself against the *Holy One of Israel*. They had reproached God by claiming the credit for their victories and for providing their own water while depriving others of it.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion—this is not implying that Jerusalem is innocent, but that she has not been overrun and defiled by Sennacherib.

26-29. God declares He is responsible for Assyria's victories. In verse 28 God reveals His "all-seeing eye" (Job 26:6; Psa 33:13,14; 90:8; Prov 15:11; Jer 16:17).

Because of Assyria's pride and arrogance against God, He will send them back to Assyria.

Hook...bridle—cruel instruments by which captives were moved from place to place. Just as captives are led away by these instruments, Jehovah will send Sennacherib back to Assyria.

A MESSAGE OF ASSURANCE TO HEZEKIAH..... 37:30-35

30-32. God abruptly turns to Hezekiah and Judah. "For several years you will have peace and security in which to grow crops, and the remnant will also be productive." This is guaranteed by the zeal of God! Cf. 32; 9:7; 2 Kgs 19:31.

33-35. Jerusalem not attacked.

God promises that Sennacherib will not enter Jerusalem. Rather, he will return the same way he will come (34). God will defend Jerusalem for two reasons:

- a. To uphold His honor and integrity which had been blasphemed by Sennacherib and
- b. For His servant David's sake (i.e. because of His promises to David. Cf. 2 Sam 7:12 ff).

It Is Done..... 37:36-38

God sent the angel of the Lord to destroy them in one night. This was prophesied in 17:12-14; Ex 12:12-23; 2 Sam 24:1-16. Sennacherib then flees to Nineveh where he is killed by two of his own sons while worshiping his false god. See chapter 33:1. Treacherous spoilers will be treacherously spoiled!

One hundred and eighty-five thousand killed in one night, and while they were sleeping!

“Evidence of the miraculous nature of the slaughter of the Assyrians is that those in the camp who were not slain were ignorant of what had happened until morning” (Hailey).

3. HEZEKIAH’S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY. CH 38

The events in this chapter are just previous to, or simultaneous with, chapters 36 and 37.

HEZEKIAH’S SICKNESS AND PRAYER. 38:1-8

- 1-3. Isaiah gives God’s message to a dying Hezekiah—set your house in order! Cf. Gen 3:19; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Heb 9:27.

Hezekiah’s response—pray to the Lord (cf. 37:4). He, like Nehemiah, was a great man of prayer. Cf. 1:4ff; 2:4; 4:4; 6:14.

- 4-8. God’s response given to Isaiah. He has heard Hezekiah’s prayer, seen his tears, and will add fifteen years to his life. What a comfort to know God listens! He promises safety for Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Assyria.

Hezekiah had asked God for a sign to confirm His promise (38:22; 2 Kgs 20:8). God promises such a sign: the shadow on the sundial will go backwards ten degrees, and it did! This could be done by God in two ways:

- a. Stop the earth and reverse its movement or
- b. Bending the rays of the sun to cast a different shadow.

“Apparently, the sickness (boil or carbuncle) of Hezekiah was providentially cured by Jehovah through the natural means suggested by Isaiah. However, the sign given to the king that he would be healed was a miracle performed by Jehovah through a supernatural intervention” (Hailey).

HEZEKIAH’S PSALM OF LAMENTATION AND THANKSGIVING. 38:9-20

- 9-14. Hezekiah’s *writing* is divided into two parts:

- a. When he first learned of his sickness and
- b. After he had recovered.

- 15,16. When near death he mourned the thought of dying so young with no son yet, and no fulfillment of promises to David. He would miss his relationship with the Lord and with other men. His life’s span is removed quickly. He waited calmly, hoping to

escape death, but there appeared to be no escape. He mourned like birds and lifted his eyes to God for help.

After his recovery he rejoices in the fact that God spoke and then did what He said in providing him health and a promise of fifteen more years of life. Men can continue to live only through God's fulfillment of promises such as these.

O Lord, by these things men live—It appears that Hezekiah... "is thinking of experiences such as he had just passed through, the promises and providence of God at such times, and the blessings that accrue from trials. The true life of the spirit is realized through affliction and its blessings" (Hailey).

17-20. Hezekiah had great sorrow when about to die, but God's love delivered him from death and forgave his sins. He knew that once one died he could no longer publicly praise God and the fate of the dead is sealed. In contrast, the living righteous will praise God and teach His word and wonderful blessings to their children. Because of God's ready willingness to save Hezekiah, he would sing God's praises all his life.

Hezekiah's Healing..... 38:21,22

Circumstances surrounding the incident. Hezekiah now recalls two things which had happened earlier:

- a. Isaiah's command to make a poultice and
- b. His own request for a sign from God (contrast with Ahaz).

4. NOT ASSYRIA, BUT BABYLON. CH 39

This chapter tells of the Babylonian embassy to Judah and Hezekiah's foolishness.

PROPHET VERSUS KING. 39:1-4

1,2. The king of Babylon sends messengers bearing letters and a gift, recognizing Hezekiah's recovery.

We are told in 2 Chron 32:31 they also came to enquire about the miracle of the sundial. Their real purpose was, most likely, to attempt to form a military alliance against Assyria.

Hezekiah did not seek God's advice concerning these visitors, thus God left him alone and on his own to try him (2 Chron 32:31). In a moment of pride he "showed off" by allowing the men to see all the treasures (Cf. 1 Jn 2:16).

Hezekiah had accumulated some wealth after sending tribute to Sennacherib. Cf. 2 Chron 32:27-29.

Domain—this is probably only in Jerusalem including his government. It is doubtful that he took them for a tour of all of Judah.

3,4. Hezekiah is cross-examined.

Isaiah questions Hezekiah, slowly leading him to realize the error he has committed. “What did these men say? Where did they come from?” Hezekiah replies that they came from Babylon. *What have they seen in your house?* “Everything!” Hezekiah is honest: another indication of his good character.

THE WORD OF DOOM. 39:5-8

Jehovah pronounces punishment upon Hezekiah for showing all his treasures to the Babylonians.

Isaiah gives God’s word to Hezekiah. “Everything” you have will be taken to Babylon and your descendants will be servants in Babylon (cf. 2 Chron 33:11; 2 Kgs 24: 12-16; Dan 1:3-6). Verse 8 reveals Hezekiah’s calm and trusting acceptance of the will of God (Lk 22:42).

Isaiah had denounced the alliances of Ahaz with Assyria, and of Judah with Egypt. Now he is ready to denounce any alliance or relationship with Babylon. Such relationships sound the death knell for truth and what is right (Hailey).

Verse 6 is the first unmistakable reference to Babylon as the land they are to be taken to as captives.

Eunuchs—we do not know if this refers to castrated individuals or to high officers in the government.

II. Hope for Troubled Times. Ch 40-66

“The subject of Part Two (Chs 40-66) is the preparation of the people for captivity in Babylon...

- a. “Their eventual return from exile would of course depend on their faith in God and in His ability to keep His promise: therefore, the first major section of Part Two (Chs 41-48) is devoted to God’s claim to power, which rests on His sole deity and Godhood...
- b. “It looks beyond to a superior Deliverer who will free all peoples from a greater bondage...

- c. “One must be careful not to see the Messiah in passages where Isaiah did not intend to refer to Him, but one should be equally careful not to overlook references to Him when they are present” (Hailey).

Notice that there are constant challenges to false deities (idols). Satire is used throughout these challenges.

A. INTRODUCTION

A PROLOGUE: THE INCOMPARABLE GREATNESS OF JEHOVAH. Ch 40

A PROLOGUE. 40:1-11

COMFORT: PARDON THROUGH GRACE. 40:1,2

First, set the scene by recalling what was studied in chapters 36-39:

- a. God had removed Assyria’s threat against Jerusalem (36,37),
- b. But had stated they would be taken into captivity by Babylon (39:5-7).

Now, by inspiration of God, Isaiah projects himself into the future.

- a. Judah has been taken into captivity by Babylon and that captivity, along with all its hardships and suffering, is near at hand.
- b. Thus, God commands Isaiah to comfort His people. Three reasons given for comfort. There are two fulfillments:
 - 1) Deliverance from Babylonian captivity.
 - 2) Deliverance from bondage of sin through the Messiah (3-8; Acts 4:10-12; 13:38,39).

This principle of dual fulfillment applies to most of the material.

Remember, Jehovah is now addressing the remnant.

“Comfort....comfort”—Literally means “to cause to breath again.” This is expressive not only of consolation but also of enduring power as a result of reviving and relief. The repetition is indicative of urgency (Vine).

MAKE PREPARATION. 40:3-5

“Jerusalem stands for the surviving remnant, for at the time in view the physical city will lie in ruins and the people will be in captivity” (Hailey).

Double for all her sins—not double punishment but:

- a. Their sins have been balanced by the proper amount of suffering and
- b. In the Messiah will receive the double balancing in their joy replacing sorrow.

Voice...crying...“Prepare the way of the Lord”—inspiration tells us this was fulfilled in John the baptizer (Mt 3:3; Mk 1:2,3; Lk 3:4-6; Jn 1:23). John did prepare the way for Christ:

- a. Lk 1:16,17 - turned hearts of people to God through preaching (prepared their hearts),
- b. Mt 3:1-6; Mk 1:2,3; Lk 3:4-6 - preached repentance and baptism for the remission of sins,
- c. Jn 1:29-51 - directed his disciples to Jesus,
- d. Mt 11:11 - none greater among those born of women.

Notice the use of *way* and *highway* (cf. 35:8-10). These are terms describing *the Lord, our God*. Jesus is the Lord, our God, therefore deity! John’s work.

Glory of the Lord shall be seen by all flesh—Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment:

- a. Glory—Jn 1:14, 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:21 and
- b. All flesh—Lk 3:3-6; Acts 2:5ff; 4:11,12; Isa 2:2-4.

Verse 4 is talking about the hearts of the people—they will remove all obstacles in order to receive the gospel.

THE ENDURING WORD..... 40:6-8

Man is temporary and relatively powerless, especially to save. In contrast, God and His word will stand forever. Therefore, trust in God and His word for salvation, not in man. These verses are quoted by Peter in reference to salvation in the Messianic age (1 Pet 1:22ff).

The breath of the Lord blows upon it—“Whether Judah in her vaunting pride and independence from God, or heathen Babylon, or a present-day nation, every people will wither, die and fade away when the breath of God blows upon them” (Hailey).

The word of our God stands forever—what a wonderful thing to know that there is something that is actually permanent!

DECLARE THE TIDINGS! 40:9-11

Zion (Jerusalem) is to proclaim the good tidings: *Behold your God* refers to Jesus. He is deity (9; 2:3; Lk 24:49; Acts 1:8,12; 2:4,11).

Notice that comfort comes through the *good tidings*—the gospel of peace (9; 52:7-10; Rom 10:15). The Lord God will come with strength and His arm shall rule for Him. “Arm” has several meanings:

- a. A symbol of strength (Psa 89:13; 98:1; Ex 6:6),
- b. A symbol of the Messiah (51:4,5; 52:7-10; 53:1; Lk 1:51),
- c. In addition, according to other passages, the Messiah would be the one who ruled (9:7; 11:1ff; Dan 2:44; Acts 2:30ff).
- d. Thus, ultimate fulfillment of this passage is in Christ, the Messiah, Jesus! He will comfort His people as a shepherd would.
 - 1) The Messiah is often portrayed as a shepherd (Ezek 34:20-34; Mic 5:1-4; Zech 11:7-14; 13:7).
 - 2) Jesus described Himself as, and others described Him as, the good or great Shepherd (Jn 10:7,9-11,14,15; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4).
 - 3) His people are shown as sheep needing His tender protection (Mt 9:36-38; Jn 10:1-30)

Notice again that the language is in the past tense indicating it is so certain it can be spoken as if already in existence.

THE INCOMPARABLE GREATNESS OF JEHOVAH.. . . . 40:12-31

“We often ascribe to Jehovah our own weaknesses and shortcomings. When we are impotent to help ourselves, we decide that God is impotent to intervene and act on our behalf; when weariness overcomes us, we infer that God is weary and has withdrawn from us; in the midst of our failures and frustrations, we conclude that God has no purpose and that everything is in the hands of blind fate. But Jehovah knows what is in man; and anticipating our every need, He makes provision for us” (Hailey).

JEHOVAH AND CREATION..... 40:12-14

These people had rejected God and His word for mediums and wizards (8:19). They compared Him to their idols and said He was not powerful enough to carry out promises (5:18-20; 29:15ff). They did not want to know the Holy One of Israel (30:9-11) thus, they were not prepared for the Lord God to come to them (3-11).

Things that only God can do—the mighty power, glory and majesty of our God! God is supreme! No one has instructed or guided Him (vvs. 13,14; quoted in Romans 11:33-36 cf. Job 5:9; Psa 145:3; 1 Cor 2:16). God is the only One qualified to guide, govern and deliver His people.

JEHOVAH AND THE NATIONS..... 40:15-17

Even the mightiest of nations is like a drop in the bucket compared to God. Even all the wood in Lebanon is not enough to make a burnt offering to this mighty God. Our God is worthy of great glory! In comparison with God, all nations are insignificant!

JEHOVAH AND THE IDOLS..... 40:18-21

God is so great, so glorious and so powerful that no one even comes close to resembling Him (46:5; Acts 17:29). Feeble man cannot and must not try to make any images (likeness) that represent Him (cf Ex 20:4; Deut 4:12-24; 1 Cor 10:14; 1 Jn 5:21). The foolishness of men trying to make their own Gods! Cf. 44:9-20. Even the poorest people were involved in idolatry.

JEHOVAH AND THE PRINCES OF EARTH..... 40:22-25

Isaiah has sarcastically rebuked them for refusing to know the living and true God.

Two reasons are given for the fact that they should have known God:

- a. From God's word—*heard...told you...*
- b. From God's world—the creation, *foundations of the earth* (Psa 19:1; Rom 1:19,20).

God lives above the earth with its small inhabitants. He also formed the heavens with great ease (cf. Job 9:8; Psa 104:2). No matter how great princes and judges may be, God brings them down (cf. Job 12:21; Psa 107:40; Jer 27:5-11; Dan 2:20-23). These men are scarcely in power, and God removes them.

JEHOVAH AND THE GLORIOUS ASSURANCE..... 40:26-31

26,27. His masterful control of the stars.

Only God created, controls and calls by name, the great multitude of stars (cf. Job 9:9; 38:31,32; Psa 147:4).

Thus, He is great, mighty, strong and powerful. Considering this, who can say, “God cannot see and protect my cause?”

28-31. The Lord, source of all power.

Isaiah again rebukes the people—they should have known that God could and would protect and save the faithful ones.

Notice his description of God:

- a. Everlasting (Psa 90:2)—what about idols or men?
- b. Lord - master, ruler—what about idols or men?
- c. Creator of the ends of the earth (Gen 1).
- d. Does not faint or grow weary.
- e. Man cannot even begin to trace His wisdom and knowledge (Job 11:7-9; Rom 11:33).
- f. Gives strength to His people (v. 29 cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13).

Even the strongest, youngest people will grow weak, but those who patiently trust in the Lord will be renewed in strength (cf. Ex 19:4; Deut 32:11ff; Eph 3:16; Col 1:11; 2 Tim 4:17; 1 Pet 5:10). The lesson in all of this—trust in the Almighty God!

He gives power to the weak—“Appropriation of this great power will lie within reach of every discouraged Jew in Babylon if he will but look up and lay hold of it. The same power is offered the child of God today (Eph 1:19-23; 3:14-21)” (Hailey).

B. THE CONTEST BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND IDOLS..... CH 41-48

1. JEHOVAH’S CONFRONTATION WITH THE IDOLS. CH 41

JEHOVAH ADDRESSES THE NATIONS. 41:1-7

1-4. A challenge—test your false gods.

God calls for silence and commands all to gather around to hear what He has to say (cf. Hab 2:20; Zech 2:13)—reverence before God.

Coastlands—islands of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, represented as the most remote of regions.

God asks them who had raised up this mighty, righteous man from the east (2-4).

- a. In this context, this is an obvious reference to Cyrus, king of Persia (44:28; 45:1, 13; 46:11; 48:14-16).
- b. Who was responsible? The eternal God—"the first and the last" (cf. 44:6,7; 46: 10; 48:12).
- c. This phrase is also applied to Jesus, proving His deity (Rev 1:8,11,17; 21:6; 22:13).
- d. God is in complete control. He is the one to trust to deliver His people (10:5-19; Jer 27:1-11; Dan 7:6; 9:24).

5-7. Futility of multiplying idols.

This is a picture of idolatrous nations preparing for Cyrus' conquests. They were afraid and drew together. They joined in alliances, endeavoring to encourage each other and trusted in their own manmade idols for protection.

"Something must be done in defensive preparation, but what? The answer is to build larger and more elaborate idols, so each workman encourages the other" (Hailey).

Jehovah Addresses Israel: What He Will Do. 41:8-20

8-10. Judah was chosen to be God's servant by being a holy nation (cf. Ex 19:5,6; Lev 25:55; Deut 4:5-7; 7:6-8; 14:2; 26:18,19). They were the descendants of Abraham, the "friend of God" (cf. 2 Chron 20:7; Jas 2:23).

- a. They were chosen to serve God in bringing the Messiah into the world (cf Gen 12:1ff; 22:18; Gal 3:16), not for salvation!
- b. Salvation is an individual matter.
- c. As long as God was with them they had nothing to fear (cf. 44:2; Deut 31:7,8; Psa 27:1; Jer 1:8; Rom 8:31).
- d. This promise is their heritage even though at this time they are cast down.

A time will come when the enemies of Judah will be defeated.

- a. Judah will search for them, but they will be gone, the reason being God's protection and help.
- b. Ultimate fulfillment is in Abraham's spiritual seed—the church (Rom 2:28,29; 4:1-25; Gal 3:6-9, 15-29) and victory over spiritual enemies (Lk 1:46-55, 68-79; Eph 6:10-18; Col 2:12-15).

The descendants of Abraham My friend—three times he is called the friend of God:

- a. 2 Chron 20:7,
- b. Jas 2:23 and
- c. In this passage.

Friend—"Denotes one who is loving and beloved, an object of desire, and one who enjoys the utmost intimacy" (Vine).

My right hand—"Our right hand is that with which we do our work, it is the emblem of our activities. That God will hold that, indicates that we can do nothing apart from Him and that it is His will for us to realize that the power we require to do anything of value must be His" (Vine).

Cf. Psa 73:23.

Although Judah, in captivity, is described as a *worm*, God assures them that they have nothing to fear. "Worm" was used to describe people who were poor, afflicted and despised (Job 25:5,6; Psa 22:6).

Notice the terms used to describe God:

- a. Lord,
- b. Redeemer (Goel)—one who delivers from slavery by paying ransom and
- c. Holy One, the term they did not want to hear - 30:9-11.

15,16. God would cause them to be powerful and victorious, and they would rejoice in and glorify the Holy One.

This does not refer to physical conquests, but to spiritual conquests by God's faithful ones.

The idea here is of spiritual triumph and power rather than weakness of the flesh.

17-20. Isaiah uses symbolism to prophesy a remarkable change that God will bring about in response to their cries (cf. 35:1ff). God will provide abundant water where wilderness used to be. Mighty trees will grow there, again probably two fulfillments:

- a. God would provide their needs in deliverance from Babylonian captivity and
- b. The new spiritual life available through the “living waters” of the Messiah (e.g. 12:3; Jn 7:37,38; 4:10ff; Acts 3:19). The reason for this remarkable thing — that all might know that it was done by the Holy One of Israel.

See....know....consider....understand—“The progress of idea in these four verbs is noticeable and significant. They describe what should be the result of our meditations in the Scriptures, and of His dealings with us” (Vine).

JEHOVAH CHALLENGES THE IDOLS: WHAT CAN YOU DO?.. 41:21-29

21-24. In this chapter God, through Isaiah, shows He will protect and deliver His people.

Now God calls on idols and idol worshipers to give their best arguments demonstrating their power and ability to save. He challenges them to predict the future and to interpret past events.

- a. Only the true and living God and His prophets can predict the future! (Cf. 44:7,8; 45:3-7; 46:9,10; Deut 18:15-22).
- b. God challenges them to do *anything*! (cf. Jer 10:3-5).
- c. The conclusion is that their idols and their works are nothing and
- d. Those who trust in them are an abomination, the most horrible and worst possible thing, to the Lord (cf. Hos 9:10; Psa 115:3-8).

Do good or do evil—the idea is for the idols to prove they can do good for their worshipers or do evil to their enemies.

25-29. God returns to the subject of verse 2—Cyrus, whom He would raise up.

- a. He says Cyrus would be from the north, while in verse 2 He says from the east. Is there a contradiction here? No!
 - 1) Persia was east of Judah, but
 - 2) All invaders, including Persia, attacked Judah from the north (Jer 1:14; 6:22; 25:9; 46:20).

- b. The one raised up would call God's name. Cyrus did this! (Ezra 1:2).
 - 1) This does not imply he was converted to Judaism, but that he recognized it was Jehovah who gave him his victories.
 - 2) He would be an awesome, victorious power, trampling rulers under foot like mortar or clay.
 - 3) Unlike the idols, God has shown His deity, power and righteousness by declaring all these events before they happened (v. 26 cf. vvs. 22,23).
 - 4) God says that He was the first to declare to Zion the good tidings of deliverance from Babylon (cf. chapter 13). That was because there was no man (or idol) wise enough to predict such a thing.
- c. The conclusion of the matter is that idols, and those who place their trust in them, are worthless and nothing; nothing but empty wind and confusion. We are to trust in God for protection and deliverance!

2. JEHOVAH'S SERVANT AND ISRAEL'S PUNISHMENT. CH 42

JEHOVAH'S IDEAL SERVANT. 42:1-9

1-4. The Servant—meek and unassuming, yet successful.

Inspiration tells us that Jesus is the fulfillment of this passage - Mt 12:15-21.

Notice the following remarkable character of this servant and that Jesus fulfilled it precisely:

- a. *My Servant*—The Hebrew word means “bond servant” or “slave”—Jesus! (Mt 20:28; Jn 13:14; Phil 2:7ff).
- b. *Whom I uphold*—God supports and sustains Him—Jesus! (Mt 4:11; Jn 5:26; Acts 2:32-36; Rom 1:4; Eph 1:19ff).
- c. *My Elect One*—He is God's special, chosen One—Jesus! (28:16; 1 Pet 2:6).
- d. *In whom My soul delights*—God will be well pleased with Him—Jesus! (Mt 3:17; 12:18:17:5).
- e. *I have put My spirit upon Him*—only Jesus fits this description! (11:2; 61:1; Mt 3:16; Lk 4:18; Jn 1:32,33; 3:34; Acts 10:38).

- f. Will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, justice for truth and justice in the earth. He will cause God's system of justice and judgment to spread throughout the whole world—Jesus! (9:7; 11:3,4; Mt 12:18; 28:18-20; Jn 7:24; 12:48).
- g. He will not be loud and boisterous, drawing attention to Himself—Jesus! (53:7; Mt 8:4; 9:30; 12:15; 27:11,12; Jn 5:13).
- h. He will have an affectionate regard and compassion for the broken-hearted (*bruised reed, smoking flax*), humble, penitent and afflicted—Jesus! (11:4; 50:4; 61:1; Mt 11:28-30; 23:37; Lk 4:18,19; 5:31,32; 19:10).
- i. He will be successful and victorious—Jesus! (Acts 2:32ff; Eph 1:19ff; Heb 1:3; 2:14; 4:14; 6:19,20; 8:1ff; 12:2).
- j. All the earth will eagerly wait to receive His law—Jesus! (2:3, 4; Gen 49:10; Jer 31:31ff; 50:4,5; Acts 2:5-12; Heb 8:6ff).

I have put My Spirit upon Him—The Holy Spirit will provide all that is necessary to the Father's Son for Him to accomplish all that is set before Him. This is a very important concept in understanding:

- a. How the Godhead functions together and
- b. How Jesus, the God-man, did not rely on His being deity to overcome temptations, do miracles, etc.
- c. See handout "The Holy Spirit and Jesus."

The coastlands shall wait for His law—the Gentiles will have to wait for His law, because it is only under His law that they will find a just government, redemption and hope.

5-9. The Lord's relationship to His Servant.

Now God speaks to the Servant. Notice how He establishes His authority to appoint the Servant:

- a. He is creator of all things (44:24; Job 38:4; Psa 24:1,2; 104:5; 136:3ff; Prov 30:4; Heb 11:3).
- b. He upholds all His creation (Heb 1:3).
- c. He is the source of all life (Job 12:10; Eccl 12:7; Zech 12:1; Acts 17:25; Heb 12:9).

God will show His righteousness by calling this Servant, protecting Him and giving Him special purposes as follows:

- a. To bring a new covenant to the people (49:8; 54:10; 61:8; Jer 31:31ff; Ezek 16:60ff). Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (Mt 26:28; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).
- b. To be a light to the Gentiles (9:2; 49:6; 60:1-3). This is Jesus, the light of the world, bringing salvation to the Gentiles. (Mt 4:16; Lk 1:79; 2:32; Jn 1:4,7,9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35,46; Acts 13:47).
- c. To cure spiritual blindness and make possible spiritual deliverance from bondage of sin (29:18; 32:3; 35:5,6; 61:1,2). Only Jesus did this! (Lk 4:18, 19; Acts 26:17,18; Rom 6:17,18; Col 1:12,13; Heb 2:14,15; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 Jn 3:8).

These things are certain because God is Lord, not an idol, and deserves all praise and glory. On the basis of His previous prophecies having come true, they can have confidence in His new prophecies.

My glory I will not give to another—"His glory and praise are incommunicable. They will not be yielded to another" (Vine).

A NEW SONG OF PRAISE TO JEHOVAH..... 42:10-17

10-12. Because of the greatness of God, His Servant and His deliverance, all are commanded to praise and glorify God in a new song—indicating a deliverance never seen before (Lk 1:46ff, 67ff; 2:25, 36ff; Heb 13:15; Rev 14:3; 15:3,4).

Sela = Petra.

13-17. The Lord works through His Servant.

In this work of a Servant, God is pictured as a mighty warrior winning the victory over His enemies (27:1; 30:30; 40:10; Ex 15:3; Psa 24:8; 45:3).

- a. This probably refers to the spiritual victory of God over Satan, sin and death in the sinless life, death and resurrection of His Servant Son, Jesus (Gen 3:15; Mk 3:27; Jn 12:31,32; Rom 5:10; 8:2; 1 Cor 15:55ff; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:9,14; 1 Jn 3:8; Rev 11:15; 17:14).
- b. *Mighty man*—a warrior, hero, champion.

God restrained Himself in waiting to bring the Servant in the fullness of time (Mt 5:17; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10; Heb 1:1ff).

- a. See handout “Fullness of Time.”
- b. When He does this, He will bring about a remarkable change and will lead those who were spiritually blind by a new way—probably a reference to the new and living way blazed by Jesus! Cf. 35:8; 40:3; Jn 10:9; 14:6; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 6:18-20; 9:8; 10:19,20.

In contrast, those who trust in carved and molded images (idols) will be ashamed and defeated.

Jehovah’s stored up anger is about to explode.

Remember, this is spiritual warfare we are talking about.

ISRAEL, JEHOVAH’S BLIND AND DEAF SERVANT, TO BE PUNISHED. . . . 42:18-25

With verse 18 the subject is changed to another servant—Israel. How do we know? By the descriptions given:

- a. This one is described as deaf and blind.
- b. This is a common description of Israel’s’ spiritual disobedience—their refusal to see, hear and obey God’s word (29:18; Mt 15:14; Rom 2:19). Thus, we know for sure Israel is the “servant” in this text.

In light of what God has promised here, the people are exhorted to *hear....and....look*. No one is so blind and deaf as this servant—Israel / Judah. Notice some things said about them:

- a. God had chosen them to be His messenger, they were privileged to have received the oracles of God (Deut 4:7,8; Psa 147:19,20; Rom 2:18; 3:2; 9:4).
- b. They were *perfect*. How?
 - 1) This could be irony,
 - 2) It could be that is the way they saw themselves,
 - 3) It could be that they were blessed by God with all they needed, yet
 - 4) They were still deliberately blind and deaf! They could see and hear, but refused to see, hear and obey God’s word (Psa 50:16; Mt 23:3; Rom 2:21, 22). Thus, there was no excuse!

Because of His righteousness, God was pleased to magnify and honor the old law to rule His people.

- a. The old law was good and holy (Psa 19:8; 119:138; Rom 7:12,14; 1 Tim 1:8).
- b. The problem was the people's misuse of the law (Rom 9:31ff; 10:3). So, even though God blessed them richly, they were lost and without any power of their own to deliver or restore themselves.
- c. "The law included commands, promises, and penalties; and if Jehovah is to magnify it, that is, to exalt its importance and greatness, to make it appreciated, then the penalties for violating it must be executed. Otherwise it is meaningless" (Hailey).

Isaiah taunts them; "Who among you, for the future's sake, will listen and learn from all these things?" Cf. Jer 5:1,2; Ezek 22:30.

- a. It was God who allowed them to be robbed and plundered (Amos 4:6-12). Notice why:
 - 1) They had sinned by not living in God's ways and
 - 2) By disobeying His law (Jer 6:16-19; Rom 4:15; 1 Jn 3:4; 5:17).
- b. The result was that they received the fiery, furious anger of God (Deut 4:24; Psa 50:3; 2 Cor 5:11; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 10:27,31; 12:29).
- c. And yet, they still did not learn their lesson (Hos 7:9)!

"Israel never understood what the Lord was doing; they laid not to heart the fact that all He did was for their salvation. Truly, the heart of man often becomes so deadened and calloused by sin that it recognizes neither the grace and mercy of God in the outpouring of His blessings, nor the chastening judgments which He sends for correction" (Hailey).

The fury of His anger and the strength of battle—Or "the heat of His wrath and the violence of war."

3. "YOU ARE MY WITNESSES...BESIDES ME THERE IS NO SAVIOR". CH 43

This chapter shows the true relationship of Israel to Jehovah.

A RENEWED PROMISE TO ISRAEL OF DELIVERANCE AND PROTECTION. . . . 43:1-7

1-4. *But now*—forms a connection with, and a transition from, the last thoughts of chapter 42:24,25.

- a. There Isaiah had shown their sins incurred God's wrath, leading to punishment (captivity).
- b. "But now" He moves to a more pleasant topic. He gives several reasons why Israel should not be afraid, even in captivity:
 - 1) He created (formed) the nation (15; 44:1; Psa 100:3).
 - 2) He had redeemed them, involving the idea of a ransom price paid (Gen 18: 16; Ex 6:6; 15:13).
 - 3) He had called them by their name, and they were called for a purpose, to bring the Messiah into the world (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Psa 72:17; Acts 3:25,26; Gal 3:8,16). At this time, this purpose had not yet been fulfilled.
 - 4) They belonged to God (49:14-18; 62:1ff; Ezek 16:1ff; Hos 11:1ff).
- c. Also, for these reasons:
 - 1) God would protect them.
 - 2) God had defeated, and would defeat, other nations to deliver Israel for His Messianic purpose.
- d. Notice the beautiful names in verse 3 which describe God.

5,6. God again encourages them to not be afraid because He is with them and will gather them, that is their descendants, from all parts of the earth. This appears to be one of those passages that has two fulfillments:

- a. In the return of the remnant from Babylonian captivity and
- b. In the return of lost sinners to God in His Son, and His church.

Notice the language used to describe the group:

- a. *Sons and daughters and everyone who is called by My name.* (I.E. His children!)
- b. Christians are the children of God by faithful obedience to Christ (Gal 3:26ff; Rom 8:16).

- c. Not all the physical descendants of Israel (Jacob) are His spiritual children, the true Israel of God, the church (Rom 2:25-29; 9:6; Jn 8:39; Gal 3:29; 6:13-16).
- d. God speaks of this group as His creation, created for His glory.
 - 1) Christians are new creatures or creations (Jn 3:3ff; Rom 6:4ff; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:15; Jas 1:18).
 - 2) God is to be glorified in the church which consists of Christians, His children (Rom 11:36; 16:27; Eph 3:21; Heb 13:21).

A FRESH CHALLENGE TO ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS. 43:8-13

8-10. God calls on the nations with their false gods to gather around. They are also spiritually blind and deaf (Rom 1:19,20). He calls upon them to bring forth witnesses to verify the ability of the false gods, to declare truth, to interpret past events and to predict future events. Obviously they are unable to do any of that! Then He calls upon Israel as His witness of what He had done throughout their history. He also identifies them as His servant, chosen for several purposes:

- a. To know God fully through His dealings with them,
- b. To believe what He says and to trust Him and
- c. To understand that He is the only God (one major purpose of Israel—concept of monotheism). Up to this point they had failed in all of these things!

11-13. God says emphatically that He is the only Lord and Savior (45:21,22; 46:9). This supports the deity of Jesus who is also Savior (Mt 1:21; Lk 2:11; Acts 4:12; 13:23). Israel knew that before they worshiped false gods, God had saved them and declared future events, thus He was the only God. Only God is eternal and all-powerful. Cf. Psa 90:2. Jesus used this same concept—Jn 8:58.

And there was no foreign god among you—“He does not mean that there was no idolatry among the people, but that there was no other god with whom Jehovah collaborated or who foretold anything that would be done; Jehovah stood and acted alone” (Hailey).

Jehovah’s Power to Remove Obstacles in Redeeming His People. 43:14-21

14,15. God again promises the destruction of Babylon (cf. Ch 13; Hab 2:5ff).

Notice again the terms used to describe the one true and living God:

- a. *Lord,*
- b. *Redeemer,*
- c. *Holy One of Israel* and
- d. *Creator, King.*

Rejoice in their ships—the ships of commerce that had brought great rejoicing through the wealth which had enriched the city. The ships of which the Babylonians are so very proud will become the means of their humiliating flight before their enemies (Hailey).

16-21. These verses show God's power to save and deliver Israel from her enemies by reminding them of their miraculous deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea (Ex 14: 4ff). Pharaoh's mighty chariots, horses and army were destroyed quickly. Even as great as that was, it would not be as memorable as the *new thing* the Lord was about to do—to make, for His chosen people, a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. This miracle will result in even the beasts honoring Him and He will have formed a people to praise Him.

"As the animal world suffered because of judgment upon man for his sins (see. e.g., Jer 14:6; Hos 4:3; Joel 1:18), so now in some way will they partake of God's blessings bestowed upon a redeemed people" (Hailey).

Again, the language points to two fulfillments:

- a. Deliverance from Babylonian captivity and
- b. Redemption and deliverance from the bondage of sin through the Messiah. How?
 - 1) This would be a *new thing*—greater even than deliverance from a nation; often used in connection with the coming of the Messiah (42:9,10; 48:6; 62:2; 65:17; 66:22; Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26).
 - 2) It involved a *road* and *rivers* in barren area, language associated with the Messianic age (e.g. 19:23; 35:8ff; 40:3; 51:3).
 - 3) It included a creation of people to praise God—the church (5-7; Lk 1:74, 75; Eph 1:5,6; 1 Pet 2:9).

Israel's Indifference—Jehovah's Grace. 43:22-28

22-24. Israel was guilty of viewing their service to God as a burden, making them weary (7:13; Jer 9:5; Mic 6:3; Hab 3:2; Mal 2:17).

- a. Their sacrifices did not honor God because of their attitudes (1:10ff; Jer 7:21ff; Mic 6:7ff).
- b. God had not burdened them with the sacrificial system.
- c. The sacrifices were neither sacrificial on their part or satisfying to the Lord.
- d. And, rather than God being a burden on them, their sins were a burden on, and wearied, God!
- e. They were guilty! They did not earn or merit the deliverance God would bring about!

You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings—this does not mean that they did not do these physical acts, but that they were not bringing these offerings and gifts from the heart.

- a. They were using these offerings as insurance for Jehovah's protection and
- b. They thought that following the letter of the law they would escape the wrath of their God.
- c. What does this say about our worship services and the pattern of our daily lives?
 - 1) Do we merely fulfill requirements or
 - 2) Do we respond to Jehovah from a true and loving heart?

Sweet cane was a sweet smelling reed; part of the holy oil imported from a distance (Ex 30:23; Jer 6:20; Ezek 27:19).

God emphatically says He is the only one who can and will *blot out* their sins (1:18; 44: 22; Mk 2:7). That means no man can do this, priests, etc., and it will be because of who God is (*My own sake*) and not their merit.

I will not remember your sins—If Jehovah is omniscient, how can He forget (not remember) their sins?

- a. Omniscience—knowing everything that is the object of knowledge—past, present and future; real or imagined.
- b. The idea is that Jehovah will not remember forgiven sins *against* them any more!
- c. Jehovah, speaking of an evil man who has forsaken his evil ways and turned to righteousness says, *None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live* (Ezek 33:16).
- d. God, being omniscient, cannot forget anything! So, when the scriptures speak of Him not remembering sins, it clearly means that He still knows them, but that He will not remember them against the justified one.

God commands them to remind Him if they can of any merit on their part and to bring their case before Him to try to justify themselves.

- a. He knew they could not meet the challenge because He knew their sins (e.g. Amos 5:12; Ezek 8:12; 9:9).
- b. The people had sinned from the beginning, including those who were supposed to teach them (53:6; Psa 14:2,3; 53:3).
- c. For that reason He will subject the religious leaders, and the people, to punishment.

Your first father sinned—“Scholars have variously interpreted this reference: Adam, Abraham, Jacob and even David; but it seems that Jacob is the father herein considered, for he had gained the blessing and birthright by deceit and an unbrotherly bargain” (Hailey).

4. THE FOLLY OF IDOLATRY. CH 44

ISRAEL’S BLESSINGS IN SPITE OF THE CURSE.. . . . 44:1-5

Yet—a pointing back to the last verse of chapter 43. Although they had been sinful and received God’s punishment, God has a better message for His chosen ones: *Fear not*.

To whom is this message written? To *Jeshurun*, a tender name meaning “righteous,” “upright” (Deut 32:15; 33:5,26—the remnant).

Verses 3 and 4 contain Messianic language. Note particularly:

- a. *Water...thirsty; floods...dry ground* (cf. notes on 16-21).
- b. *Pour My Spirit on your descendants*—a clear reference to the Messianic age (32:15; 59:21; Joel 2:28ff; Zech 12:10; Jn 7:39; Acts 2:17,33; 10:45; 21:9). This will be a time when many will confess that they belong to God (1 Cor 6:20; 2 Cor 5:14,15; 7:5).

Write with his hand—seems to refer to the act of signing a pledge.

Verses 1-5 seem to be the conclusion of chapter 43 rather than the beginning of chapter 44.

ISRAEL'S KING — THE ONLY GOD..... 44:6-8

The only true God—the Lord, King of Israel, Redeemer, Lord of hosts, the First and the Last (eternal). No one else can do such great things (41:21-23; 42:9; Jer 10:5; Jn 13:19):

- a. *Can proclaim*—command to happen whatever He desires for He is omnipotent (46:2; 48:15).
- b. *Declare it*—predict a future event with certainty before it happens for He is omniscient.
- c. *Set it in order for Me*—arrange events in the proper sequence, as an army marshaled and arrayed for battle. God is in control!
- d. *Since I appointed*—God is, and has been, in control from the very beginning. For these reasons, His people should not be afraid. They were witnesses of those great predictions and fulfillments therefore, they must know there is no other God! (43:10,12). God is the only one to trust in for salvation and deliverance.

I am the first and I am the last—“This title, claimed by God three times in Isaiah, here, in 41:4 and 48:12, and by Christ three times, in Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 22:13, indicates Their oneness in the Godhead, Their eternal preexistence and Their absolute supremacy. It predicates that all creatures animate and inanimate owe their existence to Them, and that the beginning, course and issue of all circumstances are under Their supreme control. Israel may therefore rest assured that all the divine promises and pledges will be fulfilled by Him who is their ‘King,’ their ‘Redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts’” (Vine).

Fear—the word here and in verse 11 is not the usual word Isaiah uses for fear; it is an intensified word, an increased fear, dread or terror. In other words, do not fear idols for they are powerless.

Rock—"The Rock is representative of immovability, strength and protection. Let us whom He has raised up to be His witnesses take comfort in this. Things around us are in a state of upheaval and uncertainty. The earth(i.e., its inhabitants) is changing, and the mountains of many governments are falling into the sea of revolution and disturbance. Let us, therefore, renew our confidence in our God and take courage to bear witness boldly and steadfastly for Him" (Vine).

THE SHAME AND FOLLY OF IDOLATRY. 44:9-20

It took courage to cry out so boldly against a way of life that had become deeply entrenched among all mankind (Leupold).

9-11. Foolishness of idolatry. Cf. 40:18-20; 41:5,7,21-24.

The foolishness of idolatry is stressed in several ways:

- a. The makers of idols are useless (empty, vain, powerless).
- b. The idols are not profitable. They are powerless to deliver or save.
- c. *They are their own witnesses*—one can see just by looking at them that they are powerless.
- d. *They neither see nor know*—how could they predict future events?
- e. Those who trust in them shall be ashamed.
- f. They are made by men and profitable for nothing!

"God created the dust and from it made man. Can that dust now take created material and form a God? The very thought is preposterous" (Hailey).

- g. All associated with idols will be afraid and ashamed.

12-17. Sarcasm on the making of idols .

Isaiah sarcastically declares the process of making an idol, in the reverse order.

- a. A hungry, thirsty, weak blacksmith (metal worker) straining to make something to worship!
- b. The craftsman (carpenter) works diligently to form an idol in the figure of a man!

- 1) For what purpose?
- 2) So that it can remain stationary in a house.
- c. He chops down a tree which he has labored hard to plant and which has to depend upon God's gift of rain for its growth.
- d. He uses part of the tree for fire for warmth and to cook his food and uses the rest (the residue or "left overs") to make a god.
- e. He then bows down to it, worships it, and prays to it, asking it to deliver him!
- f. In all of this process the idol is passive, not a participant, and has no control over its appearance, where it will dwell or even its destiny.

And yet, it is supposed to have the power of a god to deliver the ones who made it.

- g. How silly, worshiping the creature rather than the creator (Rom 1:20-25)!

18-20. More on the foolishness of idolatry.

In light of verses 12-17, those associated with idols are said to be ignorant, stupid and blind. Surely God gave them up to a reprobate mind! (Rom 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thess 2:11,12).

They were so self-deluded that they refused to recognize that they were worshiping tree stumps! This is an abomination to God (2 Kgs 11:5,7; 23:13).

The deceitfulness of sin, particularly idolatry (Rom 1:21; 2 Cor 4:4; Heb 3:13), is as empty and foolish as eating ashes. The result is that one who does this cannot deliver his own soul or recognize he is being deceived.

He has shut their eyes...and their hearts—"From one point of view, God may be said to have closed their eyes and hearts; but this is not an arbitrary act on God's part. They themselves are responsible (Rom 1:20-29). In their self-imposed darkened state idolaters cannot understand their folly" (Hailey).

Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy (Jonah 2:8).

Pardon and Praise. 44:21-23

God calls upon Israel to remember that they are His servant and He will not forget them.

- a. Therefore, leave your idols!
- b. He entreats them to repent and return to Him because He has redeemed them and forgiven their sins.
 - 1) This is because, in God's mind (pre-knowledge—omniscience), Jesus has been sacrificed from the beginning of time.
 - 2) Looking at the cross as already present.
 - 3) *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance* (Heb 9:15).
 - 4) See handout "Old Testament Forgiveness Of Sins."
- c. He calls on all to sing and rejoice at this redemption—even the heavens and earth (Psa 96:11,12; 148).

CYRUS THE DELIVERER IS NAMED. 44:24-28

The great redeemer, Lord, creator and sustainer of the universe has a message.

- a. He is powerful enough to, and does, frustrate plans of those who oppose Him.
- b. He confirms and carries out the messages of His prophets, particularly the message concerning the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem.
- c. God has power to dry up bodies of water. Several meanings are given to this:
 - 1) The parting of the Red Sea in defeating Pharaoh and Egypt (43:16,17; Ex 14:4ff),
 - 2) Cyrus' diverting the Euphrates in the capture of Babylon or
 - 3) Figuratively as God's great power to remove any obstacle. That God would use Cyrus to release God's people and send them to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.
- d. Remarkable prophecy!
 - 1) By name—150 years before he was born and reigned! (45:1).

- 2) Fulfilled precisely (Ezra 1:1ff).
- 3) According to Josephus, Cyrus read of this account before he released Israel!
- 4) This naming of Cyrus one-hundred years in advance is a big stumbling-block to modern theologians.

In verse 24 the word *Redeemer* is plural in the Hebrew! Another proof of the plurality of the Godhead!

5. “UNTO ME EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW”..... CH 45

JEHOVAH ADDRESSES CYRUS: HIS MISSION. 45:1-7

1-4. God identifies Cyrus as *His anointed*.

- a. The word translated *anointed* is a form of the word usually translated “Messiah.”
 - 1) It is a term used of the kings of Israel because they were set apart for the office by a ceremony of anointing (cf. 1 Sam 2:10,35; 12:3,5; 16:6).
 - 2). It is also used of the messianic Redeemer King (Psa 2:7; Dan 9:25ff).
- b. In some ways Cyrus was a type of Christ; powerful, victorious, a deliverer of his people.
- c. Here, this term means that God has solemnly set Cyrus apart to perform an important function for Him.
- d. God is going to make it possible for Cyrus to subdue nations. Thus, he will owe his success to God (Ezra 1:2).
 - 1) Notice particularly—to open before him the double doors.
 - a) The historian Herodotus records that this is exactly what happened when Cyrus captured Babylon!
 - b) Amazing! Predicted 150 years before it actually happened!
- e. Two major reasons are given for God’s doing these amazing things:
 - 1) That Cyrus and others may know that He is the God of Israel, the only true and living God and

- 2) For His elect servant, Israel. Notice the emphasis on God's power to call Cyrus by name even before he was born (see notes on 44:28). Only the true and living God could do this!

5-7. God is the only Lord and God (cf. 42:8; 43:3; 44:8; 45:14,18,22; 46:9) and He prepared and strengthened Cyrus before he knew God so that all nations would know that He was the only true God.

Though you have not known me—Cyrus was interested in religions and:

- a. Could have read this passage for himself or
- b. This passage was pointed out to him by Daniel who was still third in the kingdom.

God is all-powerful and sovereign, in control of all things, and He is ultimately responsible for:

- a. *Light*—possibly representing peace and prosperity (as just promised to Cyrus in this context),
- b. *Darkness*—opposite of light. Here possibly representing adversity, calamity, failure (Amos 3:16; Nah 1:3; Zech 9:14; Mt 24:7; Acts 16:26; Rev 6:12).
- c. *Peace*—absence of strife; wholeness and well-being (see notes on 26:3; Psa 65:7).
- d. *Calamity*—evils, judgments, trials and disappointments.

“The Persians believed in two co-existent principles virtually regarded as gods. The one, Ormuzd, good, symbolized by light, the other, Ahriman, evil, symbolized by darkness, both eternally in conflict, the world being the theater. Hence the present declaration by God addressed to Cyrus. Accordingly, the immediate reference is not to the evil of sin, which God did not create, but to the judgments of war with its consequent calamities, which, for instance, Cyrus was appointed to inflict upon Gentile powers, and to the peace which he, as God's chosen instrument, would bestow upon Israel” (Vine).

“The raising up of Cyrus, his conquests, and the return of the Jews to their homeland will stand for all time as a monument to the power and Godhood of Jehovah. And more significantly, the return of the Jews to their land will insure that the coming Ruler will be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2). This will be further verification of the claims of Jehovah” (Hailey).

Heaven's Cooperation Invoked. 45:8

Isaiah is so struck with God's sovereignty and power that he prays for the completion of God's promise. This will be a time when the earth is filled with righteousness and salvation. History shows us this could, and was, fulfilled only in the Messiah and His rule.

JEHOVAH'S RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S COMPLAINT. 45:9-13

9-11. Some Israelites would criticize God's using a Gentile (which Cyrus was) to deliver His people.

- a. Some might doubt God's abilities to do this.
- b. Here Isaiah anticipates this and pronounces a woe on any who would strive with God, their Creator, in such a way (cf. Rom 9:20, 21).
- c. Weak, frail man doing this to God is like a fragile, clay pot questioning the man who made it (10:15; 29:16; Jer 18:1ff) or an unborn child questioning his father and mother about his future birth—absurd and silly!
- d. Israel should have inquired of God to learn of His purposes before criticizing Him.
- e. Instead of Israel's complaining and questioning, God exhorts them to exercise their duty and privilege of making their requests known in prayer (cf. Mt 7:7; Phil 4: 6,7; Heb 4:15,16; 10:19-22; 1 Pet 5:7).

12,13. God is the all-powerful creator and sustainer of man, heaven and earth. Why argue with Him? (cf. 40:26; Gen 1:26,27). That same God raised up Cyrus to accomplish His purposes, so it will be done! And Cyrus will not levy any financial requirements to release God's people (cf. Ezra 1:7-11).

All their host—this could refer to:

- a. The sun, moon and stars or
- b. His angelic host.

The Effect of Israel's Redemption upon the Gentiles. 45:14-17

14. Isaiah looks into the future and speaks of a time when nations such as Egypt and Cush (Ethiopia) will submit to Israel.

- a. They will come as humble servants and

- b. They will be on their knees acknowledging that:
 - 1) God is in Israel (the true Israel of God—spiritual Israel, the church) and that
 - 2) There is no other God.

All of this language indicates a spiritual conversion on the part of the Gentile nations.

- a. It is a language which Isaiah often uses to point to the age of the Messiah (cf. 2:2-4; 18:7; 19:16-25; 23:18; 60:5-22; 61:5-11).
- b. “The full effect of Israel’s redemption upon the heathen has been veiled. It is now clearly manifested, however, that Israel’s God is the *Savior* of the Gentiles as well, for there is no other” (Hailey).

Truly You are God, who hide Yourself—God the Savior is so mighty and wise that His plans and ways are hidden from man until He chooses to reveal them (8:17; 55:8,9; 64:4; Jn 16:12; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 2:6-13; Eph 3:2-11) and:

- a. All those who make and trust in idols will be ashamed, disgraced and confused (1:29; 20:5; 30:5; 43:17).
- b. In sharp contrast, another class of people will never be ashamed or disgraced, the Israel that will be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.
- c. Obviously this speaks of a spiritual salvation.
 - 1) Those who are saved “by the Lord,” the faithful and obedient remnant.
 - 2) In the Christian era this is the true spiritual Israel, Abraham’s spiritual seed, the church (Mt 3:9; Jn 8:39; Rom 2:28,29; 9:6,7; 11:26; Gal 3:6-9,27-29; 4:28; 6:16).

JEHOVAH’S PURPOSE IN CREATION. 45:18-25

18-21. Appeal to the nations to recognize God.

The one true and living God created the heavens and the earth for a purpose—to be inhabited by man and animals. Possibly there are two thoughts here:

- a. Because of this, He alone is almighty and worthy of trust and

- b. Although Judah would vacate the promised land to go into captivity, she will return to inhabit it again.
 - 1) God had not spoken His Words, Predictions and Will secretly, but openly (Deut 30:11), as opposed to the fortune tellers, etc. who whispered their predictions in secret. (Jesus gave a statement that is remarkably similar in Jn 18:20.)
 - 2) God's exhorting Israel to seek Him was not in vain (Deut 32:47). In other words, He was a God who would do what He promised (as opposed to the false gods who could not) and the things He spoke were true and righteous (Psa 19:8; 119:137,138,173), as opposed to things spoken by false gods.

God looks ahead to those Gentiles who will escape Cyrus' military victories and exhorts them to come together close to Him.

- a. He points out that they were not saved by powerless wooden idols and challenges them to put together the wisdom of all their idols to see whether they had ever predicted such things from the beginning.
- b. Obviously they never had! For that reason, and several others, He is the only true God, a just God (Psa 85:10; Rom 3:26) and a Savior (43:11).

22-25. God's objectives reach to the end of the earth.

God calls upon all to turn to Him alone, as the only true God, to be saved. Notice several important points in this verse:

- a. God wants all to be saved (Psa 22:27; Acts 17:30; 1 Tim 2:4; 1 Pet 3:9).
- b. To be saved, man must turn from all false gods to the one true and living God (Acts 3:19; 14:15; 15:19; 17:30; 1 Thess 1:9).
- c. There is no salvation in any other god or man (Acts 4:11,12).

The salvation that God provides is certain, confirmed by His oath (cf. 62:8; Gen 22:16; Jer 22:5; Rom 14:11; Heb 6:13-20).

His righteous word will not return to Him void (55:11; Rom 14:11; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:13-20). Another thing is certain—that every knee shall bow unto Him and every tongue shall confess His name. Two points are significant here:

- a. Sooner or later all will recognize Him as the almighty and sovereign ruler and

- b. This is applied to Jesus by inspiration (Rom 14:11; Phil 2:9-11).

Two groups of people are seen in verse 24:

- a. Those who come to God, recognizing that righteousness and strength are in Him only and
- b. Those who are incensed against (opposed to and angry at) Him. They will be ashamed. All the seed of Israel (the spiritual seed) will be justified, and glory in the Lord.

1) The spiritual seed (see notes on v. 17).

2) *Justified*—be regarded and treated as righteous and innocent in God's eyes. This is associated with Christ (53:11; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:24,25; 5:1ff), *in the Lord*.

3) Those justified will glorify God (Rom 5:1-11; 1 Cor 15:54ff).

This verse could never apply to physical Israel for not all of them were:

- a. Justified or
- b. Gave glory to Jehovah.

6. JEHOVAH AND THE GODS OF BABYLON. CH 46

THE SHAME OF BABYLON'S GODS. 46:1,2

The gods of Babylon are pictured as bowed and stooping down in defeat because they could not save Babylon, much less themselves. They are carried away into captivity as a heavy burden on dumb beasts. "Bel," also known as Marduk, was the principal god of the Babylonians and was equivalent to the Canaanite god, Baal. "Nebo" was the son of Bel and honored as the scribe of Bel. Notice the contrast between these powerless gods with the all-powerful God, the Savior of chapter 45.

THE GLORY OF ISRAEL'S GOD. 46:3-11

3,4. God has protected His people.

God calls upon the remnant to pay close attention to what He has to say. There is a definite and distinct contrast between the false gods and the true God:

False Gods

Israel, Babylon and others trusted in them.

Made by men's hands.

Promised to save, but could not save themselves.

Carried into captivity.

True God

They rejected the true God.

He made Israel and all things.

He promised to save: had and would.

He had carried Israel from childhood. (Cf. 63:19; Num 11:12; Deut 1:31; 32:11,12).

5-7. Idols are utterly powerless.

It is foolish to even try to compare God to any thing! (cf. 40:18,25). It is even more foolish to bow down and worship something which feeble man has made with his own hands (40:19; 41:7; 44:9ff):

- a. Must be carried around,
- b. Must be set in place,
- c. Can only stand and are unable to move,
- d. Cannot speak and
- e. Cannot save.

"Smith has fittingly said, 'It makes all the difference to a man how he conceives his religion—whether as something he has to carry, or as something that will carry him' (II. 198)" (Hailey).

8-11. God's total control shown by His ability to foretell the future.

God calls upon Israel to conduct themselves as men and to remember certain things (1 Cor 16:13); to remember that from the beginning there has been only one true God, with none like Him.

Also, God is the only one who can, and has, accurately predicted future events (41:22,23; 43:12; 44:26).

His plans are firm and well-established and His will will be done.

Included in His plan is the calling of a *bird of prey from the east*—an obvious reference to Cyrus (cf. 41:2,25). Cyrus will do the will of God and the fact that it will happen is certain.

Salvation is Drawing Near. 46:12,13

God instructs Israel, “Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted” (rebellious, defiant) “who are far from righteousness.”

In contrast to those who were far from righteousness, God is going to shortly bring His righteousness and salvation near.

- a. It will be centered in Zion (Jerusalem, see notes on 2:2-4) and will be for Israel, which is His glory.
- b. This prediction was first fulfilled in their deliverance from Babylonian captivity and the ultimate fulfillment was in Jesus, His gospel and His church (Rom 1:16, 17; 3:21,22; 14:17; Eph 3:21; Heb 12:12ff; 1 Jn 2:1; 3:7).

Salvation—literally “to make wide.” The idea is of freeing from distress or deliverance from restrictions.

7. JEHOVAH’S JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED ON BABYLON. CH 47

“In chapter 14 Isaiah dealt with the arrogant boast and fall of the Babylonian king; in chapter 46 he revealed the divine judgment against the idols of Babylon; now he points to the fall of the queen city herself. All arrogant, proud, cruel and immoral cities that leave God out of their thinking will suffer a similar fate” (Hailey).

THE HUMILIATION OF BABYLON. 47:1-7

1-5. Babylon’s downfall is impending and inevitable.

Proud, luxurious Babylon will be brought down from her mighty throne to sit in the dust—a symbol of humiliation and mourning (Josh 8:6; Job 2:12; 10:9; Psa 22:15; Lam 3:29).

- a. Instead of being pampered as a delicate lady, she will be brought low to servant status, doing common works such as grinding meal.
- b. God will take vengeance on Babylon to strip her of her pride and to expose her to the greatest possible shame—and no man will be able to prevent it!
- c. In the midst of this prediction of mighty Babylon’s defeat, Isaiah breaks out in praise of the Lord, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel.

- d. Rather than being the magnificent, beautiful, powerful center of all kingdoms, Babylon will become silent and in darkness—symbols of sorrow, affliction and mourning (Job 2:13; Lam 2:10; 3:2; Mic 8:8).

O virgin daughter of Babylon—this does not refer to moral chastity, but to the fact that as a world power she had never been conquered or violated.

Tender and delicate—the result of lush and easy living.

“As Babylon had humbled nations, stripping them of their glory and carrying them into captivity; so will she be humbled in the presence of others” (Hailey).

6,7. Babylon’s defeat was due to the misunderstanding of Israel’s overthrow.

God was the one who was responsible for allowing Babylon to punish His people, but Babylon failed to recognize God’s role and will. Therefore they were guilty of several things:

- a. Showing no mercy in punishing Judah (2 Kgs 25:5,6-36; Psa 137:1-3; Jer 1:17; 51:34; Lam 4:16; 5:11-14).
- b. Treating the older people shamefully which, according to the Bible, is always a sin (Lev 19:32; 2 Kgs 2:23-25; Job 32:4-6; Prov 30:17; Lam 4:16; 5:12).
- c. Assuming they would rule forever.
- d. Failing to consider that destruction is always the result of pride, arrogance and cruelty (Prov 22:8; Hos 8:7; 10:12,13; Gal 6:7,8).

“Confident of her power to withstand all opponents permanently, Babylon had boasted in vaunting pride, *I shall be mistress for ever*. She gave no thought either to her actions or to the divine law of retribution. She considered herself beyond God’s reach; she placed herself in the realm of deity” (Hailey).

BABYLON’S BLASPHEMOUS CLAIMS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES. 47:8-11

Isaiah continues to list Babylon’s sins such as:

- a. *Given to pleasures*—these included feasting, mirth, drunkenness, corruption, licentiousness—all sins of the flesh (see Dan 5).
- b. *Dwell securely*—had a careless, arrogant, false sense of safety and well-being (Zeph 2:15; 1 Cor 10:12).

- c. Said, *I am, and there is no one else besides me*—the most arrogant form of pride. This statement is one that applies to God only! (Cf. 45:5,21; 46:9; Deut 4:35,39).
- d. Said she would not be a widow or lose children. They believed they would never know affliction, sadness or loneliness, but God declares they will suddenly, *in a moment, in one day* experience the very things they said they would never suffer!
 - 1) And they would suffer these things completely in spite of several vain things in which they trusted:
 - a) *Sorceries*—magic and the chanting of words supposedly having magical powers (2 Kgs 9:22; Neh 3:4; Dan 2:2; 5:7; Mic 5:11).

Astrology was originated here.

- e. *Enchantments*—supposedly restraining, binding and controlling someone through the power of a spell.
- f. *Trusted in your wickedness*—this would enable them to remain in power.
- g. Their false wisdom and knowledge (sorceries, etc.) had warped them, turned them away from God and righteousness and for these reasons destruction would come suddenly, from an unexpected source, and which they would be unable to defeat.

For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them (1 Thess 5:3)—What about the countries in which we live today?

THE FAILURE OF BABYLON’S OCCULT ARTS..... 47:12-15

Isaiah sarcastically taunts the people to trust in sorcery to deliver them from the impending destruction, knowing full well that it never could.

- a. He describes them as wearied from seeking advice in all the wrong places (Dan 2:2-11; 5:5,8) and challenges them to call upon their astrologers to save them.
- b. *Astrologers* literally means “dividers of the heavens.” They supposed that the positions of the stars had influences on the affairs of men.
- c. The positions of the stars were (and unfortunately still are) used to forecast events on a monthly basis (*monthly prognosticators*, vs.13).

- d. Such was, and is, forbidden by God! (Cf. Deut 4:19; 2 Kgs 17:16; Gal 5:20).
- e. God's fiery judgments will burn these sources of false wisdom to stubble (29:6; 30:30) and they will not be able to deliver themselves, much less others.
- f. All of the astrologers, merchants. etc. upon whom the people depended will desert them. No one shall save them.

8. ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE..... CH 48

REBUKE OF ISRAEL'S HYPOCRISY AND STUBBORNNESS. 48:1-11

1,2. A rebuke.

Isaiah calls upon Judah to hear a very solemn message. Although blessed by many advantages associated with their relationship with God, their service to Him was hypocritical—*not in truth or in righteousness*.

- a. They honored Him with their lips but their hearts were far from Him (1:11ff; 29:13,14; Mt 15:8,9; 1 Jn 2:3-6).
- b. They were guilty of forsaking the mighty *Lord of hosts* for lifeless, powerless idols.
- c. "They lean upon Jehovah, looking to Him for support, but neither in faith and true confidence nor in a way to merit that support" (Hailey).

3-8. God's power shown in His ability to predict future events.

- a. One outstanding proof of God's power was His ability to predict future events (42:9; 44:7,8; 46:9).
 - 1) The people knew from experience that He caused them to be fulfilled suddenly, when they least expected them.
 - 2) God predicted events in advance because He knew the people were obstinate and stubborn (Ex 32:9; 33:3-5; 34:9; Deut 9:6-13; 31:27) and realized if He did not do something impressive and striking they would give credit for the predictions and deliverance to dumb idols.
- b. God rebukes them, saying they knew He predicted future events and, they had seen them fulfilled! Now He says, *I have made you hear new things*—things which no mere man could predict.

- 1) This may be a reference to their deliverance from Babylonian captivity.
- 2) These prophecies are being given in Isaiah's days so that Israel could not claim to have known them before hand.
- 3) God did not reveal these predictions earlier because he knew the people to be treacherous sinners who often refused to hear and know.

9-11. God's goodness.

God tells the people He will restrain His anger in not cutting them off completely; not because of their goodness, but for His name's sake and His praise.

- a. That is, so all will know God's mercy, compassion, love and faithfulness to His promises (the Messiah).
- b. God had used the *furnace of affliction* (captivity) to refine (purify) His people (1:25; Psa 17:3; 66:10; Zech 13:9; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:12). He also did this for His name's sake. Two reasons may be included in this phrase:

For My name's sake:

- a. To punish them so His name would not be profaned by their impiety and idolatry and
- b. So the glory rightfully due Him would not be given to idols.

JEHOVAH'S FAITHFULNESS. 48:12-16

12,13. All things begin with God.

God exhorts His called people to hear a great announcement. It will concern His delivering them from captivity.

- a. He begins with establishing His authority as being the only true God (41:4; 44:6, 7; 46:10).
- b. Then declares His mighty power in creating the heavens and earth, and His complete and continuing control of them (40:12, 26; Psa 96:5; 102:25; Heb 1:10-12).
- c. Because of all this, surely He was able to deliver them from captivity!

14-16. Sending of Cyrus proves God is in control.

God now tells Judah to assemble to hear His challenge.

- a. *Who among them* (the heathen idolaters) *has declared these things?* Obviously none had, for only God is supreme!
- b. It pleases God to use Cyrus to carry out His will upon Babylon. God emphatically says He is the one who called Cyrus and He will insure his success.
- c. *Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret* as did the sorcerers, etc.

There appears to be a change in speakers in verse 16b. It is either Isaiah or the Servant:

- a. *And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me* or *the Lord God has sent Me and His Spirit*—this is one of the new truths to be made known, so it points forward to the Messiah.
- b. “Old Testament prophecy looked to His coming when He would carry out the purpose and work of Jehovah. The Spirit would accompany Him and then complete the work after His return to the Father” (Hailey).

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND WHAT WILL BE..... 48:17-22

17-19. If Israel had heeded.

God speaks as their Lord, Redeemer and the Holy One—the One who taught them the profitable way to go...His way (17; Psa 25:8; 32:8).

- a. If Israel and Judah had obeyed God’s commands, they would have experienced the abundant peace and righteousness they desired and needed (5:1-7; Deut 32:29; Psa 81:13ff; Ezek 18:23-32; Mt 22:37; Lk 19:21).
- b. If they had been obedient, the number of their people would have been much larger and
- c. They would not have suffered being cut off from God.

“He guides His people by His teaching. In order for the teaching to be of profit or benefit, however, they have to walk according to its instruction” (Hailey).

“But now [today] their name has been cut off; the Jews are no longer God’s people. Though they shall always exist as a race (Jer 30:11; 46:28), they are cast out from Him as a people (Gal 4:24-31)” (Hailey).

20-22. Judah invited to leave Babylon.

Isaiah looks forward to the time when Judah will be released from captivity. Several actions must take place at that time:

- a. Complete separation from Babylon—*Flee from the Chaldees!* (Cf. Jer 51:6,45; 2 Cor 6:17; Rev 18:4,5). Some did not want to do this.
- b. Singing and rejoicing (14:7; 24:14; 26:19; 27:2).
- c. Letting all nations know the Lord is responsible!

God is beautifully pictured as providing for their every need as they leave Babylon, just as He did in the wilderness (35:6,7; 41:17,18; Ex 17:6; Num 20:11).

- a. In sharp contrast, there is no permanent peace, enjoyment or prosperity for the wicked—those who disobey God's word.

Wicked—"loose," indicating a careless moral condition which prevents the experience of peace and excludes such from blessings promised to the righteous" (Vine).

- b. Isaiah ends each of the three major sections of chapters 40-66 with a very important Biblical principle—the way of the transgressor is hard! (57:21; 66:24; Psa 37:38; Prov 11:3,6; 13:2,15; 26:10; Rom 6:23.)

This is Isaiah's last mention of Babylon.

He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them—"There is no historical account of the returning exiles' cleaving a rock from which waters gushed forth. This prophecy, then, was not intended to be taken literally. The Lord is saying that He will provide for His peoples' needs and bring them home (cf. 43:19; Ezra 8:21-23)." (Hailey).

C. THE SERVANT AND THE GLORY OF ZION. CH 49-57

Chapters 49-57—Comfort to the Exiles in the Great Prophecy of the Servant, the Messiah, the Redeemer.

- a. In Section I much emphasis was placed on the following subjects, which receive much less emphasis in Section II:

1) Babylon:

- a) Representative of all worldly powers opposed to God: proud, cruel, enemy and captor of God's people,
 - b) Exalting herself above all nations, and as God,
 - c) Brought low and humiliated by God.
- 2) Cyrus:
- a) Named to be God's instrument to achieve His goals,
 - b) The one to release God's people from captivity and to encourage the process of restoration,
 - c) A type of the ultimate servant, the Messiah, the Christ.
- 3) The futility of depending upon idols for deliverance and salvation.
- 4) In Section II there will be much less mention of Jacob / Israel, being replaced by more stress on Zion /Jerusalem.
- 5) Major points established:
- a) The sovereignty of Almighty God, the Holy One of Israel.
 - b) His control over Israel, Babylon and Persia.
 - c) His supremacy over idols.
 - d) God will use Cyrus to accomplish His purposes.
 - e) Glimpses of an even greater deliverance are seen—from the captivity of sin through the Messiah.

1. THE SERVANT AND DESPONDENT ZION. CH 49

This chapter, and the section that follows, is about the relationship of God's people to the world, both in Israel and the Church.

ENDOWMENTS FOR HIS WORK..... 49:1-4

1. This Servant commands the most distant nations (*coastlands* and *peoples from afar*— Gentiles) to listen to His qualifications to serve.

As we proceed, it will be obvious that this Servant is the Messiah, the Christ.

The Lord had called Him *from the womb* (Jer 1:5; Gal 1:15). Jesus was appointed by God to be His Servant, even before He was born, and He did not assume that office without proper authority!

He was called *from the matrix of My mother*. There are important points here:

- a. Being born of a woman (the emphasis upon “woman” and not “father”)—a distinguishing trait of the Messiah. See 7:14; Gen 3:15; Psa 22:9,10; Gal 4:4.
- b. Being named “Jesus” before He was born! (cf. 7:14; 9:6; Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31).
- c. However, Homer Hailey takes a different view regarding who the *mother* is in this passage:

“The womb, even the *bowels* of His mother, from which Jehovah called the Servant, is neither the nation nor the virgin Mary, but the spiritual remnant that returned from Babylon. Though giving emphasis to the nation to be born, Isaiah says that Zion will bring forth a man-child (66:7,8). Micah says that the travailing ‘daughter of Zion,’ who will ‘go forth out of the city’ into Babylon but be eventually rescued and redeemed, will bring forth the ‘ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting’ (Mic 4:10; 5:2,3; cf. Rev 12:1-5).”

2,3. *Made my mouth like a sharp sword*—empowered by God to speak powerful and convincing words that penetrate the heart. This terminology was applied to Jesus in 11:4; Rev 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15; Heb 4:12.

He would be protected by God.

God would recognize Him as His Servant, one devoted entirely to the work and will of His master—Jesus! (Cf. Jn 4:24; 5:30; 6:38; 17:4; 19:30).

God would recognize Him as “Israel;” literally, the Prince of God, or Prince having power with God (Gen 32:28). Jesus is the powerful Prince of God, the Prince of Peace (9:6; Dan 9:25; Lk 1:30-35; Acts 3:15; 5:31).

God will be glorified in Him. This applies only to Jesus—to no other person or group (Jn 12:28; 13:31,32; 14:13; 16:14; 17:1-5).

“The Messiah and His mission will remain hidden, unrevealed, until God’s appointed time (64:4; 1 Cor 2:9-13; Gal 4:4)” (Hailey).

O Israel - “The name signifies conquest by faith, one who wrestles or strives and prevails, but both the first Israel (Jacob) and the nation that carried his name had

failed to strive and prevail. Calling the Servant Israel points to His victory: He will redeem both Jews and Gentiles and become the head of the new Israel” (Hailey).

4. The Servant is disappointed that His intense efforts among His own people (Jews) were not more productive (applied to Christ in Mt 23:37ff; Mk 3:1-6; Lk 18:8; 19:14, 41-44; Jn 1:9-11), yet He had great confidence in God and committed Himself to Him (Lk 23:46; 1 Pet 2:23).
 - a. “God will determine the measure of defeat or victory, justify and vindicate the Servant, give the increase and accomplish the desired end” (Hailey).
 - b. “The service we seek to render often seems to produce little or no result. In addition to ineffectiveness there comes circumstances of extreme difficulty and trial, which tend to weigh down the heart. And if Satan could accomplish his purpose, he would use all this to cast us down into despair and if possible cause us to cease from the work and turn back through perplexity and distress. Here then is a passage by the Spirit of God to give us to consider all circumstance in the light of God’s all-wise counsels, so that while in the midst of conflict we may be encouraged to share His vision and know that our judgment is with Him, and that with Him is the recompense for our seemingly fruitless work” (Vine).

THE ENLARGED MISSION..... 49:5-7

- 5,6. One of God’s main purposes in sending this Servant, the Messiah, was to bring Jacob (Israel) back to Himself.
 - a. This certainly applied to Jesus (Mt 10:6; 15:24; 21:33-43; Lk 19:10; Acts 3:25, 26), yet most rejected Him.
 - b. Thus, the Servant relates how God said that even though all of Israel had not been gathered, He would still be glorious in God’s eyes, and God would be His strength (Mt 17:5ff; Lk 3:21,22).
 - 1) Obviously, then, He would also be successful in other ways!
 - 2) God says there is something more important than the work of the Messiah Servant in restoring the remnant (*preserved*) of Israel; and that is to be a *light to the Gentiles*, thus making God’s salvation available to all.
 - 3) Inspiration tells us that the fulfillment of this prophecy is Jesus the Christ! (9:2; notes on 42:6; 60:1-3; Acts 13:47).
7. God makes a promise to His Servant, the One who was despised, regarded as an abomination by the Jews, and subject to civil rulers—an accurate prediction of the

hateful rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His obedience to government authorities (53:3, 4; Mt 17:27; 26:67; 27:30,31; Lk 23:18-23; Jn 1:46; 7:41,42,52; Acts 2:22-24; 3:13-16; 13:26-32).

In spite of this mistreatment, after His humiliation even royalty would worship and honor Him because of God's faithfulness to His promises (Acts 13:7-12; 18:8; Rom 16:23; Phil 1:13).

"Neither the nation nor the faithful remnant had ever been or could ever be the light to the Gentiles. The Servant will bring the light of truth to those whom He called to listen (v. 1). It is strange that the Jews did not understand (and have not yet understood) that the Servant's mission included the Gentiles. It is equally strange that dispensational groups today cannot see that His mission was spiritual, not political and material" (Hailey).

Salvation and Succor..... 49:8-13

8. God will hear and aid the Servant in an *acceptable time*, in *the day of salvation*.
 - a. Paul, by inspiration, applies this verse to the Messianic age in 2 Cor 6:2. That was the *acceptable time*, or *the fullness of the time* in Gal 4:4—when God was ready!
 - b. It was the time when God's salvation (*the day of salvation*) was the message of the day (Lk 1:67ff; Acts 4:12; 10:43; 13:38,39; Rom 1:16; Eph 1:13; 1 Thess 5:9; Titus 2:11).
 - c. This Servant would be preserved by God and given as a covenant to the people in a time of spiritual renewal (8b; 42:6. See notes on Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament).

To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages—the spiritual power to overcome opposition will be restored (54:17).

- 9,10. Through God's help at that time, the Servant will make it possible to cure spiritual blindness and win spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Then, the Servant is portrayed as a loving shepherd, caring for and protecting His sheep.

His sheep will not have any significant needs that are not provided (Psa 23; Mt 5:6; Rev 7:16,17).

11,12. The Servant will remove obstacles so that all can have access to Him and His blessings (35:8ff; 40:3,4; 43:5,6; 45:2; Titus 2:14; 1 Tim 2:4; Heb 10:19-22; 2 Pet 3:9).

His will be a universal religion, not a national one (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2:5; Col 1:6,23).

Sinim—where this land is we do not know, but it appears that it would be a far away place.

13. Because of the work and blessings of God and His Servant, it will be a time of universal singing and rejoicing (42:10,11; 44:23).

God has comforted and had mercy upon His people just as He promised (40:1, 2).

ZION'S COMPLAINT AND AMAZEMENT..... 49:14-21

14-16. The people of Zion (probably in captivity) complain that God has forgotten and forsaken them (40:27; Lam 5:1ff).

- a. God's reply to this complaint begins in verse 15. He says that His love and compassion for His people is even stronger than that of the most tender and strongest natural affections—that of mother and child.
- b. Some mothers even forget, but not God! He has even inscribed them on the palms of His hands and He continually sees them (Ex 13:9). Therefore, He obviously has not forgotten them!
- c. "Jews had a custom of marking on their hands, or elsewhere, a delineation of the city and temple, as a sign of their devotion to, and perpetual remembrance of, them....To be graven of the palms of His hands is suggestive of the closest identification with Himself, of His unchanging love, and of His constant mindfulness of us in all His emotions and activities" (Vine).

17-18. God comforts Zion by letting them know they will quickly return to their city from captivity and their destroyers will leave them. God has not forsaken them! He commands them to look and notice those who are coming to Zion from all directions.

- a. This language is used else where for the conversion of the Gentiles in the Messianic age (11,12; 60:3,4).
- b. This is precisely fulfilled in the church (9:1-7; Eph 2:11ff),
- c. And is consistent with the fact that Zion, pictured here as a bride, is the church! (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:29,32; Rev 21:2,9; 22:17).

19,20. In this great time their land, which was once destroyed, is pictured as being too small to contain all the people which was never true of physical Zion. Thus, probably symbolic of the rapid growth of the church (Mt 13:31,32; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 12:24).

Zion's amazement and wonder at her remarkable blessings are shown in verse 21.

JEHOVAH'S ASSURANCE TO ZION. 49:22-26

22,23. God invites the Gentiles to share in these beautiful blessings—I will lift up My hand.

- a. *Set up My standard*—a flag used in times of war to gather forces around it. God will use something to draw the Gentiles to Him.
- b. This was fulfilled in Messianic times in the preaching of the gospel to Gentiles (11:11,12; 18:3; 62:10; Acts 13:46; 18:6).
- c. *They shall bring your sons in their arms*—a possible reference to some of these same Gentiles converting Jews, thus returning then to Zion (the church). In that time even royalty will nourish and show respect to the church. Then:
 - 1) Israel / Judah will know that God is Lord and
 - 2) Those who have patiently waited on God will not be ashamed (Psa 25:3; 37:7; 52:9; 130:5).

Apparently, from the last two verses, Zion finds it difficult to believe God will do what He promised (as is indicated by their question in verse 24.)

- a. God's reply in verse 25 is, yes, I will do what I say, for I will protect My people.
- b. He will defeat those who oppress His own, and as a result, the whole world will know that He is the Mighty Lord, Savior and Redeemer!

2. THE SERVANT AS A SUFFERING PROPHET. CH 50

REBUKE TO THE EXILES FOR THINKING THEMSELVES REJECTED. 50:1-3

In these three verses God anticipates that some in captivity will complain that He has treated them unfairly and/or cruelly. To illustrate this, He uses two illustrations:

- a. A man divorcing his wife and

- b. A man selling his children into slavery to satisfy his debts (Ex 21:7; Neh 5:5).

God's reply begins in verse 1:

- a. God represents Himself as the husband of Judah (a common theme - 62:5; 64:5; Jer 3:14).
- b. He asks them to produce the document proving He had divorced Judah (Deut 24:1ff).
- c. His point is that He had not divorced Judah, therefore that was not the problem!

"The case of the northern kingdom was different, Israel was destroyed (Amos 9:8), caused to cease (Hos 1:4), given a bill of divorcement by Jehovah (Jer 3:8). Therefore, the kingdom of the ten tribes could never be taken back as Jehovah's wife, but from among them He could and would receive individuals (Jer 3:14) after the disappearance of the ark of the covenant from the temple (Jer 3:16), and Jerusalem would be called "the throne of Jehovah" (Jer 3:17). By contrast, a bill of divorcement was never given to Judah" (Hailey).

- d. Also, owing no man anything, He did not have to sell them into slavery (captivity). Rather than this being God's problem, it was their own. They had gone into captivity because of their sins. God continues His reply with a series of questions:

- 1) Why had no one answered when He called for repentance through the prophets? (They had left Him. He had not left them!)
- 2) Is He too weak to deliver them? (Cf. 59:1; Ex 11:23.) This was obviously not the problem.
- 3) On the contrary, He is the all-powerful One who was capable of drying up the Red Sea when He delivered His people from their Egyptian captors (Ex 14:26ff; Psa 106:7ff) and the One who has complete control over the heavens (40:26).

THE SERVANT'S SOLILOQUY. 50:4-9

4-6. The Servant—An example of trust in the midst of difficulty.

Now the Servant speaks:

- a. God has given to Him the ability to teach—Jesus! (Cf. Jn 3:2; Mt 23:7,8),

- b. And to comfort the weary—Jesus! (Cf. Mt 5:1-11; 11:28ff.)
- c. Verses 4b and 5 stress the willing and continuous obedience of the Servant—Jesus! (Cf. Psa 40:6-8; Mt 3:17; 17:5; Jn 8:29; 14:31; 15:10; Heb 10:4ff.)
- d. The Servant is obedient even to the point of suffering physical agony and mental anguish—Jesus!
 - 1) *I gave (voluntarily) My back to those who struck Me*—Jesus! This can apply only to our Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 27:26; Lk 18:33).
 - 2) *...and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard*—Jesus! This was one of the most humiliating insults to an oriental man (2 Sam 10:4).
 - 3) *I did not hide My face from shame and spitting*—Jesus! His face was struck and spat upon while before the Jewish council (Mt 26:67; Mk 14:65).
 - a) Spitting in one's face was one of the worst forms of insult (Num 12:14; Deut 25:9; Job 30:10).
 - b) Jesus referred to it before it happened (Lk 18:31,32),
 - c) And it was fulfilled as He prophesied it (Mt 26:67; 27:30; Mk 14:65).
 - d) "The Lord Jesus knew all the suffering that lay before Him, and with undeviating steadfastness He pursued His pathway to the Cross" (Vine).
 - 4) "His example is an incentive to us, when called to suffer the pressure of fierce antagonism, so that with fixity of purpose we may fulfill that which the Lord has committed to us. We can never suffer as He did, but our life and testimony can be marked by the same characteristics as those which marked His" (Vine)

7-9. The Servant—an example of steadfastness.

The Servant will be able to endure His horrible experiences because of His complete trust in the fact that God will aid Him. As a result::

- a. *Not disgraced (confounded)*—"a strong word indicating that He will not be thrown into confusion or perplexity by shameful treatment" (Hailey).
- b. He will set His face *like a flint*; will be resolutely indomitable in the face of any difficulty (Lk 9:51-53). Think of Jesus as He endured His "trial."

- c. He committed Himself completely to God and to the doing of His will (1 Pet 2:23; Lk 22:42).
- d. He had complete confidence that since He and His Father stood together, none could justly condemn Him.

We, as Christians in this day, should have this same boldness and confidence! (Cf. Rom 8:31-34; 2 Tim 1:12.)

- e. He was confident God would help Him and that all His enemies would be utterly and completely defeated.

Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me—"Jesus flung this very challenge into the teeth of His enemies: '*Which of you convicteth Me of sin?*' (Jn 8:46), a challenge which was met neither then (Mark 14:55,56) nor since" (Hailey).

LIGHT FOR BELIEVERS, SORROW FOR UNBELIEVERS. 50:10,11

In these verses the Servant gives two choices to Judah (and all others, including us). The option in verse 10 involves several things:

- a. Fear (show reverence to) God (as the Servant would and did!).
- b. Obey the voice of the Servant. (We must obey Jesus - Jn 5:23; 14:15; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 5:8,9.)
- c. Be willing to walk in darkness, i.e., suffer affliction and persecution as the Servant.
- d. Trust in God (26:3,4) just as the Servant did.
- e. Rely upon God; lean upon Him as the Servant did.

The option in verse 11 is not to trust in God for deliverance from darkness (affliction, suffering, etc.), but try to do it all yourself. The result of this option is that God will ensure that you will lie down in torment.

You shall lie down in torment—literally "a place of pain." The idea includes terror or torment.

3. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PROSTRATE ZION..... CH 51-52:12

Jews today regard this section as a promise by Jehovah of their deliverance from their present exile and dispersion. This, they feel, will be affected by the Messiah,

for whom they are still looking. However, to Christians it refers to the first advent of Jesus the Christ.

HARKEN! AN EXHORTATION TO THE FAITHFUL..... 51:1-8

1-3. The Lord can and will establish His people.

God calls upon the faithful remnant in captivity to listen carefully. We know it is the faithful remnant from the way He describes them:

- a. *Follow after righteousness*—implies an active, vigorous seeking after righteousness (Deut 16:20; Acts 10:35).
- b. *Seek the Lord*—diligently endeavor to learn God's will and then obey it (Deut 4:29; 2 Chron 19:3; Psa 63:1; Mt 6:33; 7:7; Heb 11:6). We must prepare our hearts to do it - Ezra 7:10; Jer 29:13.

His message is: look back to their origin as a nation. We will see why He tells them to do this in verse 2. God tells them to remember what He did for Abraham and Sarah:

- a. Abraham was alone—just one man when God called him (Gen 12:1ff).
- b. But God blessed him and made from him a mighty nation—increased him.
- c. Keep in mind why this happened:
 - 1) God was faithful to keep His promises and
 - 2) Abraham was faithful and obedient, completely trusting in God (Rom 4:16ff; Heb 11:8-12, 17-22; Jas 2:21ff).
- d. The point—if God did this for Abraham, He will do great things for all who have a similar obedient faith.

God promises He will comfort Zion with the same great change that He did for Abraham—from one man into a mighty nation:

- a. From an empty, desert wilderness (deserted because of exiles going into captivity)
- b. To a lush garden like Eden (re-occupied after captivity).
- c. The result—joy, gladness, thanksgiving and melody. This language is similar to other dual passages, especially in the next verses.

It must be remembered that this promise was only realized to a limited extent by the returning remnant. The final and full fulfillment is under the Messiad.

4-6. The Lord's salvation is forever.

This comfort will also be associated with God's law and justice which will come from Him.

- a. An obvious reference to the New Testament of Christ (2:3,4; 42:4,6).
- b. It will be as a *light* of the peoples—Jesus and His gospel (See notes on 9:2; 42:6).

God states that the revelation of His righteousness is near and His salvation has gone forth (measured by His standards).

This undoubtedly refers to the New Testament of Christ (Rom 1:16,17). Notice these are available to those who wait upon and trust in the strength of God.

“As the old pagan systems of the nations will pass away, bringing the heathen world to an end (see comments on 34:4), so will the Jewish order pass away—*the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment*. The prophet is not describing the end of the world as set forth in the New Testament, but the end of the world of Judaism (cf. 65:16,17 and comments). Judaism's heaven vanishes, its world waxes old, *and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner.....* The thought is that the old system shall pass away; its world shall come to an end. No one shall continue to live under that system and retain a relationship to God through it. In contrast, says Jehovah, *My salvation shall be forever*, as long as the age lasts, *and my righteousness shall not be abolished*; it shall abide as long as time endures. Both the doing away with the old and the establishing of the new are the work of the Servant” (Hailey).

7,8. Verbal attacks by enemies cannot harm Israel.

God tells a certain group of people (*you who know*) not to fear what men may say (Psa 37:1-3; Mt 10:28; Acts 5:40,41).

You who know—those who:

- a. Know righteousness (God's law) and
- b. Keep His law in their hearts (meditate, make it live in their lives).

The enemies of God's people will be destroyed, but His righteousness and salvation will never be destroyed.

Reproach—blame, scornful contempt.

Revilings—injurious words, abusive language expressing scorn.

An important point is made here:

Judgment will come to those who berate and abuse the followers of the Servant (Christians)!

AN APPEAL TO JEHOVAH AND HIS REPLY..... 51:9-16

9,10. A prayer for God to show His power.

The captive people are pictured as praying that God will exercise His power and they make reference to what He had done in the past.

- a. He had been victorious over *Rahab* and the *serpent*—symbols representing Egypt (27:1; 30:7; Psa 87:4; Ezek 29:3; 32:2).
- b. He had parted the Red Sea for the *redeemed* (43:16,17; Ex 14:21).

Their implication is that God had done this before—please, do it again!

11-16. A comforting answer from God.

God gives assurance that the ransomed will return with joy and singing. In verse 12 God asks, since He is the almighty and eternal God who comforts them, why are you afraid of mortal men?

He rebukes them for two reasons in verse 13:

- a. They forget Him—their Maker, and creator of heavens and earth and
- b. Continually feared enemies who were no real threat.

He assures them that deliverance from captivity will come soon and reminds them of His great power to do this (divided the Red Sea). He also reminds them of wonders He had done and the purpose for them:

- a. *I have put My words in your mouth*—revealed His will through them (42:19);
- b. *Covered you*—protected them in order that He might:

- 1) Do something equally remarkable as creating the heavens and earth and

- 2) Call Zion *My people*. This refers to the first coming of Christ and the establishing of His church (Heb 12:25ff).

Which is to be feared because it is stronger than:

- a. The temporal which will pass away or
- b. The eternal which will never come to an end?

Verse 11 is identical to 35:10.

JERUSALEM, AWAKE! STAND UP!—HER TRAGIC PLIGHT. 51:17-20

Jerusalem is pictured as stunned and unconscious as a result of drinking from the cup of God's terrible fury. This is a common way of illustrating the effects of God's wrath (Jer 25:15; Ezek 23:32-34; Rev 14:10).

God exhorts them to wake up and stand up—to prepare to leave captivity! (Compare with 52:1)

None of Jerusalem's inhabitants can or will help her. Because of *famine and sword* (the results of military defeats) the people were suffering desolation and destruction. Thus, God asks them:

- a. Who was sorry for them? So sorry that they would provide aid.
- b. Who could God use to comfort them? Obviously no human being; only Himself!

They cannot escape the fury and rebuke of the Lord.

JEHOVAH'S GRACIOUS PROMISE. 51:21-23

That cup transferred from Israel's hands to those of her enemies.

God announces to these people who are drunk from His wrath:

- a. He will remove the cup of His wrath from them—deliver them from captivity and
- b. Transfer it to those who afflicted them—punish Babylon.
- c. It is Jehovah who determines the length and severity of their punishment. He is still in control!

Awake, Jerusalem! Put on Your Beautiful Garments..... 52:1-6

Here Zion is pictured as a woman in the clothes and the dust of mourning because of her captivity (cf. Job 2:13). The people are told to *awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments*. That is, to exert themselves, become bold, cease their mourning and prepare to leave their captivity.

Notice the address to Jerusalem, *the holy city*:

- a. It promises that the uncircumcised and unclean will never again enter.
- b. Obviously, this never could be fulfilled in regard to the physical city of Jerusalem,
- c. Therefore, it refers to the spiritual Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church (Heb 12:22ff).
 - 1) Those who are uncircumcised in heart and who have not been cleansed in the blood of Jesus cannot enter! (Cf. Rom 2:28,29; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Eph 2:11-22; Phil 3:2-11; Col 2:6-13.)
 - 2) Those in this city (the church) must be holy (2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15, 16; 2 Pet 3:11).

Through their sins, the people had sold themselves into captivity—at no cost to their captors. In the same way, they will be redeemed without having to pay anything to their captors (45:13); only the mighty power of God can accomplish this! God reminds them of His proven ability to do this:

- a. In the case of the Egyptian oppression,
- b. In the case of the Assyrian oppression and
- c. In this present case of Babylon:
 - 1) *Make them wail* - “This is not the howling of misery (that idea seems to have led to the A.V. rendering ‘make them to howl’); here the verb is used of the blustering war cry of the oppressors and it was that spirit that the Name of the Lord was blasphemed continually by them” (Vine)
 - 2) *My name is blasphemed* (see Ezek 36:20,23). Therefore, God will act against cruel Babylon to deliver His people just as He had done in the past. And, when God does this, His people will know Him fully and will know that He is responsible.

The Herald of Good News, and an Exhortation. 52:7-12

7-10. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger.

The beauty of one bringing good news, glad tidings—the gospel. Notice the contents of the glad tidings:

- a. Proclaims peace,
- b. Brings glad tidings of good,
- c. Proclaims salvation,
- d. Announces *Your God reigns!*

Again, we see two fulfillments in these verses:

- a. Deliverance from Babylonian captivity (physically - 51; 52:4-6),
- b. The coming of Christ, the preaching of His gospel and the establishment of His kingdom, the church.
 - 1) By inspiration Paul applies this passage to the preaching of the gospel of Christ (Rom 10:15).
 - 2) Notice how beautifully and precisely the contents of this message (*glad tidings*) correspond with Christ, His gospel and His church:
 - a) Peace (see notes on 2:4; 9:6; 11:6,7; 26:3,4; Lk 1:79; 2:14; Acts 10:36; Eph 2:17; Jn 14:27; 16:33; Rom 5:1; 10:15)—gospel of peace (Col 1:20; Phil 4:9).
 - b) Good, cf. Jn 10:11—good shepherd (Acts 10:38; 2 Cor 9:8; Gal 6:10; 1 Thess 5:15).
 - c) Salvation—in Christ (cf. Mt 1:21; Lk 19:10; Acts 4:12; 2 Tim 2:10). Through the gospel (cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 15:1,2; Eph 1:13; Jas 1:21). In the church (cf. Acts 2:47; Eph 5:23).
 - d) The reign of God and Christ (cf. 9:7; Mt 16:18,19; Mk 9:1; Lk 1:32, 33; Acts 2:33-36; Heb 1:8; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:12,16).

This will be a time of singing (42:10-13; 44:23; 48:20ff; 49:13) and rejoicing in the Lord's comforting and redeeming His people (44:23). In doing this, God will show His *holy arm* (righteous power) and salvation to all the world:

- a. Redemption of His people from the mighty power of Babylon and
- b. Redemption of His people from Satan, sin and death through His “Holy Arm”— the Christ! (cf. 53:1ff; Acts 17:30,31; Rom 1:4,5; 4:25; Eph 1:19:20; Titus 2:11,14).

11,12. A call to leave Babylon.

The people are commanded to leave the idolatrous nation of Babylon and to not be contaminated by her any longer.

- a. They had been there for seventy years when this captivity had ended.
- b. Most who came from Jerusalem, had died.
- c. History tells us that because many of them had known no other city or way of life, they did not wish to go.
- d. Verse 11 is quoted by Paul in 2 Cor 6:17 (cf. Rev 18:4).
- e. They will not have to depart quickly as they did from Egypt (Ex 12:11; Deut 16:3) because God will go out before and behind them.

4. Victory Through Vicarious Suffering. 52:13-Ch 53

Exaltation of the Servant. 52:13-15

Background information:

This is the fourth of four “Servant Songs” (42,49,50).

“The Servant is to conquer as a sufferer, not as a warrior (cf. Rev 5:4-6). From His shameful suffering and inhumane treatment He is to emerge in triumph and glory” (Hailey).

This song stresses the following major points about the Servant:

- a. His vicarious suffering,
- b. The importance of that suffering in God’s plan of salvation,
- c. His total obedience,
- d. His utter willingness to suffer,

- e. His sorrow and rejection by the people,
- f. The guilt of those rejecting Him and
- g. His grand and glorious approval by God after suffering.

Proof that this refers to the Messiah, Jesus the Christ:

- a. It clearly refers to an individual, not a group of people or nation.
 - 1) He suffers voluntarily—cannot be said of Israel,
 - 2) He is innocent—cannot be said of Israel,
 - 3) His suffering makes possible the justification of His people and
 - 4) He suffers quietly and patiently.
 - 5) Since this refers to an individual it must apply to the Messiah because no other individual past, present or future fits this description.
- b. Ancient Jewish and Christian traditions, even though not inspired, give good indication that this applies to the Messiah:
 - 1) Jewish—states this applied to the Messiah before and during the time of Christ; then blinded by their hatred.
 - 2) Christian—for 1700 years until anti-supernatural critics.
- c. The testimony of the New Testament - Mt 8:17; Mk 15:28; Lk 22:37; Jn 12:37,38; Acts 8:35; Rom 10:16.
- d. Also alluded to (not quoted but obviously referring to this section) by New Testament writers in connection with Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for sins (Mk 9:12; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:21-25).
- e. The precise and accurate manner in which Jesus' life, character, death and triumph fit these detailed prophecies could not be the result of guess or accident.
- f. These prophecies could not be used by an imposter because many of the circumstances did not depend upon Him personally, but grew out of feelings and purposes of others.

13-15. Greatly exalted after being deeply humiliated.

This Servant of God will eventually be victorious and lifted up above all (49:1-7; 53:12) —Jesus! (Mk 16:19; Acts 2:33; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Pet 3:22).

Deal prudently can have several meanings:

- a. Use the best means to obtain the highest results,
- b. Will be successful or
- c. Intelligent and effective action.

A sharp contrast is presented in verses 14 and 15. First, people will be astonished because of the way in which His appearance will be horribly disfigured—Jesus! (Lk 23:47-49.)

- a. This probably refers to the humiliation of His physical torment and suffering preceding the crucifixion, and while on the cross.

- b. But, through this suffering, He will *sprinkle (startle) many nations*:

- 1) Commentators seem to be about equal in which interpretation they choose (*sprinkle* or *startle*):

- a) *Sprinkle*:

- (1) This is not a reference to sprinkling as a form of baptism!
- (2) In the Levitical system, the sprinkling of blood of the sacrifice was done to obtain cleansing from sin (Lev 4:6; 8:11; 16:14ff; Heb 9:19ff).
- (3) Thus, through His suffering and the shedding of His blood, He will make it possible for many to receive cleansing from sin— Jesus! (Mt 26:28; Eph 1:17; Heb 9:22; 1 Pet 1:18,19.)

- b) *Startle*:

- (1) Those who had been *astonished* at how badly He was bruised and marred are now *startled* at His transformation from total defeat to total victory and exaltation.
- (2) This seems to be the proper understanding based on what follows; *For what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.*

(a) Gentiles—they will now know of the wonderful plan of God which they had never before heard.

(b) Jews—they have been deaf to true meaning of the prophets and had been taught incorrectly for centuries. Now they will also know of the wonderful plan of God which was actually carried out through them as a people.

(c) Cf. Rom 15:21.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH GRIEF. 53:1-3

Isaiah mourns that so few chose to believe his message concerning the Servant — the Messiah.

- a. This looks forward to New Testament times when the Jews refused to believe.
 - 1) This, in spite of the fact that God's power (*arm of the Lord*) was openly revealed in this Servant.
 - 2) God's greatest power is shown in the salvation of men through His Son, as announced by His gospel (Rom 1:16,17; 1 Cor 1:18ff).
 - a) Yet, God's Servant will be rejected by most although He was prophesied before hand.
 - b) Inspiration applies this verse to the rejection of Christ and His gospel (Lk 19:14; Jn 1:11; 12:37-41; Acts 13:46; Rom 10:16-21).

The Servant will grow up before God and in His constant care as a *tender plant*.

- a. He is compared to a *root* (similar to *branch*), clearly a Messianic term (cf. 4:2; 11:1; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8).
- b. He would not possess any of the external glory which most of Israel desired in that He would not be a "worldly" king wearing royal robes and crown (Mt 13:54-56; Mk 6:3; Jn 1:46; 6:42).

This Servant will be hated and rejected by men—Jesus! (3a; 49:7; Mt 12:14; 27:1, 29-31; Mk 3:6; Jn 7:19).

- a. He will know sorrow and grief—Jesus! (3a; 49:4; Mt 23:37-39; 26:37, 39, 42, 53; Mk 3:5; Lk 19:41-44; Jn 11:35; Heb 5:7).

- b. Israel turned her face away from Him in contempt, refusing to recognize Him as Messiah—Jesus! (3b; Lk 23:18-25).

“Men hide the face from, or turn away from, that which is considered unbearable to behold. Their estimate of Him is put very strongly; they regarded Him as nothing” (Vine)

He has no (stately) form or comeliness (splendor); and when we see Him, there is no beauty (appearance) that we should desire Him.

“Horribly disfigured by the treatment at His trials and crucifixion, He will be repulsive to look upon. There will be *no beauty*, no regal adornments such as the people desire, but only an unimposing peasant carpenter from a small obscure village in Galilee. He will have none of the human glory that men look for and desire” (Hailey).

Grief (sickness)—this does not refer to any physical grief or sickness, but to the spiritual sickness (grief) of all people of all times (cf. 1:4-6).

III Treatment: The Servant’s Vicarious Suffering..... 53:4-6

The idea of substitution of one person for others is critical here!

- a. “He was smitten of God only in the sense that God allowed Him to suffer, God provided Him as an offering for man’s sin” (Hailey).
- b. *He has borne our griefs (sicknesses)*—Matthew applies this part of the verse to Jesus’ miracles of physical healing (Mt 8:17).
- c. The Jews saw His suffering as an indication that Jesus was being punished by God for His sins (Lk 23:34; Jn 16:3; Acts 3:17; 1 Cor 2:8).
- d. But, the real reason He was wounded and bruised was for their (and our) sins, not His.
- e. *Wounded*, pierced or perforated—Jesus! (Jn 19:34-37).
- f. Jesus bore our sins in His own body (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:2-4,6,11,12; 3:18).
- g. He was without sin (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22).
- h. He bore the chastisement due us for our sins so that it might be possible for man to have peace with God (Acts 10:36; Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14,15,17).

i. He would suffer beatings so that we might be healed.

1) By inspiration we know this is spiritual healing from sin (1 Pet 2:24).

2) Jesus was scourged before the crucifixion (Mt 27:26).

All of mankind has sinned selfishly (Rom 3:9; 11:32; Gal 3:22; 1 Pet 2:25) and God placed the sins of all upon the Servant—Jesus.

Surely no other person, or group of persons, could or did fulfill this as Jesus did!

All we like sheep have gone astray - All may go astray, but it is done one by one. Sins are committed by individuals and salvation comes one by one. Salvation does not come to a whole group at one time. Each individual is responsible for his own acceptance of God's terms of forgiveness.

TOTAL SUBMISSION OF THE SERVANT. 53:7-9

In spite of His excruciating suffering, the Servant would bear it patiently, silently and submissively. What an accurate description of Jesus! (Mt 26:63; 27:14; Lk 23:9; Jn 18:19-24; 1 Pet 2:23). He would be silent, like a lamb.

a. Acts 8:32-35 applied this to Jesus.

b. The Lamb of God (Ex 12:3; Jn 1:29; 1 Pet 1:19), from before the foundation of the world (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8).

He would be *taken from prison* (or “bound” - Jn 18:24), and be forced to submit to a mock trial (Mt 26:57ff).

He would be killed, *cut off from the land of the living* (Dan 9:24-27; Mt 27:50). Yet, He would live forever—Who will declare His generation? (Psa 16:10; Acts 2:27ff; 13:35ff; Heb 7:25).

“The Hebrew word rendered ‘death’ is in the plural; this is expressive of the violent character, not to say the comprehensive nature, of His death” (Vine)

a. Men intended that the Servant die and be buried with the wicked.

1) They put Him in a class with Barabbas, a murderer (Lk 23:18) and two thieves (Mt 27:38).

a) Yet the Lord saw to it that He was buried in a rich man’s tomb (Mk 15:42ff).

- b) This was because He was guilty of no sin (1 Pet 2:22).
- b. These are remarkable, specific prophecies that can apply only to Jesus!

VICTORY AND REWARD. 53:10-12

It pleased God to bruise and grieve His Servant. How could such a thing be?

- a. It was not for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) Because God enjoys seeing the innocent suffer,
 - 2) Because of the guilt of the Servant or
 - 3) Because He was dissatisfied with the Servant.
- b. It was for the following two reasons:
 - 1) Because the Servant voluntarily submitted to this to make known the evil of sin and to make eternal salvation possible (Jn 10: 17,18; 19:11; Heb 10:1-10).
 - 2) To make known the justice and mercy of God in the gift of such a Savior (Lk 1:67ff; Eph 2:4ff).
 - a) The Servant would voluntarily offer Himself as a sacrifice to atone for sin (Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 1:4; 2:20; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10).
 - b) Then He will live forever to see His descendants! (Jn 12:23-26; Rom 9:6-8; Gal 3:15-20; 23-29; Heb 7:25).
 - (1) By being lifted up, He could draw all men to Him (Jn 3:14,15; 8:28; 12:32,33).
 - c) The Lord's will will be accomplished through Him as mediator, giving us access to the Father and salvation (Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1).

The Servant will see the results of His labors (salvation) and be satisfied.

- a. Through full, practical knowledge concerning the Servant, many will be justified —declared innocent.
- b. Only through faithful and obedient knowledge of Christ is salvation possible! (Jn 14:6; 17:3; Acts 13:38,39; Phil 3:7-11).

- c. This is because He bore their sins.

See Barnes' statement on this, page 282.

After His suffering, God will exalt the Servant as a conquering Prince (49:1-7; 52:13,15; Acts 2:36; 4:11,12; Heb 1:3,4; Rev 5:12; 11:15). Several reasons are given for this exaltation:

- a. He voluntarily poured out His life as a sacrifice.
- b. He allowed Himself to die with sinners; in obedience, humility and love.
- c. He bore the sins of all mankind and
- d. He made intercession for sinners.

The Servant pays the price, but it will have no effect until the sinner responds with faith and obedience!

5. THE FUTURE SPLENDOR OF ZION..... CH 54

THE JOY AND ENLARGEMENT OF ZION..... 54:1-8

1-3. Promise to Zion of numerous children.

Zion, which was previously barren (unproductive in the Lord's work) is commanded to sing aloud. To be without children was a disgrace to the Jew. Thus, a cause for mourning.

- a. The number of God's faithful people had dwindled to a very small number in captivity. Therefore, Zion is pictured as being barren.
- b. Their reason for rejoicing—that they would have more descendants than ever before because of the grand and glorious work of the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, the Christ (Ch 53).
- c. Zion will have so many descendants that it will be necessary to enlarge her tent (figurative language - 49:19,20). Zion will expand in all directions, even into the Gentile cities (Acts 1:8; 13:46; 18:6; Col 1:6,23; 1 Pet 2:11,12; 1 Cor 4:11).
- d. This is describing the spread of the church through the gospel.

Your descendants will inherit (possess) the nations—The idea is not of military might in conquering, but of spiritual conquest.

4-10. That promise reinforced.

God assures Zion that after the work of the redemption of this Servant (Chapter 53) she will no longer be ashamed or be a reproach. Cf. 4; 41:10,14.

- a. *The shame of your youth* = their idolatry while in Egyptian bondage in Zion's early history and
- b. *Reproach of your widowhood*—Babylonian captivity (cf. 49:21).

God's relationship to Zion is given as another reason for them not to fear. Notice the aspects of that relationship:

- a. *Maker*—God created the nation; Christ created the church (Mt 16:18).
- b. *Husband*—protected them as a husband does his wife (Jer 3:14; 31:32); Christ is the husband to the church 5:21ff).
- c. *Lord of hosts*—almighty and sovereign God; Jesus above all and over all in the church (Eph 1:20ff).
- d. *Redeemer*—bought them back from captivity; Jesus redeemed or bought the church with His blood (Acts 20:28; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18ff).
- e. *Holy One*—Holy God; Jesus is the Holy One (Mk 1:24; Lk 1:35; Acts 3:14).
- f. *God of the whole earth*, not only of the Jews (Rom 3:29); Jesus is Lord of lords, King of kings, above all (Phil 2:9; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 11:15; 17:14).
- g. With these relationships, this obviously applies to the true Israel of God—the faithful remnant in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament. Although they, in the Old Testament, were temporarily forsaken, God would call them back.

Youthful wife (wife of youth)—not necessarily a wife who is still young, but a wife who was taken in her youth.

7. What a beautiful and comforting picture of God!

- a. He had left them for a short time, but would gather them with great mercies (2 Cor 1:3; 4:17).
- b. His wrath was momentary, but His kindness and mercy as redeemer is everlasting!

“AS THE WATERS OF NOAH”..... 54:9,10

These promises of God are just as certain as His promise to Noah to never again destroy the earth by flood (Gen 9:11).

The mountains which appear strong and permanent, will pass away, but God's kindness, covenant of peace and mercy will not!

“The promise is made to spiritual Israel. It does not mean that she will not be severely tested. What it does mean is that though she might be unmercifully persecuted by her enemies and forced to pass through the floods and fire of tribulation, the true spiritual Zion and Jerusalem (the church) will never be the object of God's wrath and judgment of destruction (cf. Hag 2:6,7; Zech 14:1-5; Heb 12:22-28)” (Hailey).

There have always been the faithful few (remnant).

JERUSALEM'S GLORY AND PERMANENCE IN THE MESSIANIC AGE. 54:11-17

11-13. The future glory of Zion.

Although Zion is afflicted, God promises she will be as beautiful as precious stones. This is the type of language which is applied to the church (1 Pet 2:4-10; Rev 9:21). The inhabitants of Zion will all be taught of the Lord and enjoy great peace (11:9; Hab 2:14).

- a. This can only be spiritual Zion, the church under the new covenant of Christ!
- b. All must be taught God's will before entering spiritual Zion (Jer 2:3; 31:31-34; Mic 4:2; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 8:8-13; 10:16,17).

“The source of this learning is not human wisdom or the philosophies and traditions of men, but the word of God. On the foundation of this knowledge and the forgiveness of sin (cf. 53:11), the spiritual city, the church, will be built” (Hailey).

- c. Jesus quotes this verse and applies it to His time and the partaking of Him as the *bread of life* (Jn 6:44).
- d. Christians have access to the great peace (Phil 4:7; Col 3:15). This Zion will be established in righteousness.
 - 1) The Messiah, Jesus, who established spiritual Zion, was characterized by righteousness (9:7; 11:4,5; 53:11; Acts 3:14 [ASV]; 1 Jn 2:1) and, as a result, she will have no reason to fear oppression. This does not mean

spiritual Zion will not be oppressed, but she has no reason to fear if she remains righteous and in Zion—the church.

- 2) Enemies will gather together to fight against this Zion, but will fall. That is because God created all things and has all things under His control (10: 5-7; 37:26,27; 46:1-6)—including the blacksmith who makes weapons of war.

14-17. *Righteousness...oppression...fear* - when we walk according to His commandments we will not receive oppression or fear from Jehovah. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love* (1 Jn 4:18).

A further promise of ultimate victory against all foes. Notice He specifies those to whom the promises apply:

- a. *Servants of the Lord* - those who are totally dedicated to the Lord.
 - 1) The faithful and obedient remnant in the Old Testament and
 - 2) The church in the New Testament (1 Cor 15:57; 1 Jn 5:4; Rev 12:12,11) which is:
 - a) Protected by the spiritual armor of God (Eph 6:10-18) and who, through their faithful obedience,
 - b) Receives the righteousness that only God can provide (Rom 4:21-25; 2 Cor 5:21).

The Jews and the Romans tried to destroy the church and failed. This is further proof Jehovah will keep His promise to protect His remnant.

6. THE GREAT INVITATION: FREE MERCY FOR ALL..... CH 55

COME AND PARTAKE WITHOUT PRICE. 55:1-5

1-3. Invitation to accept God's blessings.

An invitation is extended to all (*everyone*) to accept God's wonderful blessings.

Notice the beautiful elements of this invitation:

- a. *Everyone*—His invitation is open to all. He wants all to be saved (Mk 16:15,16; Mt 28:29; 1 Tim 2:4; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet 3:9).

- b. *Thirsts*—one of man's most intense needs and desires; occurring daily and must be satisfied or we die. One must have this intense desire to receive God's blessings (Psa 42:2; 63:1; 143:6; Mt 5:6; 6:33; Jn 7:37).
- c. *Come to the waters.*
 - 1) Notice the necessity for man to leave where he is and *come* to God and Jesus to receive the blessings. The word *come* appears three times in this verse. (Cf. Mt 11:28ff; Rev 22:17.)
 - 2) Water is often used figuratively to represent salvation (12:3; 35:6,7; Jer 17: 13; Jn 4:7-26; 7:37ff).
 - 3) Thus, it is clear that God's invitation to salvation is extended worldwide.
- d. *Have no money*—without price; God's salvation cannot be purchased or earned. It is a gift by grace, although there are conditions to be met! (Rom 6:23; Eph 2:4ff).
 - 1) God asks why men are spending their money and effort on material things that do not provide true happiness.
 - 2) Rather, what should be done is to listen diligently to and obey God's word to receive true happiness.
- e. God promises more blessing to those who *listen* to Him only and *come* to Him.

Hear and *come* are conditions to be met.
- f. *Eat what is good*—spiritual food, that which satisfies life's deepest needs.
- g. *And let your delight*—"Often in Scripture where two commands are given the second suggests the good result of obeying the first (cp. Gen, 42:18)....The satisfaction of the soul can be obtained only in the path of the obedience of faith. By diligently listening to the voice of God and fulfilling His will we can enjoy real spiritual delight. Moreover, what the Lord here holds out is something more than meeting our need. He designs to give us an overflowing satisfaction. This is indicated by the word 'fatness' (see, for instance, Pss. 36:8 and 63:5). This is 'the riches of His grace'" (Vine).
- h. *Incline*—not only must we want to hear what Jehovah has to say, but we must have the intent and desire to do it.
- i. *Soul shall live*—eternal, spiritual life.

j. *Everlasting covenant*—a reference to the new covenant associated with the coming of the great Servant (42:6; 49:6,8; Jer 31:31ff; Heb 8:6ff; 10:16,17).

k. *Sure mercies of David*.

1) The phrase “looks to the establishment of David’s Seed, the Messiah, upon his throne under an everlasting covenant of peace. We know that a political king is not in view, for Jehovah said with regard to the carrying off of Coniah ([also called] Jeconiah or Jehoiachin) into Babylon. ‘No more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling in Judah’ (Jer 22: 30). He was the last divinely approved king in Judah, for his successor Zedekiah was a puppet king set up by Nebuchadnezzar (II Chron 36:10). Furthermore, when the crown was removed from Zedekiah, and his rule overturned, Jehovah said, ‘This also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it to him’ (Ezek 21:27). The earthly kingdom and temporal throne of David came to an end with Coniah and Zedekiah, never again to be established as a political entity. Christ the Servant is the one ‘whose right it is.’ The promise of a throne and kingdom that would endure forever was fulfilled at His coming” (Hailey).

2) Quoted by Paul in Acts 13:34 as being fulfilled in Jesus’ (the suffering Servant’s) resurrection from the dead.

Paul, in his next message in Acts 13:47, specifically includes the Gentiles by quoting Isa 49:6.

Thus, the ultimate fulfillment of these verses is in Jesus who brought life and immortality through the gospel! (2 Tim 1:10).

4,5. Available through the great Servant.

Notice the reasons specified why God gave the Servant:

- a. *A witness*—one who bore solemn testimony about God (Jn 7:16; 14:24; Heb 1:12).
- b. *Leader*—a ruler or king (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16). This term is used of the Messiah in Dan 9:25; Acts 3:15; Heb 2:10; Rev 1:5.
- c. *Commander*—a law giver or commandment giver.

He would call nations that did not know Him and they would respond eagerly (52:15; Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15,16; Eph 2:11ff; 1 Pet 2:9,10)—because God would glorify Him (Jn 17:1,5; Acts 3:13).

“SEEK YE JEHOVAH WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND”. 55:6-13

6,7. *While He may be found*—this shows there is a time limit. God will one day bring all physical existence to an end (2 Pet 3).

Those who would receive God's blessings must diligently seek and call upon Him today! (49:8; Mt 7:11; Jn 12:35; Acts 17:27; 2 Cor 6:1,2; Heb 3:7,13).

They must also:

- a. Forsake their wicked *thoughts* and *ways* and
- b. *Return unto the Lord*.

Abundantly pardon—Jehovah completely forgives and then removes the penalty due (Psa 130:7; Jer 3:12; Rom 5:21,22).

8,9. God's magnificent ways and thoughts.

God's ways and thoughts are as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Psa 57:10; 89:2; 103:11). How do these verses fit this context? Here are two possibilities:

- a. The reason for man's need to leave his ways and thoughts and return to God and
- b. God's mercy and willingness to pardon are immensely superior to man's normal reaction to offenses against him. Therefore, we ought to have an even greater appreciation for His mercy and forgiveness.

10,11. God's powerful and effective word.

God sends the rain and snow to accomplish His purposes—to water and provide nourishment to the soil, causing plants to grow to provide seed and food (Deut 32:2; 2 Sam 23:4; Psa 72:6) and they do exactly what God sends them to do! In the same way, God sends His word to accomplish His purpose and it will do exactly that!

- a. It is effective and powerful! (Rom 1:16; Heb 4:12). As is the rain and snow.
- b. It is the source of spiritual life! (Jn 6:63; 1 Cor 4:15; Jas 1:18,21; 1 Pet 1:22-25).
- c. It is inseparably connected with salvation (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 21,24; Eph 1:13; Jas 1:21). As water is essential to the saving of the plants.

- d. The kind of heart (soil) is important (Lk 8:4ff; Col 1:5,6). Notice the connection of God's word with God's Servant and His beautiful blessings in this context:

- 1) Worldwide invitation to salvation,
- 2) Eternal life,
- 3) Everlasting covenant,
- 4) Eternal king,
- 5) Need for repentance and
- 6) Gods abundant mercy and forgiveness.

12,13. Great joy after deliverance.

Notice the language associated with the great deliverance (14:8; 35:1,2,10; 42:10, 11; 44:23; 52:7)—joy, peace, singing, clapping of hands, fertile, vegetation.

An everlasting sign that shall not be cut off—"Other signs might be cut off or fail, but the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon and the Servant's deliverance of the redeemed from among all nations stand, and will ever stand as a testimonies to Jehovah's being and power" (Hailey).

7. CONSOLATION FOR THE REJECTED: REBUKE OF THE BLIND WATCHMAN. . CH 56

The old distinctions of the Jews, both national and personal, are to be done away. They will have their pre-eminence, to which they proved themselves unworthy, taken away from them.

CONSOLIDATION FOR FOREIGNERS AND EUNUCHS. 56:1-8

1,2. Justice and holiness required for God's salvation.

In chapter 55 God had predicted His universal call to salvation through His word and Servant with the need for repentance on man's part.

- a. Now He says the complete revelation of His righteousness and salvation is close at hand (Mt 3:2; 4:17; Mk 9:1; Lk 21:31; Rom10:17).
- b. But man has a part in receiving these blessings: to do justly or righteously (Acts 10:34,35; Rom 1:16,17; 3:21-26), to do the will of God!

- c. God promises that the person who does this and continues in it (*lays hold on it*), will be happy (*blessed* - 2a; Psa 1:1ff).

Other things included:

- a. Keeping the Sabbath:
 - 1) The Sabbath was one of the most important parts of their religion.
 - 2) It served as a continual memorial between God and Israel (Ex 31:13-17).
 - 3) Thus, it is used here to represent the keeping of the old law, of which it was a part. In other words, obedience to God's revealed will.
 - 4) This passage is not grounds for Sabbath keeping today! It is a part of that old law which was nailed to the cross (Col 2:13-16; Heb 8:6ff; 9:9,10,15ff; 10:1ff).
- b. Restrains himself from doing evil (Psa 34:14; Amos 5:15; Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 5:22). This is a continual requirement for all of God's people.

3-8. Foreigners to be acceptable to God.

Isaiah looks forward to a time when physical and national distinctions will be eliminated as barriers to being God's people. This is illustrated by:

- a. *Son of the foreigner*—strangers, non-Israelites. Gentiles, who, under the Old Testament, were excluded from full fellowship with the Israelites (Ex 12:43-49; Lev 22:10; 25:35,40).
- b. *Eunuch*—could not enter the congregation (Deut 23:1; Lev 21:20).
 - 1) Notice, however, that these were the ones who *joined themselves to the Lord*; faithful and obedient to the Lord's commands.
 - 2) This has been true ever since the establishment of the church (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28, 29; Eph 2:12-19; Col 3:10,11).
 - 3) These are the people who are obedient to and please God—hold fast My covenant.
 - 4) Those who do these things will be given a place in God's house, or the church in New Testament times.

- 5) Obedience is what is important, not the family tree! There are no second-class citizens in the church.

A name better than that of sons and daughters—"A name passed on to sons and daughters can be cut off. But a name which Jehovah gives to a member of His spiritual family cannot be cut off, for only He can blot it out of His book" (Hailey).

Notice the attitude and obedience of these foreigners whom God accepts. The worship and prayers of these with this kind of attitude and obedience will be accepted by God in His church—*My holy mountain...My house of prayer*.

Why does He mention *burnt offerings* and *sacrifices*? Because He was talking to Jews to whom these represented authorized worship to God.

- a. In the Christian era each Christian is a priest authorized and commanded to offer his own spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God through Christ (Rom 12:1,2; Phil 4:18; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 2:5).
- b. Isaiah again prophesies that God will gather people other than the Israelites into the church (11:12; 49:5,6; Amos 9:11,12; Mic 7:15-17; Zech 8:20-23; Jn 10:16).

A REBUKE OF THE BLIND WATCHMEN. 56:9-12

"Isaiah has turned from prophesying of the captivity, the return under Cyrus, and the coming of the Messiah, to speak to the people of his own day, summarizing the causes that will lead to the captivity" (Hailey).

God calls on the enemies of Israel to come and devour them.

The enemies are represented as wild beasts: a reference to the Babylonian invasion.

One of the reasons God would do this is because of problems with Israel's watchmen, a term applied to prophets and spiritual leaders (Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17).

- a. Their function was to warn of danger (1 Sam 14:16; 2 Sam 13:34; 18:24). But these were not faithful watchmen. Notice how he describes them:
 - 1) *Blind*—spiritually blind; could not or would not see approaching dangers.
 - 2) *Ignorant*—refusing to acknowledge their own sinfulness and that of the nation.
 - 3) *Dumb dogs*—the purpose for dogs was to warn of danger (Job 30:1).

- 4) *Cannot bark*—cannot speak; “dumb” and of no value.
- 5) *Sleeping*—lazy, slothful, not paying attention.
- 6) *Greedy dogs*—never satisfied with what they have; sensual, carnal.
- 7) *Shepherds who cannot understand*—because of greed refuse to understand their proper function and the needs of others.
- 8) *Look to their own way*—selfish.

In verse 12 Isaiah speaks to those who “cover their woes and stimulate false hopes through drink, living only from day to day, with no concern for the future” (Hailey).

- a. *I will bring wine*—intoxicated.
- b. *Tomorrow will be as today*—looking forward to, and planning to continue in their evil practices, ignoring the right ways of God.

8. REBUKE OF THE WICKEDNESS OF ISRAEL’S DAY..... CH 57

“BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD”..... 57:1,2

“When the merciful or godly man is taken away, no one considers that his being removed *from the evil to come* upon the nation is actually a blessing for him: he will be spared from the calamity. Micah’s parallel description of people in the pre-exilic period (Mic 7:2; cf. 2 Kgs 22:20) confirms that this passage does not refer to post exilic conditions” (Hailey).

Rest in their beds—this is not talking about rest from a day’s labors. This is the eternal rest which Jehovah reserves for His faithful ones (Heb 4:9; cf. Psa 95:11).

Beds here signifies the resting place of the deceased.

Uprightness—or “straight before Him.”

IDOLATRY AND FAITHLESSNESS SEVERELY REBUKED..... 57:3-13

3-10. Rebuke of sorcery and idolatry.

In contrast with the righteous of verses 1 and 2, God calls on those guilty of sorcery and idolatry to come and listen (cf. 3; 2:6; 8:16ff; 47:12ff).

- a. He accuses them of sinning by mocking, making fun of and showing contempt for God and spiritual things by mouth and other gestures (Psa 22:7,13: 35:21; 2 Chron 36:16).
- b. They burned in their lust for idols, worshiping them in the groves (1:29; Deut 22:2; 2 Kgs 17:10; 2 Chron 28:4).
- d. They even sacrificed their children to these detestable idols (Deut 12:31; 2 Chron 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31).

They made their idolatrous offerings in the valleys and God was extremely displeased with this!

- a. Their spiritual adultery was public and shameless, showing extreme disrespect for God, and their idolatrous images were everywhere.
- b. They loved, were intimate with and made covenants with these false gods, choosing them rather than the true and living God.

They were unfaithful to God in seeking alliances with and following customs of foreign nations, thus degrading themselves.

- a. They wearied themselves in seeking such help from everywhere except God.
- b. Yet they refused to admit that all these things were hopeless and idolatry seemed to refresh them so they did not weary of it.

“Human nature does not change; today, instead of finding satisfaction for spiritual needs and strength in the Lord, multitudes are seeking help in the cults and false religions. Such recourses may serve for the moment, but in the end they are doomed to failure” (Hailey).

11-13. The threat of judgment.

The people were guilty of fearing men and seeking to please them through idolatry rather than turning to God.

- a. Therefore, they lied to (were false to) God.
- b. Because God had been silent for awhile, they forgot Him.

“The fact that God does not intervene by way of judgment leads the hardened heart to be void of the fear of God” (Vine)

- c. But God would not remain silent forever! He would make known their unprofitable and insincere righteousness and sinful works.
- d. He tells them to cry out for aid from their multitude of idols and nations and promises that weak allies will be blown away by the wind.
- e. In contrast, those who trust in God will be victorious.

I will declare your righteousness—"does not indicate that those with whom God was remonstrating were themselves righteous. The very opposite was the case. It was what Israel in its blind condition regarded as their own righteousness. It was a lying righteousness and its true character would be declared, i.e., exposed and judged by the Lord" (Vine).

Shall possess the land—"Israel's original possession of the land was unconditional; it was given to Israel in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham (Gen 12:7, etc.).....But the retaining of the land was conditional (Lev 26:14-45)" (Hailey).

THE CONDESCENDING LOVE OF GOD..... 57:14-21

Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people—God will remove everything out of His path; the one on which the people who return to Him must travel.

God is high, lofty, eternal, holy and dwells in heaven.

Yet, He lives with and provides spiritual life to those who are humble and contrite; crushed by the horribleness of sin (62:2; Psa 34:18; 51:17; 138:6; Mic 6:8; Mt 5:3-9).

God promises to not contend with, or be angry with man forever, because, if He were to be, all would fall (cf. 16; Psa 78:38,39; 103:9,13,14).

- a. What a blessed and comforting thought for weak man!
- b. One of the sins that provoked God's wrath was Israel's love for covetousness— unjust gain (2:7; 33:15; 1 Sam 7:3; Jer 6:13).
- c. God will provide a means of spiritual healing and comfort for those who repent mourn over sin.
- d. God will provide a reason for *the fruit of the lips*—praise (Heb 13:15).
 - 1) The reason is the availability of the spiritual healing that man needs so desperately!

- 2) Notice that it is available to:
 - a) Those who are *far off*—the Gentiles and
 - b) Those who are *near*—the Israelites.
- 3) This is the healing and peace of the great Servant, the Christ! The major subject of this entire section.
 - 1) Cf. 2:4; 9:6,7; 53:5,6; 1 Pet 2:25.
 - 2) Acts 10:34-36.
 - 3) Eph 2:11-17.

No peace...for the wicked—in sharp contrast, the wicked have neither rest nor peace. They have not contributed anything to their moral or spiritual lives, or of the nation's.

D. NATION SINS, REDEMPTION BY JEHOVAH AND FUTURE GLORY. CH 58-66

In this section the emphasis will be upon comfort in the future glory of Zion, with special emphasis upon the kind of life which must be lived to enjoy that comfort.

“Although a new section begins at chapter 58, a close relationship exists between chapter 57 and chapters 58 and 59, making it difficult to distinguish clearly where one section ends and the next begins. There is also a problem in determining the precise point in history to which this section belongs.....The most reasonable theory is that of some time following Sennacherib's defeat and return to his homeland (ch. 37) and the prophecy of the Babylonian exile (ch. 39), Isaiah compiled various prophecies which he had spoken during his ministry. These he preserved in the last major section of his book” (Hailey).

1. RIGHT AND WRONG OBSERVANCES OF FEASTS AND SABBATHS. CH 58

CRY OUT! SPARE NOT!. 58:1,2

God commands Isaiah to cry out their sins. Externally they acted like a nation doing righteousness in seeking God, but their hearts were indifferent and apathetic (1:11ff; 29:13; 43:23ff).

“The prophet is commanded to cry around (lit., ‘with full throat’), to lift up his voice like a trumpet, in order to declare to Israel their transgression, and the sins of the house of Jacob” (Vine).

Hypocritical Formalism Versus True Fasting.. 58:3-12

They complain that God has not seen or known their fasting.

- a. This implies they expected God to deliver them or reward them for their fasting.
- b. God gives two reasons why He did not accept their fasting:
 - 1) They continued to seek out pleasure while supposedly fasting.
 - 2) Fasting should be a self-denial, not a self-indulgence in pleasures!

They were oppressive in demanding what was due them.

- a. Even while fasting, they divided into groups fighting against each other.
- b. Fasting of this kind is not acceptable to God.
- c. He states, by asking a sarcastic question, that their fasting was not the kind He had asked for.

The things they did which were not acceptable were:

- a. *Afflict his soul*—merely inflicting pain and inconvenience without the correct attitude of heart and
- b. *Bow down his head like a bulrush*—illustrates a hypocritical man bowed down in false grief.
- c. Cf. Mt 6:16-18.
- d. Only the spiritually blind could conclude that their actions met with God's approval.

6,7. The right kind of fast.

In these verses God specifies the kind of fast He approves, and says the true fast affects the heart, and leads to acts of justice, kindness and love; such as:

- a. Releasing those who are oppressed with *bonds...burdens ...oppressed*—a reference to abusive or unjust slavery,
- b. Sharing food with the hungry (Job 31:16-22; Mt 25:34ff; Jas 2:15ff),

- c. Providing shelter for the homeless and
- d. Providing clothing for those in need (Lk 3:11; Jas 2:15ff; 1 Jn 3:17).
- e. Do not *hide yourself from your own flesh*—do not fail to care for your own family (1 Tim 5:8).

8,9a. If they would do the things in these verses:

- a. The Lord would bless them with prosperity and health and
- b. Their righteousness would lead them in the proper way and the Lord would protect them.
- c. And, if they asked for His help, He would aid them.

9b,10a. Other abuses that are to be put aside.

- a. They must release those who are oppressed—*yoke*,
- b. Cease from condemning others—*pointing of the finger*,
- c. Cease from unjust speaking—speaking wickedness and
- d. Show true kindness to the hungry and afflicted—*extend your soul... satisfy*.

If...if...then—Jehovah is very clear throughout the scriptures, providing them and us with “if...then” promises (vvs. 9,10).

10b-12. Resultant blessings.

If they would do the things described in these verses, they would enjoy prosperity and, after the return from captivity, their descendants would rebuild and restore areas which had been destroyed.

This may also refer to the faithful rebuilding the spiritually abandoned places in their lives.

“Mere external religion and outward conformity to ritual are easy. Moreover they intend to produce a spirit of self-satisfaction. What meets with God’s approval is that obedience to His word which firstly keeps the soul in true exercise of heart before Him and then leads to the fulfillment of all righteousness in our ways and relationships with others. We may seek strictly to attend certain spiritual duties, while all the time the heart is not right with God, and there is sin in the life which His all-seeing eye does not fail to discern” (Vine).

PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH..... 58:13,14

God establishes some conditions. They must:

- a. Not do things in their own ways,
- b. Nor find their own pleasure and
- c. Not speak their own words.

If they did not do these things, they would:

- a. Enjoy God (Job 22:21-26; Psa 37:4),
- b. Be victorious—*ride on the high hills of the earth* and
- c. Receive the promised land—*heritage of Jacob*.

These verses also contain an *if...then* section.

2. Sin: The Wall Of Separation. Ch 59

The book of Micah is a good commentary on this chapter.

Jehovah's Charge Against the People. 59:1-8

1,2. Sin separates man from God.

The fact that they are not saved from their enemies is not because God is not powerful enough to hear and save them (50:2; Num 11:23).

Rather, their sins had separated them from God.

Our God is Holy. Sin is abominable in His sight. He is separate from it.

Sin should grieve us as well!

3-8. Some of Israel's sins.

God begins to list some of their sins. Notice the use of the different parts of the body:

- a. *Hands are defiled with blood* (1:15)—they persecuted the innocent (murder, oppression and cruelty).

b. *Fingers with iniquity*—may refer to thefts.

c. *Lips have spoken lies*.

Lies will poison any society and eventually bring it to its end.

d. *Tongue has muttered perversity*—spoke evil things with a hateful spirit.

e. Did not seek justice and truth—deceitful; taking advantage of others.

f. *Trusted in empty words and speak lies*.

g. Schemed and made plans to do evil.

h. Cf. Rom 3:13,14.

i. This list shows they were totally sinful!

The people are so evil and destructive they are described as producing (*hatch*) the most poisonous kind of snake (*viper*) and anyone who participates in their plans and activities dies.

Just as a fragile spider's web is not adequate for clothing, their sinful and violent works will never save them.

7,8. Their thoughts were sinful, leading to eagerness to do evil, oppress the innocent, and destroy all those in their path (Rom 3:15-17).

They refused to seek peace, justice and the straight paths of God (57:20, 21; Psa 125: 5; Prov 2:15).

And whoever chose to walk with them would not receive peace!

THE PROPHET'S REPLY: A CONFESSION OF WICKEDNESS. 59:9-15a

9-11. The result—moral confusion.

The people confess the result of their sins (*therefore... us...we*).

They do not receive vindication of their cause (*justice...righteousness*), deliverance from calamities, nor the light they desire (probably happiness and prosperity). They wander and stumble through life like the blind and those in darkness (Deut 28:28, 29).

They are in a state of utter disorder and confusion with obstacles everywhere.

They are as dead men (dead in trespasses and sins: Eph 2:1ff; Col 2:13; 1 Tim 5:6).

They mourn because they receive neither vindication of their cause nor salvation.

What a tragedy sin is in our lives!

“Those who persist in error find no help from the light of God’s truth, although it is there for them. Christ Himself and the very Scriptures have become a stumbling block to the Jews. So it is in Christendom: the Scriptures are read but not understood. The blinding power of ecclesiastical traditions obscures the light of God’s word, and people who have the Bible remain in religious bondage, unable to enjoy the truth which would set them free if they faithfully listened to its voice instead of adhering to the systems of men” (Vine).

12-15a. A sincere confession.

Isaiah admits the sinfulness of his people.

They know their sins and that those sins testify against them before God who sees all (Jer 14:7). We cannot hide anything from God!

More of their sins are confessed:

- a. *Transgressing*—violating His commandments is sin! (1 Jn 3:4).
- b. *Lying*—being false to God (Titus 1:16)—claiming to be His but worshiping false gods.
- c. *Departing from our God* (1 Tim 4:1ff).
- d. *Speaking oppression and revolt*—forming and implementing plans to take advantage of others and rebelling against God.
- e. *Conceiving and uttering...falsehood*—(Mk 7:21-23). Notice the source of these things is the heart. We must guard it!
- f. *Justice and righteousness stands afar off*—unjust and untruthful in their legal decisions.
- g. *Truth is fallen...equity cannot enter*—truthfulness was rare and those who would not participate in their evil were harassed.

“In such an environment, he who turns away from evil and seeks to do right is oppressed, harassed, and destroyed by evil men” (Hailey).

JEHOVAH'S RESPONSE: VENGEANCE AND DELIVERANCE. 59:15b-21

God saw all of their sin, injustice, cruelty, etc. and it was painfully displeasing to Him.

- a. He also saw that there was no human willing or capable enough to intercede for His people (63:5).
- b. Therefore, He intervened Himself, using His mighty power to bring salvation. And, His righteousness in doing so sustained Him.
- c. In doing this, God is pictured as a righteous, mighty, zealous warrior going out to vindicate His people by winning their salvation

Wondered—"or was astonished, expressing His displeasure rather than anything like human wonder" (Vine).

Notice the clothing of his warfare is spiritual, not carnal. Paul uses this language about our spiritual warfare (2 Cor 10:3ff; Eph 6:10ff).

Because of the great power of God, men everywhere will fear Him. God's fury will come like a rushing stream.

He promises that the redeemer is going to turn men from sin.

Paul, by inspiration, applies this to Christ (Rom 11:26,27).

God also promises that His spirit and words will never depart from the true Israel — the faithful and obedient remnant in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament.

Jehovah made the covenant. We either accept it and enter into it or we reject it.

3. Glorious Zion! Ch 60,61

"Having repeatedly and fully shewn that the national pre-eminence of Israel was not to be perpetual, that the loss of it was the natural consequence and righteous retribution of iniquity, and that this loss did not involve the destruction of the true church or spiritual Israel, the Prophet now proceeds to shew that to the latter the approaching change would be a glorious and blessed one" (Alexander).

Made Glorious Through the Light of Jehovah's Presence. 60:1-3

Isaiah again looks into the future. Zion is told to arise and shine for two reasons:

- a. *Your light has come*—represents salvation in this context and an obvious reference to the Christ, the great light who brought salvation (9:2; Mal 4:2; Lk 1:78ff; Jn 1:4; 8:12-20, 46; Eph 5:8,14).
- b. *The glory of the Lord is risen upon you*—another obvious reference to Christ (Jn 1:14; 2 Cor 4:4; Heb 1:3).

When this occurs, the world will be filled with darkness (sin) but the Lord's glory will be seen in Zion (the church - Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21).

Gentiles will be attracted to Zion by this great light (2:3; 11:10; 49:22; 54:3; Eph 2:11-22).

Darkness—"Some will be steeped in idolatry, some in Jewish traditions and prejudices, others in Greek and Roman philosophy (Acts 17:16-18), none of which shed any real light" (Hailey).

Made Glorious Through the Return of Her Children. 60:4-9

This is a reference to the conversion of the Gentiles. They will come in great numbers (49:22,23). At this time Zion's heart will overflow with joy and excitement because of the conversion of such a large number of Gentiles (Acts 11:18; 15:13) and these converts will turn over much of their worldly goods to Zion (the church).

People from distant nations will offer their best to the Lord and praise Him. They will offer acceptable worship to God and God will glorify His house—the church (Hag 2:7,9; Heb 12:26ff).

The number of converts will be so large as to appear as a dense cloud or swarm of doves. People from afar will come to turn over their most precious possessions to Zion —through Jesus, the glory of God.

"Drawn to Zion because she has been glorified and beautified by Jehovah's presence, light, and name, multitudes of foreigners from throughout the world come bringing their all; everything they have is dedicated to Him" (Hailey).

MADE GLORIOUS THROUGH OFFERINGS. 60:10-14

10-12. The attitude of those coming to Zion.

Foreigners will help in the building of this Zion.

- a. The language is Messianic (cf. Amos 9:11,12; Acts 15:14-17). For inclusion of the Gentiles in the building of the church, see Eph 2:11-22.

- b. The gates of Zion will be open continually.
- c. Anyone can enter the church any time, as long as they meet the Lord's conditions.
- d. Whoever refuses to serve this Zion (the church) will perish (Mt 21:44) and perish eternally!

Gates shall be open continually—this clearly demonstrates that this is not talking about conditions after the return from captivity.

13,14. The attitude toward worship shown by those coming to Zion.

The most beautiful and glorious objects will be devoted to God's service (35:2; 41:19).

- a. God will make His dwelling place, the church, glorious.
- b. The descendants of those who had persecuted the Zion will come humbly before her, acknowledging her as God's dwelling place.

MADE GLORIOUS THROUGH HER ETERNAL EXCELLENCY. 60:15-18

God will change Zion from being forsaken and despised (in captivity) into something to be exalted and rejoiced in forever (the church).

She is pictured as a nursing child, receiving the best of nutrients (49:23; 66:11,12).

Zion will know that God is her Savior, Redeemer and the Mighty One!

This will be a time of unprecedented changes for the better through the remarkable power of the glorious gospel, also peace and righteousness will rule over this Zion.

This Zion will be characterized by peace, not violence; construction, not destruction.

- a. It will be ruled by the Prince of Peace,
- b. His reign will be that of peace (2:4; 11:6ff; Acts 10:36; Eph 2:14,15,17) and
- c. His church will consist of citizens who seek and pursue peace (Mt 5:7,9,21-26,38-42; Rom 12:18-21; 14:19; Heb 12:14).

Zion's walls will be Salvation and her gates Praise (26:1).

MADE GLORIOUS THROUGH JEHOVAH'S EVERLASTING LIGHT. 60:19-22

Salvation and Praise in the light that this Zion depends upon is the everlasting light that Jesus and His gospel brought into the world, not the physical light provided by the sun and moon.

“Surely if the sun and moon can contribute nothing to the splendor of this city, the light of human wisdom and philosophy would add only confusion and darkness” (Hailey). Denominationalism?

Little one—the less privileged and those who appear insignificant.

Small one—the poor, weak or young.

THE HERALD OF GOOD TIDINGS.. . . . 61:1-3

The Servant speaks in these verses. They are applied to Jesus by Luke (4:16-21).

Note the Servant's qualifications:

- a. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me*—Peter tells us that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38). Cf. 11:2; 42:1; Mt 3:16; Jn 1:32; 3:34.
- b. *The Lord has anointed Me*, set Him apart for a special office (cf. Psa 45:7; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb 1:9).

Also note the functions for which God anointed Him:

- a. *Preach good tidings to the poor* (afflicted). Jesus brought the gospel to the afflicted and poor (Mt 5:3-12; 11:5).
- b. *Heal the broken hearted*. Jesus healed and comforted those who are distressed and mourning—probably because of their sins (Mt 5:4; 11:28-30).
- c. *Proclaim liberty to the captives*. Jesus made it possible for men to be released from the bondage of sin (cf. 42:7).
- d. *Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*—to let all know that this was the right time in God's eyes. Jesus did this in the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4).
- e. *The day and vengeance of our God*—victory of God over His enemies in the perfect life, death, resurrection and ascension of His Servant Son (Mk 3:27; Jn 12:31-33; Eph 4:8; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14ff; 1 Jn 3:8).

- f. *To comfort all who mourn* (25:8; 49:13; 57:18; Mt 5:4; 11:28-30).
- g. *To give them beauty for ashes.*
- h. *To give them...oil of joy for mourning.*
- i. *To give them...garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*

Heaviness—"the word describes a condition burdensome enough to cause one's death" (Vine).

THE MISSION AND BLESSING OF THE REDEEMED. 61:4-9

The thought in this section is that Jews and Gentiles work together to build the new Zion (the church).

Old destroyed areas will be restored (49:8; 54:3; 58:12).

Foreigners will serve Zion (14:2; 60:9,10).

All the citizens of Zion will be priests (1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

Verse 6 is a remarkable prophecy, resulting in a change from the Levitical system.

The Gentiles will contribute of their best to Zion (19:16-25; 60:5-11).

And in their glory you shall boast—this clause may mean "that true glory, which the nations once thought of as theirs, now belongs to the redeemed. This is a cause of boasting (in a good sense) for the citizens of Zion" (Hailey).

Their shame and confusion (in captivity—sin) will be replaced with twice as much honor (35:10; 40:2; 60:15; Jn 15:11; 16:22; 17:13; Rom 14:17; 1 Jn 1:4).

God loves justice and hates injustice.

- a. This requires that He punish His enemies and deliver His people.
- b. Therefore, He will reward His people *in truth* (faithfully) and make an everlasting covenant with them (55:3; 59:21).
- c. The descendants of God's people will be distinct and others will recognize that the Lord has blessed them (44:3; 54:3; Acts 2:47; 4:13; Rom 16:19; 2 Cor 3:2; Phil 2:15,16; 1 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 2:12).

- d. Whether Jehovah gives joy or judgment, He does it because He is just.

ZION'S BURST OF PRAISE. 61:10,11

Those who are *in the Lord* (Zion, the church) rejoice because of God's salvation and righteousness (25:9; 49:18; 52:1; Lk 1:46ff, 68ff).

- a. In making this salvation possible, God will cause righteousness and praise to abound throughout all the world (14:8; 42:19; 43:9; 44:4).
- b. This will burst forth like a tender, young plant. God's word will accomplish its purpose! (55:10,11).

4. SALVATION IS DRAWING NEAR. CH 62

THE NEW NAME AND GLORY OF ZION. 62:1-5

1-3). For Zion's sake, God will not rest until righteousness and salvation proceed out of her like a brightly shining light.

- a. When righteousness and salvation go forth brightly, the Gentiles will see the righteousness and glory of Zion and
- b. Zion will be called by a new name which God will give.
- c. The following is fulfillment of this prophecy:
 - 1) Peter was sent to Cornelius, a Gentile (Acts 10:1ff).
 - 2) He went to tell Cornelius what was commanded of him by God (Acts 10:33).
 - 3) He told Cornelius what he had to do to be saved and receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43; 11:14).
 - 4) God indicated His approval of the Gentiles through the pouring out of His Holy Spirit on Cornelius, just as He had done on the apostles (Acts 10: 44, 45; 11:15,17).
 - 5) Thus, the Gentiles saw God's righteousness, salvation and glory just as He had prophesied.
 - 6) Just after this, a congregation was established in the Gentile city of Antioch, where the disciples were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26), the new name given by God!

- d. *Crown of glory....royal diadem*—"the two descriptions mark the combination of royal authority and priesthood....men of renown have sought to exercise this double function, so as to have authority over both the religious and the civil life of those under them. The whole history is one of dismal failure and catastrophe" (Vine).

I will not hold My peace—Jehovah will not remain quiet or refrain from speaking.

I will not rest—He will not be inactive.

Then, Zion would not be called *Forsaken* and *Desolate* as they were during captivity (54:4ff). Instead, she will be called:

- a. *Hephzibah*—"My delight is in her." God will delight in His new creation, spiritual Zion, the church and
- b. *Beulah*—married (54:4,5). The forsaken one is now reunited to her husband, God. And, God will rejoice over Zion as a bridegroom does over his bride; a most special and tender love.
 - 1) Notice the picture of God as the husband and Zion (the church) as His bride (Eph 5:21ff; Rev 19:6-8; 21:2; 22:17).
 - 2) "As a young man marries a virgin and dedicates himself to protecting and caring for her honor, so the sons of Zion dedicate themselves to the honor of Jehovah's land and people—His kingdom" (Hailey).

JEHOVAH'S PROTECTION AND PROVISION FOR ZION. 62:6-9

6,7. God says that He has placed faithful watchmen upon the walls (52:8; 56:10).

- a. They are exhorted to continue steadfastly in prayer until God causes Jerusalem to be praised.
- b. These watchmen are not angels, Old Testament prophets or priests.
- c. They are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers under the New Testament.

8,9. Successful achievement on God's part.

God gives a solemn oath that Zion will no longer be plundered by foreigners. Instead, she will have security and will praise God for it.

SALVATION OF THE DAUGHTER OF ZION. 62:10-12

“Zion’s citizens go forth removing obstacles, making clear the way, and lifting high the banner so that those of the nations (Gentiles) can find their way to Zion and press through the gates into the city” (Hailey).

“All that presents a stumbling block, all that hinders our enjoyment of free and constant access to the Throne of Grace, everything that stands in the way of our communion with God is to be removed. Often there is much rubbish to be cleared out, such as worldly associations and fleshly desires” (Vine).

God makes a universal proclamation—Zion’s salvation is coming and He has His reward with Him.

- a. Language very similar to 40:10, which is Messianic.
- b. Similar language is used about Jesus (Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15; Rev 22:12).

When this happens Zion’s citizens will be known as:

- a. *The Holy People*—set apart and dedicated to God (Ex 19:6; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15,16; 2 Pet 3:11).
- b. *The Redeemed of the Lord*—bought back by paying the ransom price (1 Cor 6:19,20; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19).
- c. *Sought out*—not only have they sought out the city (the church), but Jehovah has sought them out through His Son.
- d. *A City Not Forsaken*—constantly under Jehovah’s care and providence.

“But should the citizens of Zion lose sight of this sacred relationship, become a religious ‘social club’ concerned primarily with political affairs and business enterprises, they will cease to be *The Holy People*, separate and different from the world. They will become simply another religious body” (Hailey).

5. VENGEANCE, MERCY AND A PRAYER. CH 63

JEHOVAH’S VENGEANCE ON HIS ENEMIES. 63:1-6

The people ask who this mighty and victorious warrior is who has returned with dyed garments from the capital of Edom.

- a. Edom was one of the worst enemies of God’s people, therefore, she often represented all the enemies of God’s people (as did Babylon).

- b. The warrior answers, *I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save*. He is God!
- c. Cf. 42:13 for a description of God as a mighty warrior.

The people ask why His garments are dyed red as one who has been treading grapes in a winepress.

- a. God states that His garments are stained with the blood of His enemies.
- b. He has conquered them completely—righteous punishment for their sins.
- c. And, He did this with no help (59:16). This vengeance is not on Edom only, but to all the heathen nations.
- d. In doing this, God has taken vengeance on His enemies and redeemed His people.
- e. He reemphasizes the fact that no others could or would aid Him in bringing this salvation (59:16). He alone brought it about!
- f. God will bring His enemies down in the fury of His righteous wrath (51:17).

Indeed, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God—a consuming fire! Cf. Heb 10:27,31; 12:29; 2 Cor 5:10,11.

JEHOVAH'S ENDURING LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE..... 63:7-9

Isaiah speaks out for the people, remembering God's abundant love, goodness and mercy that He had shown to Israel in the past.

God had chosen them as His special people, expecting their loyalty—probably referring of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1ff).

He became their Savior; He was touched by their afflictions (Jud 10:16) and sent *the Angel of His presence* to serve them.

- a. God had promised to send this Angel (Ex 23:20-23) and
- b. He did send Him (Ex 14:19; Num 20:16).
- c. This *Angel of His Presence* is Jehovah Himself! Cf. Ex 13:21; 14:19; 32:34; 33:14,15; Deut 4:37.
- d. Cf. Gen 22:11,12; Ex 3:2; 4:6,14.

- e. In Joshua 5:13, God is called a *Man*; in verse 14 He accepted worship and in verse 15 He told Joshua to remove his sandals for he stood on holy ground.

God showed His great love and pity in redeeming and carrying them (40:11; 43:1; Deut 32:11,12).

Special Note: Verses 9 and 10 are one of those beautiful passages where all three of the Godhead are brought together in one place.

- a. *Angel of His Presence* = the Son, Jesus the Christ.
- b. See special study on the Angel of Jehovah.

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE: REBELLION. 63:10-14

In spite of God's great love and pity, Israel rebelled against God, thus grieving His Holy Spirit (Psa 78:40; 95:10; Eph 4:30; Heb 3:10-17).

As a result, God became their enemy.

The people wanted God to act as He had in delivering Moses and Israel at the Red Sea (Ex 14:21).

God's leading them out of that danger into safety is likened to cattle going down into a valley to rest—a beautiful picture of peace and tranquility.

Put His Holy Spirit within them—this refers to the Holy Spirit being given to the seventy elders (Num 11:17,25,29; Hag 2:5).

AN IMPASSIONED PRAYER FOR MERCY AND HELP. 63:15-19; Ch 64

15-19. Bitter mourning because of present misfortunes.

The people question as to where God's former zeal, power and compassion have disappeared, implying that God is not caring for them as He had in the past.

- a. They plead with God to look down in mercy, and call upon Him as their Everlasting Father and Redeemer who could and would aid them even when such men as Abraham and Isaac could not.

"That Abraham and Israel do not know the nation does not mean that they now reject the people, or claim no relation to them, but that descent from the patriarchs cannot help them now" (Hailey).

- b. They seem to blame God for causing them to sin and harden their hearts. This accusation is untrue, for we know man always has a choice and sometimes man chooses the wrong way—the way that will result in his hardening his own heart.
- c. They beg God to return to them.

The people accuse God of allowing them to possess the land and sanctuary for only a short time before their enemies destroyed it.

- a. They were claiming to be His special people while, of course, the invading foreigners are not.
- b. In this, they are trying to point out reasons why God should intervene to aid them.

6. A FERVENT PRAYER..... CH 64

PRAYER FOR JEHOVAH'S PRESENCE AND ACTION.. 64:1-7

1-3. The people call upon God to come down out of heaven to take vengeance upon their foes. This is graphically described in the use of symbols:

- a. *Rend the heavens*—to violently tear the heavens (vengeance - Psa 18:9; 144:5, 6; Hab 3:5,6).
- b. *That the mountains might shake at Your presence*—even the great mountains would melt from the intense burning heat of God's wrath (Jud 5:4,5; Psa 97:5; Mic 1:3,4).
- c. *As fire burns*—showing just how intense the heat of God's wrath is!

The purpose is to make God's powerful name known and to cause nations to tremble at His fierce power.

They make reference to God unexpectedly doing these kinds of things in the past (Ex 19:16ff; Deut 32:22; Jud 5:4,5; Psa 144:5) and imply that if He did it then to, please, do it again!

What the people are, in the final analysis, praying for is Jehovah's *presence*. These are the last words of the first three verses.

4,5a. God—the only source of help.

From the very beginning, man has never seen from any other source the blessings which God provides to those who patiently trust in Him (30:18; 40:31).

In 1 Cor 2:9 Paul quotes this verse, applying it to the blessings associated with the gospel.

To understand the idea of *waiting on God* see Psa 25:3,5, 21; 27:14; 37:9; 130:5.

God *meets* with those who rejoice in doing righteousness—His will (Acts 10:35).

Meet means to help.

God will provide peace, friendship and protection to those who *remember* Him by doing His will in His ways.

Rejoices....does righteousness....remembers You—“It is possible to walk in righteousness in strict adherence to religion, without delighting ourselves in the Lord. It is possible to do what is morally right and virtuous without actually having God Himself in remembrance. The enjoyment of the secret of His presence is the key to the manifestation of His power in effective service to Him. The Lord delights in those who know in practical experience what fellowship with Him is. His eye is upon them that fear Him. The apostle Paul precedes his desire for the realization of the power of His resurrection by the desire ‘that I may know Him.’ Enoch walked with God, and so had this testimony that he pleased God. He ‘delighted himself in the Lord’ and his life of witness in a godless world issued in his translation to the very presence of God” (Vine).

5b-7. Renewed misgivings and hopelessness.

The people confess that God is furious because of their sins.

- a. God’s ways (as mentioned earlier in this verse) are everlasting—continuing and those who keep them will be saved.
- b. They confess they are polluted by sin and their most righteous deeds are as filthy rags before God (Lk 17:10ff).
- c. They are dying as the autumn leaves (cf. 40:6,7) and their sins have swept them away (from God) like the wind.
- d. None worship or obey God or stir themselves to cling tightly to Him.
- e. Because of their iniquities God has turned away from them and consumed them.

A RENEWED CRY FOR MERCY..... 64:8-12

Now they claim God as their only Father (63:16), implying He should deliver them from captivity as a good father should.

- a. They confess He is in control of them as their potter (29:16; 45:9), the fact they had refused to accept earlier!
- b. They now call upon Him as *His people* and to not be unduly angry nor to remember their sins forever (54:7,8).
- c. "Though Jehovah is the creator of all mankind, He is the Father of only His spiritual people" (Hailey).

They point out that His holy cities are destroyed and the temple and all the things most dear to them are burned and laid waste.

- a. In their plea to God they ask whether He will continue to not help them, thus severely afflicting them (49:15; Ex 34:6; Jer 31:20).
- b. It appears that some of these people had felt the horribleness of their sins and had repented, coming to God in prayer as their only source of aid.
- c. *In wrath remember mercy* (Hab 3:2).

7. JEHOVAH'S RESPONSE TO THE PRAYER..... CH 65

Chapter 65 "is Jehovah's response to the nation's prayer. Because of their rebellion and idolatry He cannot do what they plead for. He will cast off the fleshly nation, but will redeem or save a remnant. The present order will pass away, and He will create a new one" (Hailey).

DESTRUCTION OF THE APOSTATES: A JUST RECOMPENSE. 65:1-7

God predicts He will be sought after and found by people who had not done so before that time—obviously not the Jews!

- a. He will call *Here I am, here I am* to a people who were not previously His.
- b. Paul applies this to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles in Rom 10:14-20.

In contrast, God had patiently called His rebellious people. What a beautiful expression of God's longsuffering and love!

In Rom 10:21 Paul applies this to Israel's rejection of God.

Notice how God describes His people:

- a. Rebellious,
- b. Walk according to their own thoughts—do their own will, which is not good,
- c. Provoke to anger continually,
- d. Sacrificed to false gods in groves and on altars of brick. God required altars made of uncut stone (Ex 20:24,25),
- e. Sat among the graves (8:19,20)—apparently to try to receive communications from the dead,
- f. Ate swine's flesh which was forbidden by God's law,
- f. Ate broth of abominable things used by witches and idolaters in casting spells (magic and mysticism) and
- g. Thought themselves to be holier than the true worshipers of Jehovah.

What about the Change Agents in the Lord's church today?

Their behavior was as offensive to God as smoke is to the nostrils, and it kindled God's wrath like an eternal fire (Deut 32:22; Psa 18:8; Jer 17:4; Ezek 38:18).

God declares that their sinful deeds are recorded (Dan 7:10; Rev 20:12ff) and the books will be opened on judgment day!

God will not remain silent forever, but will repay them fully for their deeds, punishing them for their sins and their fathers for their sins (Hos 8:7; Gal 6:7,8).

Bosom—a fold in an apron or in a garment in which items can be carried or a bribe concealed.

Jehovah is now going to cast them off, just as they had already cast Him off!

SALVATION OF A REMNANT — DESTRUCTION OF THE FAITHLESS. 65:8-12

God uses a physical example to teach a spiritual lesson.

- a. If one finds a cluster of good grapes in a bunch of rotten ones, he saves the good cluster.

- 1) He will not destroy it because it is a *blessing*.
 - 2) In the same way, God will save His faithful and obedient ones (the remnant) out of the “rotten” nation of Israel for His Servant’s sake (1:9; 6:13; 10:20,21; 11:11-16; Rom 9:27; 11:5).
- b. God promises to bring forth *descendants* out of the remnant to inherit His mountain.
- 1) These descendants are the faithful ones who will inherit God’s Messianic promises—the *Holy Seed* (6:13; 44:3; 54:3; 59:21; 66:22; 2 Sam 7:12-17).
 - 2) They inherit God’s *mountain*—the church (2:2; Mic 4:2; Heb 12:22ff).
 - 3) They are His servants and His elect (Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 1:2; 5:13).
 - 4) They are the faithful and obedient remnant in the Old Testament, the church in the New Testament and He promises a great change:
 - a) *Sharon*—a district noted for its great beauty and fertility (see notes on 30:9; 32:5). Flocks will again graze there although now, in captivity, it was empty.
 - b) *Valley of Achor*:
 - (1) The place where Achan was stoned (Josh 7:21; 15:7).
 - (2) The name means “causing trouble” or “affliction.”
 - (3) In contrast, in the return from captivity it will be a place of happiness (*herds lie down*).
 - 5) Those who would receive these blessings are *My people who have sought Me*—the faithful and obedient.
 - 6) *Jacob...Judah*—“Jacob and Judah represent the people as a whole. Both Israel and Judah went into captivity, both ceased to exist as political kingdoms, and from both Jehovah will redeem His remnant” (Hailey).
 - 7) Jehovah has always had moral conditions for any people at any time possessing any land.

Notice the use of the word *but* in verse 11, indicating a contrast—a contrast with the obedient He has just talked about.

In verse 11 the unrighteous are re-introduced. Notice their characteristics:

- a. They have forsaken God,
- b. They have forgotten His holy mountain (probably Moriah or Zion where the temple was),
- c. They worship false gods (ASV, *Fortune* and *Destiny*).
 - 1) These will receive God's righteous wrath (2 Chr 36:14-17).
 - 2) "For our purposes we need only mention that Fortune and Destiny are heathen deities before whom Israel had spread tables (cf. Psa 23:5; 69:22; 78:18, 19) of food and offered drink oblations. Of course, there is no such thing as luck (Fortune) or fate (Destiny), for 'the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God' (Eccl 9:1)" (Hailey).
- d. Other reasons for punishment are found in verse 12b:
 - 1) They refused to answer God's call (Prov 1:24) to repentance and obedience, issued through His prophets,
 - 2) They refused to hear and obey God's word and
 - 3) Chose to do evil.

BLESSINGS AND JUDGMENTS. 65:13-16

"In view of the content of the chapter, it is clear that the Lord is speaking of spiritual food and drink which His servants will have, but which those who forsake Him will not have (cf. 62:8,9)" (Hailey).

Notice the contrast between the results for the two classes of people:

<u>God's Servants</u>	<u>Disobedient Ones</u>
Eat	Hungry
Have enough to drink	Thirsty
Rejoice	Ashamed
Sing for joy of heart	Cry for sorrow of heart Howl for vexation of spirit

Cf. Deut 11:26-28; 30:15-20.

God promises He will destroy the disobedient in such a way that their name would be a curse to His chosen ones (Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7; Zech 8:13).

- a. The name “Israel” would become like “Sodom” and “Gomorrah”—cursed by God!
- b. But His faithful and obedient ones will be known by a new name—Christian! (62:1,2; Acts 11:26).
- c. When God fulfills these and other promises, people will seek blessings from and swear by the only *God of truth* and not by false gods!
 - 1) Ex 34:6; Deut 32:4. God is abundant in truth; He is truth!
 - 2) Psa 119:142,151,160; Jn 8:31,32; 17:17. His word is truth!
 - 3) Jn 1:14; 14:6. God’s Son is full of, and is, the truth!
 - 4) Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13. His Spirit is the Spirit of truth!

To bless means “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” (TWOT).

He is the one to be relied upon. He always keeps His promises.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH. 65:17-25

God speaks of creating new heavens and a new earth, which will cause people to forget the former (66:22).

What is this new creation?

- a. In this and other Old Testament books tragedy and God’s destruction of nations is often portrayed as the heavens growing dark, being rolled up as a scroll or passing away (13:10; 24:23; 34:4).
- b. Similarly, good and God’s blessings are frequently represented as the violent *shaking of the earth*, remarkable changes and new life given to dead things (35:1,2,7; 51:3; 60:13,17; Joel 2:28-32; Hag 2:7).
- c. Thus, great changes in physical things are often used to represent and predict great spiritual changes.

- d. That is what is being done here.
- e. Man lives within the heavens and earth. Therefore,
 - 1) The *new heavens and a new earth*, as referred to here, refers to a remarkable change that will be as astounding as the creation of a new heavens and earth!
 - 2) In this context, Isaiah is predicting an entirely new age or era—the Christian age, begun by God’s beloved Servant and the church!
 - 3) Later, in the New Testament, Peter and John use this phrase to refer to something even better—Heaven! (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).

God commands Zion to be glad and rejoice forever (35:10; 51:11).

- a. Rejoicing is a characteristic of Messianic times.
- b. God will rejoice in His new creation, where cause for weeping will be removed (25:6-8; 62:5).

Long life—short life (v. 20).

“In the new order each citizen, whether for a brief moment (e.g., Stephen—Acts 7) or for a lengthy period (e.g., Paul, John), will fulfill his mission in God’s purpose. It is not the length but the fullness of one’s days that counts. And the sinner, regardless of the length of his days, is accursed. He will suffer the consequences of his deeds and die in his sins, regardless of when they were committed” (Hailey).

It will be a time of security, satisfaction and enjoyment.

- a. The people will be able to build and inhabit homes and receive produce of their vineyards (62:8,9) without fear of invasion or other major disturbance.
- b. They will be able to enjoy the results of their work.
 - 1) Notice this promise is made only to God’s people—only God’s elect.
 - 2) Their labor will not be in vain (1 Cor 15:58) as long as it is in the Lord!
 - 3) “Security and permanence, together with God’s providential care and supply for all needs are indicated here” (Hailey).

- c. They will not bring forth children who will face curse or early death, because they are descendants of those blessed by the Lord for their faithful obedience (Ex 20:6; Deut 5:29; 7:9; Jer 32:39,40).

These are spiritual offsprings, not physical.

Another blessing to God's faithful ones is that He will anticipate and eagerly provide their needs expressed in prayer (30:19; 58:9; Psa 145:18,19; Dan 9:20,21; Mt 6:8).

He knows our prayers before we utter them (Mt 6:8) and will have made provision for them according to His will.

This will be a time of great peace (11:6-9; 25:6-9), symbolized by changes in normally hostile animals.

- a. This reaches back to 11:6-9 to bring that picture forward.

This is the Messianic period when the animal nature of man will be brought under the control of the Servant.

- b. This takes place in God's holy mountain, Zion, the church! Cf. 2:2-4; 56:6,7.

8. JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENTS—ZION'S REJOICING..... CH 66

"This chapter winds up the prophetic discourse with an express prediction of the change of dispensation, and a description of the difference between them" (Alexander).

JEHOVAH'S GREATNESS AND THE ABOMINATION OF IDOLATRY. 66:1-6

1-4. Corrupt worship.

Almighty God is the King ruling over the relatively insignificant heaven and earth (57:15; Mt 5:34,35).

What house could feeble man build that would be a suitable dwelling place for Him? (1 Kgs 8:27; Acts 7:48-50; 17:24).

- a. The Jews thought that just having the earthly temple guaranteed God's presence and approval, no matter how wicked their deeds were!
- b. God's point—no physical building can assure God's presence and approval.
- c. God created all things, therefore He does not need man to create a house for Him.

d. Rather than externals (like buildings) God desires people who:

- 1) Are *poor*—humble and subdued in spirit (57:15; Mt 5:4),
- 2) Are of a *contrite spirit*—broken, crushed, deeply affected by sin (Psa 34:18; 51:17) and
- 3) *Trembles at My word*—fearful and showing reverence to God and His commands (Deut 4:10; Neh 7:2; Psa 112:1; 119:161; Prov 1:7; Eccl 12:13; Mt 10:28).

Verse 4 - “This verse is admittedly difficult. Is the prophet saying that one who burns incense or offers legal sacrifices (e.g., an ox, a sheep, an oblation [a meal or cereal offering]) in the wrong spirit is guilty of murder (or human sacrifice—57:5) and offering an abominable sacrifice to idols? Or is he saying that in the new temple and under the new order, the offering of sacrifices that were formerly acceptable will be idolatry?” (Hailey).

- a. But, in any case, if they choose their own ways, God will choose their punishments (their *delusions*) and bring their worst fears upon them.
- b. Several reasons are given for the punishments:
 - 1) They did not repent,
 - 2) They refused to hear and obey God’s word,
 - 3) They did evil and
 - 4) They chose things hated by God.
 - 5) Cf. 65:3,12.

5,6. God stands by the faithful and repays the ungodly.

Isaiah commands all who fear the Lord and His word to listen to Him.

God predicts that the people related (brethren) to His faithful ones will banish them in God’s name while claiming to be doing God’s will (Mt 10:22; 24:9; Jn 15:18,21; 16:2; 17:14; 1 Thess 2:14).

But God will vindicate (give joy) to the faithful while causing the persecutors to be ashamed.

In this vision Isaiah hears a great noise from the city and a voice from the temple—the noise of the Lord defeating His enemies.

God and His people will be victorious! This is a confirmation of the promise just given in verse 5.

“The entire passage (vv. 1-6) seems to point to the close of the old Jewish order when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (A.D.70)” (Hailey).

BLESSING IN THE NEW ZION. 66:7-14

7-9. A miraculous new birth.

Old Zion is pictured as suddenly giving birth to *a male child*.

- a. Could this be the promised *Son* and *Child*—the Immanuel? (7:14; 9:6; Rev 12:1ff.)
- b. Who was the *seed* who came forth from old Zion (the faithful and obedient Israel) as promised, to bless all nations? (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Gal 3:16.)
- c. The One who would come suddenly to His temple! (Mal 3:1; Mt 11:7-10; Mk 1:2-4.)
- d. “Only the entrance of Christ into the world and events of Pentecost can be in view here; the Son was exalted, the new nation was established, and Zion’s children began to multiply (Acts 2; 4:4)” (Hailey).

No one had ever heard of or seen such an occurrence!

- a. The earth producing vegetation, etc., in one day or
- b. An entire nation being created in one day.
- c. Zion is now spoken of as producing children (plural), thus, the illustration of a phenomenal, overnight growth in numbers!
- d. Does this not sound like:
 - 1) The establishment of the church (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 12:24)?
 - 2) Three thousand were added in one day, with amazing growth after that!
 - 3) Christians are a *holy nation* (1 Pet 2:9).

e. It was absolutely certain God would accomplish this.

10,11. Exhortation to rejoice over the new creation.

Those in captivity who love and mourn for Jerusalem (Zion) are commanded to rejoice with her over this new creation—the *nation* to which she has given birth.

Their joy and satisfaction are likened to those most tender moments between a mother and her nursing child (49:15-22; 60:4).

12-14. The Lord is with His people and against His enemies.

God promises blessings for Zion:

- a. *Peace to her like a river*—a spiritual peace that passes understanding (9:6,7; 26:12; 52:7; 54:13; Phil 4:6,7).
- b. *The glory of the Gentiles*—the conversion of Gentiles in great numbers (60:5, 11).

In doing this God will bring great comfort to Zion as a mother tenderly comforts her child (40:1; 49:15).

When Zion sees this, she will rejoice and be rejuvenated (27:6; 58:11).

God's protecting and comforting hand will be experienced by His servants, but His enemies will experience His frightful wrath.

INDIGNATION AGAINST THE IDOLATERS... 66:15-17

God is pictured as coming swiftly (*like a whirlwind*) and with flames of fire to rebuke and to render His furious anger.

This type of language is used in several ways in the Bible:

- a. God's judgment upon His enemies at any time (29:6; 30:30; Psa 50:3; 97:3),
- b. God's sending Jesus and His gospel into the world—in this context (2:4; 9:4-7; Jn 3:18),
- c. The destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 24:28ff.) and
- d. The final judgment (2 Thess 1:7-9; 2 Pet 3:7).

The Lord will execute His vengeance with fire and sword (instruments of punishment and death).

“Upon all flesh. The judgment extends beyond the Jews to include all who are in rebellion against Him” (Hailey).

The result being that many will perish (34:5; Rom 13:4).

Idolaters are among those who will be consumed by the Lord.

Jehovah’s Glory Proclaimed to the World and the Response. . . 66:18-24

18. *I know their works and thoughts!*—These idolaters and all others cannot hide from God! (1 Sam 16:7; Job 34:21ff; Jer 11:20; Acts 1:24; Rev 2:2,9,13,19).

The time will come when God will gather all nations to see His glory! (2:2-4; Mic 4:1-3; Acts 2:5-12).

Can this be anything other than the establishment of the church (the new Zion) on the day of Pentecost?!

- 19-21. The message of salvation sent to distant nations.

God promises to set a sign among the people—something miraculous to arrest attention.

Many feel Jesus is that *sign* (banner), approved of God by many *signs* and *wonders* (cf. 11:10-12; Jn 3:2; 14:10-12; Acts 2:22; Heb 2:3,4).

Then He would use those who escape these judgments sent upon His enemies to go to the most distant parts of the earth to declare His glory to the Gentiles.

- a. In Acts 2:40 Peter gave the instructions on how to be saved (escape) from *this perverse generation* and
- b. In their obedience they escaped (were saved) and added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:41,47).
- c. Then, *they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus...everywhere*, even though being scattered abroad (Acts 5:42; 8:4);
- d. Bringing the glory of the Lord to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-49) and bringing brethren back as an offering to God’s holy mountain.

- 1) Notice that Isaiah speaks of these Gentile converts as *brethren* — members of the same spiritual family (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 3:26-28; 1 Jn 3:1,2).
- 2) Cf. Rom 15:16—offering up of the Gentiles through gospel obedience.
 - a) God would use the Gentile converts as priests in His service (21; 61:6; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10).
 - b) In New Testament times every Christian is a priest!
- e. Hailey offers some points on the *sign* for serious consideration:

“The sign that Jehovah will set is not identified. Although it may be a special miraculous sign as in 7:11,14, that seems doubtful. It could be the accomplishment of a particular deed or purpose...It could be the resurrection of the Messiah and evidence confirming it. Or it could be the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, for their army was composed of ‘mercenaries drawn from all parts of the Roman world.’ Or the sign could be the establishment of the church and its power in the world.”

22,23. The finality of the new order (or age).

God makes two promises in verse 22:

- a. His new age, the Christian age, represented by a new heavens and a new earth (65:17) will be permanent, never being replaced by another.
 - 1) We have been in the *last times* or *last days* since the day of Pentecost in the first century (Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 Jn 2:18).
 - 2) In the same way, the name of this Zion and her descendants will be permanent—Church of Christ and Christian.
 - 3) “There will always be a seed, a faithful remnant who serve God (cf. Psa 22:30,31)...It is the seed and name of the new spiritual Israel that shall endure before His presence” (Hailey).
- b. This language assures the final and ultimate triumph of God and His church (cf. book of Revelation).
 - 1) In that time people from all nations (*all flesh*) will worship God regularly and in accordance with His will.
 - 2) In Old Testament language Isaiah uses *New Moon* and *Sabbath* as representing worship acceptable to God in that era.

24. Eternal punishment of those who rebel against God.

Those faithful to God will see the defeat of the ones who violate His will.

Jesus applies this type of language to the eternal punishment of sinners in hell (Mk 9:43-46).

FINIS

APPENDICES

ISAIAH OVERVIEW

NAME: Isaiah

MEANING: Jehovah Saves

DATE: 725 B.C.

AUDIENCE: Judah

THEME: Coming doom and salvation of the Lord

SPECIAL NOTE: The Messiah is coming

OUTLINE:

- I. Judgment from God..... Ch 1-39
- II. Comfort from God. Ch 40-66

LESSONS:

There is but one God and He is Jehovah

God's enemies are to be completely vanquished

A god of power and greed is a false god

Sometimes God restores our confidence by giving us new tasks

Prayer is the key to God's power

No man of God ever stands completely alone

THE PROPHETS

ROMANS 15:4

I. The prophetic office was ordained by God (Deut 18:9-22).

The prophets were men raised up by God, and in their mouths God placed His word. They stood as the opposites of the soothsayers and diviners of Canaan. Israel was to listen to *her* prophets and no others.

II. Their mission:

Communicate God's word to Israel. They predicted the future but as a whole they were more concerned with being proclaimers rather than predictors.

III. The prophets, with the priests, were the teachers of Old Testament times (Jer 1:8,9; 18:11).

- A. They were wise men and women for counsel such as Solomon and others (2 Sam 14:1-24; 20:16-22).

"The wise man did not appeal directly to the conscience as did the prophets, but rather to the mind through council and argument, though their ultimate aim was to reach the conscience and through it to influence conduct and life" (Eiselen).

- B. Priests and the Law were always related (Mal 2:7). The two-fold duty of the priests was:

1. To declare and interpret the Law. This involved helping the judges settle disputes by explaining the Law to them.
2. To tend to the sacrificial duties of the worship.

- C. Prophets were both preachers and predictors, both forthtellers and foretellers.

IV. Some New Testament statements concerning the prophets:

- A. Spoke from God (2 Pet 1:20,21).
- B. All foretold of "These days" — the Christian age (Acts 3:18, 22-26).
- C. Read every Sabbath (Acts 13:27).
- D. Persecuted by their hearers (Acts 7:52; Mt 23:37; Neh 9:31).
- E. Paul reasoned "out of the prophets" (Acts 28:23).

F. Connected with the gospel (Rom 16:25-27; Lk 24:27).

G. Even the return of Christ predicted (Jude 14-16).

V. Meaning of the word “prophet:”

“A prophet is one who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, speaks the words and thoughts of God, whether they relate to the past, the present, or to the future” (Milligan).

“To boil up like a fountain”—Hebrew verb.

“The prophet is a speaker for God. His words are not the production of his own spirit, but come from the higher source” (ISBE).

A. Other terms applied to such men: Seer (1 Sam 9:9); Man of God (1 Sam 9:6); Servant of God (Isa 20:3); Messenger for Jehovah (Isa 42:19); Watchman (Ezek 3:17).

B. There are three classes of preachers:

The good preachers who have something to say,

The poor preacher who has to say something and

The highest class is the preacher (prophet), who has something to say and has to say it.

VI. Oral prophets:

Abraham (Gen 20:7,17).

Isaac and Jacob (Psa 105:9-15).

Moses (Deut 18:15, 34:10).

Miriam (Ex 15:20).

Deborah (Judges 4:4).

Elijah (1 Kgs 17:24).

Sons of the prophets (2 Kgs 2:3).

VII. Unity without uniformity:

Amos - a herdsman.

Micah - a countryman.

Zephaniah - an aristocrat.

Zechariah - a leader of his people in Palestine.

Zephaniah - a young man.

Haggai - an old man.
Habakkuk - sensitive and introspective.
Nahum - a thunderbolt.
Joel - had intense nationalism.
Hosea - tells of the love of God.

VIII. Basic principles for understanding the prophets:

- A. The prophet is a man who is moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20,21).
- B. The prophet cannot introduce strange religions (Deut 13:1-5). Nor can the prophets introduce any new law. It was their function to call men back to the Law given by Moses (cf. Gal 1:6-9).
- C. The false prophet is the one whose oracles do not come to pass (Deut 18:20-22). The ability to know the future belongs to God alone. The prophet knows things to come only to the extent that God speaks through him.
- D. Prophecy is conditional (Jer 18:5-10). The question must be kept before us: have the conditions of this threat or promise been met? The Lord did not destroy Nineveh at once, despite Jonah's threat, for Nineveh repented. A threat may be delayed or avoided by repentance (1 Kgs 21:29).
- E. What are marks of a genuine prophecy?
 - 1. Proper timing (far enough in advance).
 - 2. Specific details (not vague generalities).
 - 3. Freedom from ambiguity (no double meanings or misleading statements).
 - 4. Exact fulfillment.
 - 5. Genuine date and authorship.
- F. Most of the prophets lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Threats of destruction were fulfilled in these calamities. After the return from Babylon, Zechariah reminds the post-exilic people that the threats against their fathers are fulfilled (Zech 1:5,6).
- G. Christ's coming and the beginning of the church are important subjects of Old Testament prophecy (Rom 1:1-4; 1 Pet 1:10-12).
- H. God's final revelation is made in his Son (Heb 1:1,2). It is for this reason that when a New Testament writer says, "This is that which was spoken by the

prophet," it is to be considered as conclusive for that particular prophetic statement (Acts 2:16).

IX. Fulfilled Bible prophecy....just a coincidence?

Christians claim that fulfilled prophecy is one of the best evidences for the inspiration of the scriptures. Many prophecies have been accurately fulfilled. Is it coincidence when Bible prophecies come true? Or is it really supernatural? Every Christian interested in giving a reasonable answer for his faith should be familiar with fulfilled Bible prophecy, which presents overwhelming evidence for inspiration of the scriptures.

A. Some examples of fulfilled prophecies:

1. Babylon, one of the greatest cities of all time.
 - a. It had modern characteristics such as an irrigation and canal system, paved streets, apartment houses, street lights and running water. Its wall was wide enough for three chariots abreast on top. It had its famous "hanging gardens of Babylon."
 - b. It's idolatry, vicious invasion of Israel and persecution of God's people caused God's pronouncement of doom by Isaiah 700 B.C. (Isa 13:19-21).
 - c. One hundred years later Jeremiah predicted the fall of Israel, saying she would serve the king of Babylon 70 years (Jer 25:11). He also predicted the desolation of Babylon (Jer 25:12-14).
 - d. The Medes, led by Cyrus, attacked Babylon in 539 B.C. It was later plundered by Xerxes and Alexander the great.
 - e. The ruins of the city caused a chemical reaction in the soil which turned it to arid waste.
 - f. Even in the first century it was still a foul-smelling, decaying ruin inhabited only by wild animals.
 - g. By the twelfth century the ruins of the city palace were impossible to reach because there were too many poisonous snakes and scorpions.
 - h. The Arabians still refuse today to see the sun go down on the area.
2. Tyre, rich and prosperous city on the Mediterranean.
 - a. It had invincible 150 foot walls.

- b. She had sinned against God through pride, mistreatment of Jewish prisoners of war and broke a treaty with King Solomon (Amos 1:9,10).
 - c. In the sixth century B.C. Ezekiel predicted their doom.
 - (1) The city would be broken down.
 - (2) It would be scraped off like a rock.
 - (3) It would be a place for fishermen to spread their nets (Ezek 26:3-14).
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar led a 13 year siege and destroyed the mainland cities. Tyrians fled to an island a half-mile off shore (332 BC). Alexander invaded it by tearing down ruins to construct a bridge out to the island which fulfilled Ezek 26:12.
 - e. It was completely destroyed in the 13th century by Moslems who took it from the crusaders.
 - f. Today, tourists watch fishermen dry nets on the barren rocks.
3. Edom (the Edomites) were polytheists and persecutors of Israelites (Isa 34:5-12; Amos 1:11,12; Ezek 25:14).
- a. They were over-run by Jewish Maccabean forces, 164 BC and then in 12 B.C.
 - b. By A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites disappeared and the land of Edom is a devastated ruin.
4. Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire.
- a. God gave them a chance to repent through the preaching of Jonah.
 - b. But they soon returned to their brutal and murderous practices.
 - c. In the seventh century B.C. God prophesied against the city (Nahum 1:1-8; 2:3-6; 3:7; Zephaniah 2:13-15).
 - d. In 612 B.C. the Babylonian and Median forces diverted the Tigris River and caused a flood to literally dissolve the buildings and walls (Nahum 2:6).
- B. Some fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ — the Messiah:

1. Old Testament predictions concerning the Messiah begin in Genesis 3:15.
2. Jesus made predictions:
 - a. Announced His crucifixion three years before it happened (Jn 3:14).
 - b. Declared His resurrection three years ahead of time (Jn 2:19,21).
 - c. Foretold the complete destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Mt 24:2).
- C. Fulfilled prophecy does not prove the divine inspiration of scripture, but it does provide undeniable evidence that the Bible is a supernatural book, written with more than human knowledge.

X. Practical lessons:

- A. God's tender heart is severely hurt when the saints have forgotten the vows of their first days.
- B. Genuine repentance must precede the giving of God's blessings in individual lives.
- C. True religion is an inward, spiritual, genuine response of the heart to the righteous God.
- D. Religion may be tested by its results in producing the right sort of conduct and attitudes.
- E. Sin cannot triumph, for God must have the ultimate victory.
- F. Each man stands alone before a righteous God and must be judged as an individual soul.
- G. The minister who leans most heavily on God and His word is the one who knows the deeper truths of God.
- H. Sin always results in ruin. Judgment is inevitable, automatic and eternal.

**SOME THOUGHTS ON
WHETHER THE PROPHECY IN ISAIAH 7:14 WAS FULFILLED ONCE OR TWICE
Charlie DiPalma**

I. This is obviously a very challenging verse of prophecy!

- A. There is a great deal of controversy over whether there was only one fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (the virgin birth of Jesus) or if there were two fulfillments (one in Isaiah's time and the other in the birth of Jesus).
- B. Most of the controversy seems to stem from the meaning of the Hebrew word 'almah translated "virgin" by the KJV, ASV, NKJV, NASB and other versions.
- C. A review of various Hebrew language reference works reveals that there are many different beliefs concerning the meaning of this word.
- D. Some claim that the word always means a woman who has not had intimate physical relations with a man. Others claim that the word means an unmarried or even a married woman, with no indication as to whether she has been intimate with a man.
- E. Those who believe that there were two fulfillments of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 normally contend that the word 'almah means a young woman of marriageable age who was either married or unmarried at the time of the prophecy and had this son later by normal means.
- F. Thus, they believe that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled by the birth of some unknown son in Isaiah's time and then later by Jesus.
- G. After much careful and prayerful study of the passages where this Hebrew word is used, we do not believe that anyone can say with certainty that the word 'almah ALWAYS means a woman who has never known a man intimately.
- H. However, we believe that the question is not whether that word always has that meaning.
- I. Instead, the relevant question is what does 'almah mean in Isaiah 7:14?

II. To strive to answer this question, let's begin with Isaiah 7:14.

- A. First of all, Isaiah said that the Lord would give a sign.
 - 1. That sign would be to the, "house of David" (:13).

2. Although the word translated “sign” does not necessarily mean a miraculous sign, the context makes it clear that the Lord was talking about a miraculous sign.
 3. More specifically, Isaiah challenged Ahaz to ask for a sign from the Lord, “...either in the depth or in the height above” (:11).
 4. Clearly, Isaiah was asking Ahaz to name some miraculous sign that he wanted the Lord to provide to confirm Isaiah’s assurance that they did not have to worry about the threat of Rezin and Pekah.
 5. It is thus only reasonable to conclude that when we get to verse 14 and the Lord promises a sign for the house of David, He is promising a miraculous sign.
 6. What was that sign?
- B. The Lord’s spokesman said the sign was that the virgin would conceive and bear a son.
1. As mentioned above, there is a wide spectrum of beliefs concerning the meaning of the Hebrew word ‘almah.
 2. Based upon our study, we believe that Edward J. Young has done the best job of documenting the meaning of this word which fits its use in the Bible {The Book of Isaiah Vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), pp 287ff}.
 3. He states that the word was used to refer to a young, unmarried woman.
 4. Mr. Young also points out that in Ugaritic, that word is never used of a married woman.
 5. That definition certainly fits the use of the word ‘almah in its seven occurrences in the Old Testament (Gen 24:43; Ex 2:8; Psa 68:25; Prov 30: 19; SofS 1:3; 6:8; Isa 7:14).
 6. It is significant to note that the reference in Genesis 24:43 was to Rebekah, who was clearly a virgin since, “...no man had known her” (Gen 24: 16).
 7. So we see that although the word ‘almah may not have always referred to a woman who had not known a man intimately, it could be used in that sense, as it was in Rebekah’s case.

8. Combining all of that information, the Lord was saying that a young, unmarried woman would conceive and bear a son.
9. Given this information from God, it seems that there are only three possibilities:
 - a. This young, unmarried woman could have been a promiscuous woman.
 - (1) If that were the case, what kind of sign would it be for her to conceive and bear a son?
 - b. This young woman could have been unmarried when God revealed the prophecy through Isaiah, but she married later and gave birth to this son.
 - (1) Again, what kind of sign would it have been for such a woman to conceive and bear a son?
 - (2) And how could such a woman be identified and distinguished from all other young women in Judah?
 - (3) Why is she not identified clearly later in the book of Isaiah?
 - c. Or, she could have been a good, pure unmarried woman.
 - (1) For such a lady to conceive and bear a son would indeed be a sign, a miraculous event!
 - (2) This would indeed be a virgin birth, no matter whether the word 'almah always means a pure virgin or not.
 - (3) But how many virgin births have occurred in the history of man?
- C. Furthermore, Isaiah referred to this woman as "the virgin" (emphasis supplied).
 1. It appears clear that in using such language, God's spokesman was referring to one particular woman, not two or more.
 2. Since we know that Matthew, being moved by the Holy Spirit, applied this prophecy to Mary, this would seem to exclude the

possibility that there was also a fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah's time.

- D. In the last part of verse 14, we learn that the virgin would call the son Immanuel.
1. We know and the people of Judah knew that this name means, "God with us."
 2. We realize that not even in Jesus' case was this name actually given to Him.
 3. Thus, we understand that we can not legitimately demand to know if there was a son born in Isaiah's time who was actually called Immanuel.
 4. However, we do believe that in using this name, God was telling us something very important about the son to be born of the virgin.
 5. To the Hebrew, the name represented more than a designation by which someone was called.
 6. The name was even more significant because it represented the character, nature or some other significant factor about the person.
 7. For example, we are familiar with the instances when God changed Abram's name to Abraham because it meant father of multitudes (Gen 17:5), as well as when He changed Jacob's name to Israel which meant Prince of God because he had wrestled with God (Gen 32:38).
 8. As noted above, the name Immanuel means, "God with us."
 9. Thus, in some special way, this son who would be born of the virgin would be God present with mankind.
 10. That is, this son would be deity!
 11. Could that possibly apply to anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ?
 12. We do not believe that it could!
 13. Thus, it does not seem reasonable that this prophecy could be applied to anyone other than Jesus.

14. In addition, just two chapters later, God's spokesman makes reference to a child being born, a son being given (9:6,7).
 15. Could this be a reference to the son to be born of the virgin, as prophesied in 7:14?
 16. We believe it is!
 17. Of course, Isaiah went on to say that this son's name would be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.
 18. Again, it is clear that this son would not literally have all of these names.
 19. Instead, this was a description of the son, the child who would be given.
 20. More specifically, this was a description of his characteristics and attributes.
 21. Furthermore, this son would rule over and govern his kingdom upon the throne of David.
 22. Can there be any doubt that God's prophet was referring to the Messiah, the Mighty God?!
 23. Even the Jews accepted 9:6,7 as a prophecy concerning the Messiah.
 24. Thus, if they were thinking in God's way, Judah could and should have made the connection between the son of the virgin in 7:14 and the son in 9:6,7.
 25. We know that 9:6,7 was a prophecy concerning Jesus the Christ.
 26. And we know that no other son could have the characteristics and attributes described in 9:6,7.
 27. To us, this is further confirmation of the fact that the prophecy in 7:14 only applied to one person - Jesus the Christ!
- E. But some point out that the name Immanuel is found in Isaiah 8:8.

1. They allege that this means that there must have been a son named Immanuel who was born in Isaiah's time as the initial fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.
2. But please read Isaiah 8:8.
3. The Immanuel mentioned in that verse is the owner of the land of Judah!
4. This is a clear reference to the Lord, not to any child who was born in Isaiah's time!
5. This is further confirmation of the fact that the Immanuel of 7:14 was the Lord Jesus Christ, not some son born in the days when Isaiah was prophesying for the Lord!

III. Next, let's turn to Matthew 1:18-25.

- A. To any who believe the Bible is the word of God, there is no doubt that Matthew applied the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 to the virgin birth of Jesus.
- B. Surely, there never has been a set of circumstances which duplicates those which led up to the birth of our Savior by Mary, who had not known a man intimately.
- C. And God said through His inspired spokesman Matthew that the virgin birth of Jesus was, "...done so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us'" (Mt 1:22,23).
- D. Does that not give us an inspired commentary on what the word 'almah means, at least as used in Isaiah 7:14?
- E. When we try to assign some other meaning of that word as used in Isaiah 7:14, are we not "flying in the face" of what God tells us in Matthew 1:18-25?
- F. Are we not placing more confidence in what some uninspired "language experts" say than what God's inspired prophet recorded?
- G. We have seen from the example of Rebekah in the Bible that the word 'almah CAN refer to one who is a virgin, that is, one who has not known a man intimately.

- H. Thus, the real issue is not what 'almah means in each passage where it is found, but what does it mean in Isaiah 7:14?
- I. The only INSPIRED answer which we have to that question is that in Isaiah 7:14, God used it to refer to Mary, the woman who had never known a man intimately, and who was with child by the Holy Spirit.

IV. Some have made the point that there is a special significance to the way Matthew used the Greek word pleroo which is translated "fulfilled" in Matthew 1:22.

- A. It is said that Matthew used this word thirteen times in his account of the Gospel with reference to prophecies being fulfilled and that in every one of those uses, the reference was to a dual-fulfillment prophecy.
- B. It is argued that since Matthew always used pleroo to refer to dual fulfillment prophecies, then he must have done so in Matthew 1:22 when he referred to Isaiah 7:14.
- C. Thus, the argument is made that Isaiah 7:14 must have been a dual fulfillment prophecy, fulfilled once in Isaiah's time and once in the birth of Jesus.
- D. With all love and due respect for those who make this argument, let's analyze it carefully.
- E. There are indeed thirteen occurrences of the word pleroo with reference to fulfilled prophecies in the book of Matthew.
- F. That word is found in 1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; and 27:9,35.
- G. Please notice the context of each of those verses and the prophecies to which the Holy Spirit moved Matthew to refer:
 - 1. Matthew 1:22.
 - a. This is the reference to Isaiah 7:14.
 - 2. Matthew 2:15,17,23.
 - a. These refer to Hosea 11:1, Jeremiah 31:15 and Judges 13:5-7 which are clearly dual-fulfillment prophecies.
 - 3. Matthew 4:14.

- a. This is a reference to Isaiah 9:1,2.
 - b. By inspiration, Matthew applied this prophecy to Jesus.
 - c. In the context of Isaiah chapter 9, there is no other apparent fulfillment of this prophecy.
 - d. In fact, in this same context (9:6,7), we find the Messianic prophecy which could only be fulfilled by Jesus the Christ!
 - e. Thus, the evidence suggests that this is not a dual fulfillment prophecy!
4. Matthew 8:17.
- a. This is a reference to Isaiah 53:4.
 - b. Clearly, there never has been, nor will there ever be, any other fulfillment of Isaiah 53 than the Lord Jesus Christ!
 - c. Matthew's use of pleroo in this verse negates the position that he always used this word to refer to dual-fulfillment prophecies!
5. Matthew 12:17.
- a. This is a quotation of Isaiah 42:1-4, the first of several "servant" passages in Isaiah.
 - b. We recognize that the Lord's prophet Isaiah used the term "servant" to refer to the nation of Israel occasionally, e.g., Isaiah 41:8 and 44:1.
 - c. We also acknowledge that he used the word "servant" to refer to Israel in this chapter (42:19).
 - d. However, it is also obvious that the Lord moved Isaiah to use that word to refer to the coming Messiah in passages where it is absolutely clear that the only reference was to the Messiah.
 - e. Isaiah 52:12-53:12 is a prime example of the use of the word "servant" to refer to the Messiah and ONLY to Him.

- f. Careful study of Isaiah 42:1-4 reveals that this is another example of Isaiah's use of the word "servant" in a way that could only apply to the Messiah.
 - g. For example, this servant is one in whom the Lord delights; one upon whom the Lord would place His Spirit; one who would bring forth justice to the Gentiles; one who would not fail until he established justice in the earth; and one from whom the coastlands would wait for his law.
 - h. Can this apply to anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - i. But what about the use of "servant" in this very same chapter (42: 19)?
 - j. Does God's use of the word "servant" in verses 1-4 refer to the Messiah as one fulfillment of this prophecy and then His use of "servant" in verse 19 refers to Israel as another fulfillment of this same prophecy, thus resulting in a dual fulfillment?
 - k. The answer to this question is, "No!"
 - l. God was indeed talking about two different servants.
 - m. However, the first servant is clearly Jesus as the Messiah and the only fulfillment of verses 1-4.
 - n. There is no doubt that the second servant mentioned in verses 18-20 was Israel.
 - o. However, Israel was NOT the fulfillment of the prophecy given in verses 1-4.
 - p. Instead, God describes them as deaf, blind and disobedient, a far cry from the servant in verses 1-4 in whom the Lord delighted!
 - q. Thus, this is another case where Matthew used the word pleroo to refer to a prophecy which was fulfilled only once in the person of the Savior!
6. Matthew 13:35.
- a. This is a reference to Psalms 78:2.

- b. We know of no one besides the Lord Jesus who fulfilled this prophecy!
- 7. Matthew 21:4.
 - a. This is a quotation from Zechariah 9:9.
 - b. This is clearly a Messianic prophecy which applied to the Lord Jesus Christ alone!
- 8. Matthew 26:54,56.
 - a. In these two verses, Matthew used the word pleroo to refer to unnamed prophecies.
 - b. How can we safely say that these are dual-fulfillment prophecies, when we do not even know exactly what prophecies are referred to?
- 9. Matthew 27:9.
 - a. This is a reference to Zechariah 11:12,13, as well as apparent references to Jeremiah 18:2,3 and Jeremiah 32:6-9.
 - b. If this refers to anyone besides Jesus, who could it be?
 - c. It does not appear that anyone can say with certainty that this was a dual-fulfillment prophecy!
 - d. On the other hand, we can say with certainty that this prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus because an inspired apostle of Christ applied it to Him!
- 10. Matthew 27:35.
 - a. This is a quotation from Psalms 22:18.
 - b. Who else could this have applied to other than the Lord Jesus?
- H. In summary then, we have examined twelve of the thirteen uses of the word pleroo to refer to fulfilled prophecies in the book of Matthew.
 - 1. We did not analyze Matthew 1:22 because that passage is the one under consideration.

2. Please remember that the validity of the position being reviewed depends upon the accuracy of the claim that every time Matthew used this word, he used it to refer to a dual-fulfillment prophecy.
3. In sharp contrast, our study has revealed that we can only say with certainty that the word pleroo is used to refer to a dual-fulfillment prophecy in just 3 of those verses!
4. In the other nine occurrences, it is either clear that the word pleroo does not refer to a dual-fulfillment prophecy or there is considerable doubt that it is used to refer to more than one fulfillment.
5. From this careful study of the use of the word pleroo it is obvious that this word does not always refer to a dual-fulfillment prophecy.
6. Thus, the argument that Matthew's quotation of and reference to Isaiah 7:14 with the word pleroo automatically meant that it was a dual-fulfillment prophecy is seen to be invalid!
7. This is one more indication that the belief that Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled twice is not the proper understanding of that verse and Matthew's use of it.

V. When the understanding that Jesus was the only fulfillment of this prophecy is presented, it is often asked how the birth of Jesus 700 years later could be a sign to Ahaz.

- A. First of all, it does not appear that the sign was given to Ahaz.
 1. He had rejected Isaiah's offer for the Lord to give him a sign.
 2. He had shown by his stubborn attitude that he was not going to accept any such sign from the Lord.
 3. The sign was actually given to the "house of David" (:13), to "you" (plural) (:14).
 4. Thus, the sign was given to Judah, not just to the stubborn king.
- B. Second, the Lord told those people that within the space of time between when the son was born to the virgin (whenever that son was born) and before he could discern good and evil, the threat from Rezin and Pekah would disappear (Isa 7:15, 16).

1. That fact would assure those who believed what the Lord said through Isaiah that they should not be concerned about that threat.
 2. The exact time when the son would be born of the virgin was not important.
 3. What was important was the length of time from when the son was born to the time before he knew the difference between good and evil.
 4. In that length of time, a relatively few years, the threat from Rezin and Pekah would be removed.
- C. Third, the birth of the Messiah to the virgin at some time in the distant future would be a sign which would be significant to those who truly believed in and trusted God.
1. The Jews knew that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah, from the lineage of David.
 2. They could and should have known that the son to be born of the virgin would be the Mighty God, the ruler upon the throne of David and over his kingdom (7:14 with 9:6,7).
 3. Thus, if they were thinking God's way, then they could conclude that when this Messianic Son was born sometime in the future, the house of David would still be in existence!
 4. Thus, the house of David and Judah would survive the current threat from Rezin and Pekah!
- D. In those ways, the birth of the son to the virgin at some distant date would serve as a sign to those who truly believed in and trusted the Lord, whether Ahaz accepted it or not!

VI. In conclusion, we believe there were double-fulfillment prophecies and that Matthew makes reference to several of them.

- A. However, we do not believe that the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 was one of those double-fulfillment prophecies for the reasons summarized below:
1. The birth of the child would be a "sign," with the context indicating a miraculous sign (:11-14).

2. According to the definition of 'almah used by Edward J. Young, which seems to be consistent with its use in this context and the rest of the Old Testament, the virgin would be a good, unmarried woman.
 - a. For such a woman to conceive and bear a son would indeed be a miracle which has only occurred once in the history of man.
 3. Isaiah referred to, "the virgin," indicating one particular woman, not two or more.
 - a. Matthew, by inspiration, said the virgin was Mary, not some woman in Isaiah's time.
 4. The son would be one who could legitimately be described as Immanuel, God with us.
 - a. That is, this son would be deity!
 - b. Indeed, this Immanuel would own the land of Judah (8:8).
 - c. This is consistent with the fact that just one chapter later, Isaiah referred to a child being born, a son being given (9:6,7), and this son would be Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace, that is, he would be deity.
 - d. Surely the son born of the virgin was the same as this son and these prophecies could only be fulfilled by Jesus the Christ!
 5. In the only inspired commentary on the use of the word 'almah in Isaiah 7:14, Matthew tells us that Jesus being born of Mary, who was clearly a virgin, was the fulfillment of that prophecy.
 6. Matthew did not always use the Greek word pleroo which is translated "fulfilled", to refer to dual-fulfillment prophecies.
 - a. Instead, by the inspiration of God, he used it to refer to prophecies which were only fulfilled once as well as dual-fulfillment prophecies.
- B. On the basis of all of that evidence, we believe that the wiser and safer course of action is to accept the inspired interpretation which Matthew gave to Isaiah's prophecy as the only fulfillment of that prophecy.

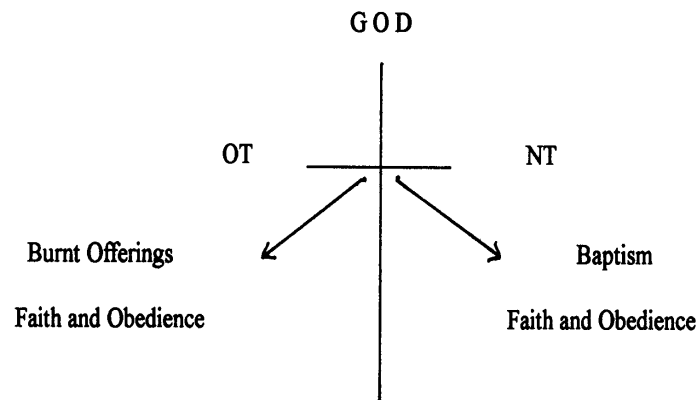
OLD TESTAMENT FORGIVENESS OF SINS (Including New Testament Times Prior To The Kingdom)

Old Testament Passages:

Isa 44:22
Num 14:18-20
2 Chron 7:14
Isa 43:25
Lk 5:18-26
Mk 2:10,11
Rom 3:23-26

Lev 16:30
2 Sam 12:13
Psa 32:5
Psa 103:2,3
Isa 33:24
Jer 36:3
Mt 6:12

Ex 34:9
Isa 6:7
Psa 86:5
Psa 130:4
Isa 55:7
Mt 9:2-8
Lk 18:14



God, being omniscient, saw the cross in time. Therefore, he forgave sins prior to the cross as well as after the cross. The fact that Christ's blood is the agent does not alter when in time God actually forgave the sin. Cf. Isa 46:10.

God's knowledge is:

Distinct -	It is free from vagueness or confusion.
Immediate -	It does not come by senses or imagination.
Eternal -	It is comprehended in one timeless act of the Divine mind.
True -	It corresponds to the reality of all things.
Simultaneous -	It does not come by successive observation or reasoning.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (JEHOVAH) THE LOGOS PRIOR TO THE INCARNATION

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Logos was God, i.e., divine, one nature with the Father - Jn 1:1.
- B. Since the Logos was active in creation, we can hardly suppose that He would drop entirely out of the picture for four thousand years. Or that He would be inactive in the affairs of this world.
- C. The fact that Jesus was the Angel of Jehovah is not a subject within the realm of speculation. Though you may not agree with my use of certain passages of scripture, I am sure you will agree, from the amount of scripture used, that the position taken is scriptural and not a mere speculation based upon a few isolated and/or ambiguous statements.

See ISBE - VOL. I, p. 133; Strong, p. 319.

II. THE EXPRESSION “ANGEL OF JEHOVAH” (“THE LORD”) AS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS HIMSELF JEHOVAH; HE IS GOD; HE IS DIVINE.

- A. His experiences with Abraham and Hagar.
 - 1. Hagar called the ANGEL OF THE LORD (JEHOVAH), “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.” And Moses, the writer, said, “She called the name of the Lord who spoke to her.” So Moses called this person Jehovah and the ANGEL OF JEHOVAH - Gen 16:7-13.

Gen 16:10 “I will” - not an angel but The Angel-Christ. Cf: Gen 21:17 - God saying what the Angel said as His own words.
 - 2. Abraham stood before the Lord (JHWH - Jehovah) and talked with Him (Gen 18:1). Three men appeared before Abraham (Gen 18:2). The men went on but the Lord remained (Gen 18:22). Only two of the three men reached Sodom (Gen 19:1). The one to whom Abraham talked is called Lord (JHWH - Jehovah) (vv. 13,17,20,22).
 - a. Abraham talked with the Angel of the Lord who called Himself Lord and made promises only God can make - Gen 22:11-18.

22:1 = God.

22:11 = Angel.

22:15 = Angel.

- b. Here is the renewal of the same promise made by Jehovah - Gen 12: 1ff. Compare 22:17,18 specifically with 12:2,3.

3. Comments:

- a. "Gen 12:7 Was this a manifestation of the Son of God, a Theophania, in some measure anticipating the incarnation? ... The affirmative of the fourth opinion was held by the great majority of the fathers from the very first ... The fact that the name 'Angel of the Lord' is sometimes used of a created angel is not proof enough that it may not also be used of him who is called 'The Angel of Mighty Counsel' (Isa 9:6, Septuagint Translation) and 'the Angel of the covenant' (Mal. 3:1); and the apparent identification of the Angel of God with God himself in very many passages...leads markedly to the conclusion that God spoke to men by an Angel or Messenger who himself was God."
- b. Gen 18:13. "Here the speaker is distinctly called 'Jehovah.' And it seems much more reasonable that there was a Theophania of the Son of God, than that a created angel was impersonating God and speaking in his name."
- c. Verse 22. "The two created angels went on to Sodom (see 19:1), but 'Abraham stood yet before the Lord,' stood yet in the presence of the third Being who was not a created angel, but the eternal word of God, 'the Angel of Mighty Counsel' (the Messenger of the Covenant; Bible Commentary - Speaker's Commentary).

B. His experience with Jacob:

- 1. The God of Jacob revealed to him - Gen 28:12-16; Gen 35:7.
- 2. The Angel of God was the God of Bethel - Gen 31:11-13.
Cf: 28:13
- 3. Jacob wrestled with the Angel.

- a. He is called a man - Gen 32:24.
 - b. He is called God - Gen 32:28,30; Gen 35:7. See Strong, p. 318.
 - c. He is called the Angel - Hos 12:3-5.
4. Jacob calls Him "God Almighty" and "the Angel" - Gen 48:3,15,16.
- a. God = the Angel (a memorial name). Cf: Gen 28:13; 48:3; Hos 12: 2-5; Isa 42:1-8.
 - b. Here Jesus is called God (or Lord) Almighty - Jehovah's Witnesses say this phrase is never used of Jesus in the Bible.

Summary to this point: Jesus = Angel of the Lord = Angel of Jehovah = God Almighty = God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob = Angel of God.

C. His experience with Moses and the Israelites:

- 1. In the burning bush - Ex 3:2-15:
 - a. The Angel of the Lord in verse 2.
 - b. Lord and God in verse 4.
 - c. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in verse 6,15.
 - d. I AM WHO I AM in verse 14.
 - e. Stephen's view of the matter - Acts 7:30-34,35,38.
 - f. No angel ever had anyone take off their shoes because he (the angel) made the ground holy!
- 2. In deliverance from Egypt:
 - a. God's Angel promised to lead Israel - Ex 23:20.
 - b. He had pardoning power - v. 21. He is God!
 - c. The name of Jehovah was in Him - v. 21; Psa 83:18.

- d. No creatures allowed to wear name of Jehovah - Isa 42:8; 48:11.
- e. Promise of the Angel's presence withdrawn - Ex 32:34-33:16.
 - (1) The Jehovah that swore to give the land to the fathers said He would send an angel - 33:2; Gen 22:15-18.
 - (2) He said, "I will not go up in your midst" - 33:3.
 - (3) The people mourned when they heard this - v. 4.
 - (4) When Moses spoke face to face with Jehovah, he prevailed and Jehovah promised, "My presence will go" - v. 14.
- f. Isaiah called Him the Angel of His Presence - Isa 63:9; Deut 4:37.
- g. Stephen's comment on the matter - Acts 7:38.
- h. Ex 13:21; 14:19:
 - (1) Angel of the Lord (JHWH) - Ex 3:2.
 - (2) Angel of My Presence - Ex 33:14.
 - (3) Angel of the covenant - Acts 7:38.
- i. Trinity in Old Testament - Isa 48:12-16.

D. His experience with Joshua:

- 1. He is called a man - Josh 5:13-15. No good angel accepts worship.
- 2. He calls Himself the Commander of the Lord's army. He accepts worship - 5:14,15.
- 3. Joshua removed his sandals in His holy presence - 5:15.
- 4. He is called Lord (JHWH) - 6:2.
- 5. The Angel of the Lord said - Jud 2:1-5:

- a. "I led you up from Egypt" - See Ex 20:2.
 - b. "I ... brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers" - See Gen 13:14,15; 15:17-21; Psa 105:8-11,42,45.
 - c. "I will not... break My covenant with them" - See Lev 26:44,45.
 - d. "The Lord your God will not drive out those nations (the Canaanites) from before you" - See Josh 23:12,13.
6. His experience with Manoah - Jud 13:8-24:
- The trinity is present here:
- Father - vs. 20.
 - Son - vs. 3, etc.
 - Holy Spirit - vs. 25.
7. Compare Hos 1:7 with 2 Kgs 19:35.
8. See Zech 12:8; 2:10,11; Hos 1:6,7.

III. COMMENTS.

- A. Josh 5:13. "The appearance was that of God manifested in the person of his Word...verse 14. The divine Person intimates that he, the Prince (as the Hebrew word 'sar' is rendered in Dan 10:13 and elsewhere), of the angels had come to lead Israel in the coming strife" (Bible Commentary).
- B. Josh 5:13. "It has been a very general opinion, both among the ancients and the moderns, that the person mentioned here was no other than the Lord Jesus in that form, which, in the fullness of time, he was actually to assume for the redemption of man. That the appearance was supernatural, is agreed on all hands; and as the name Jehovah is given him (chap. 6:2), and he received from Joshua divine adoration, we may presume that no created angel is intended" (Adam Clark).
- C. "God, as the Shepherd and King, conducts all things according to law and righteousness, having established over them his right Word, his only begotten Son, who is the Viceroy of the Great King, takes care of the ministers to this sacred flock. For it is somewhere said, Behold I am, and

I will send mine Angel before thy face to keep thee in the way” (Philo Judeaeus - Adam Clark).

- D. Cf: Isa 9:6 with Jehovah’s Witnesses’ doctrine, “The Mighty God.”

IV. JESUS CHRIST IS CALLED LORD (JEHOVAH).

- A. In prophecy, Psa 68:16-18,24 ...is applied in Eph 4:8.
- B. Isaiah’s vision, Isa 6:1-10 ...John applies it to Jesus - Jn 12:37-43.
- C. The Septuagint Translation (LXX) translated the Hebrew word for Jehovah by KURIOS, which means Lord. So all Messianic prophecies in which the word JEHOVAH appears prove that Jesus, the Messiah, is called Jehovah. KJV uses LORD for this translation in agreement with LXX.
- D. Isa 40:3ff ...is applied by Matthew to Jesus - Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3. Cf: Jn 1:23.
- E. Joel 2:32 ...is applied by both Peter and Paul to Jesus - Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13; Psa 102: 24-27 = God; Heb 1:10-12 = Jesus.

God = Jesus.

- F. An angel calls Him, “the Lord their God” - Lk 1:16,17.
- G. Isa 44:6 Cf: Rev 22:12,13.
- H. COMMENT:

“Thus, then, the title of ‘Jehovah’ and ‘Lord’ both prove the divinity of our Saviour; ‘for,’ as it is remarked by Dr. Waterland, ‘if Jehovah signify the eternal, immutable God, it is manifest that the name is INCOMMUNICABLE, since there is but one God; and, if the name be INCOMMUNICABLE, then Jehovah can signify nothing but that one God, to whom, and to whom only, it is applied. And if both these parts be true, and if it be true likewise, that this name is applied to Christ, the consequence is irresistible, that Christ is the same one God, not the same person, with the Father, to whom also the name Jehovah is attributed, but the same substance, the same BEING, in a word, the same Jehovah, thus revealed to be more persons than one” (Watson, Theological Institutes, Vol. I, p. 510).

V. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (JEHOVAH) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Angel of Jehovah Gave the Covenant at Sinai.
 - 1. He sent Moses - Ex 3:2-15; Acts 7:30-34.
 - 2. Spoke to Moses in Sinai - Acts 7:38.
 - 3. The Jehovah who wrote on tables of stone (Ex 31:18; 34:1) was the angel, in whom was God's name, who was promised to lead Israel (Ex 23:21; 33:34) and the Jehovah who made the covenant (Ex 34:27).
- B. The Jehovah who made the Old Covenant promised a New Covenant - Jer 31:31ff.
 - 1. Jesus took away the first covenant to establish the second - Heb 10: 9.
 - 2. Jesus found fault with the Old Covenant and made the New - Heb 8:8.
 - 3. The pronouns in Heb 8:4-14 prove Jesus to be the maker of both covenants.
- C. The Messenger of the covenant, who calls Himself Jehovah, was to follow John the Baptist - Mal 3:1.
 - 1. He was the Messenger of the covenant because He made it.
 - 2. He was the Lord of the temple because it was dedicated to Him - 1 Kgs 8:12-16.
 - 3. This prophecy in Mal 3:1 was applied to Jesus in Mk 1:1-3.
- D. Spirit of Christ spoke in the prophets - 1 Pet 1:11; Isa 63:10.
- E. Christ was the Rock which was with Israel - 1 Cor 10:4 Cf: Ex 14:19; 13:21.
- F. Christ was tempted (called Jehovah) - Deut 6:16; 1 Cor 10:9.
- G. Moses esteemed the reproaches of Christ above earthly riches - Heb 11: 26.

VI. THE WORK OF THE LOGOS PRIOR TO INCARNATION.

- A. Creation - Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2.
- B. Upholds all things - *Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; Jn 5:17.

* "In Him all things consist," means that Christ holds all things together. Albert Barnes says, "The meaning is that they are kept in their present state; their existence, order, and arrangement are continued by his power. If unsupported by him they would fall into disorder or sink back to nothing. If this be the proper interpretation, then it is the ascription to Christ of infinite power - for nothing less could be sufficient to uphold the universe; and of infinite wisdom, for this is needed to preserve the harmonious action of the suns and systems of which it is composed. None could do this but one who is divine; and hence we see the reason why he is represented as the image of the invisible God. He is the great and ever active agent by whom the perfections of God are made known" (Barnes Notes, Vol 7, pg. 250).

Cf Heb 1:3; 11:3; Psa 33:9; 148:5; Mt 8:26,27; Mk 1:34; Jn 5:28,29.

When we understand this it is no surprise that Christ's gospel is God's power to save lost souls (Rom 1:16) and the spiritually dead, who hear and obey the voice of God's Son, shall live (Jn 5:25)!!

- C. Gave light to all men - Jn 1:4,7-9.
- D. The God and companion of God's people in all ages as proved above.

**FULLNESS OF TIME
GALATIANS 4:4**

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

ONE MAJOR WORLD POWER
A PERIOD OF PEACE
GOOD ROADS
SAFE SEAS AND ROADS
EXTENSIVE TRAVEL
WORLD WIDE COMMERCE
AN EXACT LANGUAGE (GREEK) KNOWN & USED THROUGHOUT THE
WORLD

FULLNESS OF TIME - SOCIAL

SLAVERY
IMMORALITY
DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE
DEBASEMENT OF WOMEN
FREQUENT DIVORCES
MANY SUICIDES

**FULLNESS OF TIME - RELIGIOUS
GENTILE**

PAGAN RELIGIONS DID NOT RELATE MORALITY WITH RELIGION.
THEY HAD MANY VARIETIES OF SUPERSTITIOUS RELIGIONS.
MAN WAS LOOKING FOR SALVATION BUT NONE OF THEIR
MAN-MADE RELIGIONS COULD SATISFY THIS LONGING.
GOD HAD SHOWN THE WORLD THAT MAN LEFT TO HIMSELF
COULD NOT PROVIDE FOR NOR EARN HIS SALVATION.

**FULLNESS OF TIME - RELIGIOUS
JEWISH**

THE LAW THAT GOD GAVE TO THE JEWS AT SINAI SHOWED SIN TO BE
SIN.
IT ALSO SHOWED THAT MAN IS INCAPABLE OF SAVING HIMSELF.
BY THE TIME CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD JEWISH TRADITION WAS
MORE IMPORTANT TO THE JEWS THAN THE LAW ITSELF.
BY GIVING THE JEWS A REVEALED CODE OF CONDUCT
AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN GOD HAD SHOWN THAT MAN
COULD NOT ATTAIN SALVATION
BY HIS OWN EFFORTS.

FULLNESS OF TIME - RELIGIOUS - CONCLUDED

THROUGH THE GENTILES GOD HAD SHOWN ALL THE WORLD
THAT MAN'S EFFORTS TO PROVIDE HIS OWN SALVATION ALWAYS
ENDS IN FAILURE.

THROUGH THE JEWS GOD HAD SHOWN THAT
MAN WAS NOT CAPABLE OF KEEPING A REVEALED RELIGION
(FROM HIM) BASED ON HUMAN EFFORT.

THEREFORE
BOTH THE GENTILES AND THE JEWS
NEEDED A SAVIOR!

THE WORLD WAS READY:

POLITICALLY,
ECONOMICALLY,
SOCIALY AND
RELIGIOUSLY!

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JESUS

I. The “measure” of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Being a person, the Holy Spirit is not given by measure (Jn 3:34). Measure = sparingly (Thayer); extent, degree, quantity (Webster).
- B. The measure, if we must use that expression, is in what the Holy Spirit enables one to do.
- C. It is not how much of the Holy Spirit one has, but how much the Holy Spirit will enable one to do.

II. The Holy Spirit has always been given to people to enable them to do whatever they were commissioned or expected by God to do.

- A. Of Bezalel it is said, “And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold,” etc. (Ex 31:1-11).
- B. Of the seventy elders God said, “I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same on them... And it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied” (Num 11:17,25).
- C. Philip compared with the Apostles — Acts 8:12-19.

John worked no miracles — Jn 10:41.

III. Jesus’ cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

- A. Predicted by the Holy Spirit — 1 Pet 1:10; Mt 22:43,44.
- B. Conceived by the Holy Spirit — Mt 1:18; Lk 1:35.
- C. Anointed by the Holy Spirit — Mt 3:16,17; Jn 1:32,33; Acts 10:36-38.
- D. Rejoiced in the Holy Spirit — Lk 10:21.
- E. Led by the Holy Spirit — Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:14.
- F. Worked miracles by the Holy Spirit — Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20. See Jn 3:34.
- G. Offered Himself by the Holy Spirit — Heb 9:14.
- H. Gave the great commission by the Holy Spirit — Acts 1:1,2 cf. Mt 28:19.

- I. Events of Pentecost by the Holy Spirit — Acts 2:33.
- J. Quickened by the Spirit — 1 Pet 3:18.

Conclusion:

Jesus “emptied” Himself of exercising His attributes as deity (Phil 2:7) and relied upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish His miraculous works while here on earth. But, Jesus was not given more of the Spirit than anyone else (Isa 42:1-4); He was commissioned to do more, therefore the Holy Spirit aided Him more.

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