

**GOD'S MESSAGES
BIBLE
COMMENTARY
SERIES**

VOLUME 14

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).

**COMMENTARY
ON THE BOOK
OF
ISAIAH**

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Murfreesboro, Tenn.

2003



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**The Book Of
ISAIAH**





Introduction To Isaiah

Historical Background for the Book:

Isaiah lived toward the end of a time when Israel had enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. During the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, threats from neighboring nations had been less serious than at many other periods. Jeroboam in Israel, and Uzziah in Judah, had the good fortune to lead a people who were affluent.

This changed drastically when Assyria to the north and Egypt to the south of the land of Canaan both vied for power and world domination. The prosperity God's people had enjoyed previously had led to moral depravity and there was more dependence upon man's ability to direct his own paths than to look to the Lord for guidance.

Greece and Rome had not yet matured to the point where they could challenge either Egypt or Assyria for dominance. This would come about later. It was to be another century before Babylon would play any major role in the competition for international power. Assyria seem to be the most threatening force to be reckoned with. If Israel had held a proper respect for the God of heaven, history could have taken a quite different direction. But they did not have such respect. They felt the need for dependence upon human wisdom rather than divine.

Israel in the north decided to make an alliance with Syria to protect themselves from the Assyrian forces. They asked Judah, in the south to join them in this

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alliance. Judah refused to join them. They then decided to force Judah's cooperation and Judah was attacked by Israel and Syria. This caused Judah to call for help from Assyria.

The result was that Assyria was enabled to conquer both Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel. Even Judah was forced to pay tribute to Assyria. In their march southward Assyria managed to reach the outskirts of the city of Jerusalem. God then intervened and some 185,000 Assyrians lost their lives. The Assyrian army then left Judah and returned to the north.

### **Social Conditions:**

There was practically no middle class in the time of Isaiah. The rich could oppress the poor whenever they chose to do so. Laziness, drunkenness and indifference were common attitudes.

Justice was nearly non-existent. The law was used for the purpose of abuse of the weak rather than protection of all. Poverty and misery were to be seen in every direction.

### **Religious Conditions:**

Israel was to have transformed others in the direction of God's righteousness. Instead of doing that, she had allowed herself to forsake Jehovah and become conformed to the idolatry and other sins which the heathen practiced. Baal and Moloch were worshipped by those who should have been taking the lead in persuading others to be honest and upright. Even some of the prophets of Israel had allowed themselves to become drunken.

Honesty and other ethical standards were shoved into





the background. The women became sensual and coarse. Family life decayed. The people turned to soothsayers and superstition. Religion had little to do with everyday life. How strange it is that mankind has such great difficulty in dealing with prosperity! Instead of thanking God for His provisions, we tend to give the credit to our own wisdom. Without the Lord there would be no wisdom!

## **Isaiah the Man:**

Isaiah was the son of Amoz. There is reason to believe that he was born into the higher levels of society since he seems to have had access to the royal court of the king. He actually served as a historian to the king.

Very early in his life he received a vision from the Lord which he never allowed himself to forget. It was the Lord who was to direct men's paths, not the lust for power and riches and pleasure. This understanding caused Isaiah to become a statesman of "faith."

1. He warned the people not to make alliance with Egypt.
2. Nor were they to ally themselves with Assyria.
3. They were to make God their helper.

There were three other prophets with whom Isaiah was very likely acquainted. First we have Micah who prophesied in the countryside while Isaiah spent more time in the court at Jerusalem. Then, in the northern kingdom, Amos and Hosea were pleading with the people to honor the will of Jehovah.

History from outside the Bible informs us that Isaiah was sawn apart with a wooden saw (Compare Hebrews 11:37).

## **The Nature of the Book:**

The book of Isaiah is strongly Messianic. It presents several phases of the life of our Saviour.

1. His birth
2. His divinity
3. His kingdom
4. His trials and suffering
5. His sacrificial death for sin.

There are a number of very outstanding chapters, including chapters 1, 6, 9, 11, 40, 49, 50, 53 and 55.

## **The Date of Writing:**

The book was probably written over many years of the life of the prophet. The very first verse speaks of the last year of the reign of Uzziah. Second Chronicles 32:32 says Isaiah wrote a history of the life of Hezekiah. Second Chronicles also says he recorded the death of Sennacherib, which occurred in 681 B.C. We know that Uzziah died in about 740 B.C., which means that Isaiah dealt with events some sixty years distant from one another.

## **A Brief Outline of the Book:**

1. There are prophecies of judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem.
2. There are prophecies of judgment against many nations, including: Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tyre.
3. A New Kingdom to be Established. God's people are to be victorious.
4. A Day of the Lord was to come.

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- 5. Salvation will come through a suffering Messiah.
- 6. Israel's enemies will be overthrown.

Chapter 1

Isa 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

This first chapter of the book of Isaiah presents a beautiful overview of the entire book. It points out the vast blessings which Jehovah has poured out upon His people. It then tells of their ingratitude and the fact that they have plunged themselves into spiritual adultery by adopting the idolatrous worship of the heathen false gods. It goes on to tell of the horrifying consequences of this path of action. It calls upon them to repent. Those who are willing to do so will be but a small remnant of the nation, but they will be the seed for a future harvest which will be more than worth the effort required to hear and obey.

Isaiah was the son of Amoz. We know very little of the latter. He may have been a man of prominence since it appears that Isaiah was comfortable in the company of the leaders of the nation.

It is difficult to determine just how many years Isaiah was used by the Lord as a prophet. There is reason to think it may have been in the neighborhood of sixty years. We cannot simply add the number of years which each of the kings listed here reigned. Some of their rulerships over-lapped. We do know that Isaiah exerted a powerful influence for several decades. In addition, we must say that his influence did not stop with his death. It continues on at the time of this present writer more than two thousand years after the coming of the Messiah which Isaiah predicted would arrive.

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**Isa 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.**

The message Isaiah delivered was not his own. It had been presented to him through visions he received from the Lord. It contains truth which must be respected as long as time continues. These truths must be heard and heeded wherever and whenever they are made known. It is most certainly true that the message Isaiah delivered was primarily directed to those living in pre-Christian times, but the focal point of his preaching was that God blesses those who submit to His will in grateful humility, and He will curse those who defy or ignore Him.

God has done more for men than our finite minds are capable of comprehending. He expects us to respond by making the proper use of the blessings and opportunities He has made available to us.

**Isa 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.**

Anyone who has been raised on a farm will immediately recognize the accuracy of the statement about the ox and the ass. We normally classify such creatures as “dumb animals.” These so called dumb animals know perfectly well who governs their lives. If cattle are scattered around in a field at feeding time, all that is necessary is for them to hear the voice of their owner calling for them to come to the barn for food. They will move toward the gate of the field and do not even have to be driven. They know the source of their good things.

If Israel did not accept the fact that her blessings

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came from the Lord of heaven and earth, they were the “dumb animals.” They had placed themselves in deadly danger by their ingratitude. Does the reader happen to recognize Israel’s attitude among the people who live in his own time and place?

Isa 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

We have a number of very blunt accusations here. The Bible often emphasizes a statement by repeating it in slight variations. This time it is not just one repetition. Israel is sinful. They are iniquitous. They are children of evildoers, or they bear children who become evildoers. They have forsaken God. They have turned their back on Him. He is angry with them!

Isa 1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

Can they not understand that the problems which they are suffering are the result of separating themselves from their Creator? They are spiritually sick from head to toe. Nor do they recognize that their illness can only be cured by accepting the medicine of the Great Physician. They have become so independent that they have attempted to find answers by either following their own way, or by attaching themselves to the vain idols of those who know not the Lord.

Isa 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and

bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

There are many symptoms of their spiritual disease. The Lord sees them as being covered with bruises, open wounds and sores which are filled with pus. Intelligent persons should know that such conditions needed immediate treatment. They had not demonstrated such wisdom. God's medicine had been spurned. As long as this was the case, the sickness would become increasingly unbearable.

Isa 1:7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

The northern territory of Israel had already been overrun by the Assyrian armies. Apparently those same forces had made excursions into Judah, and the city of Jerusalem was being targeted

What a picture we have here of suffering! Prisoners have been taken. Homes have been burned. Fields have been ransacked. About the only thing left was to be taken into captivity in the land of the invaders.

It is difficult to know just how much of that which was in place, and how much of it is a prediction of that which was to come at the hand of the Assyrians.

Isa 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

Watchmen were often assigned to keep guard over



crops which were ripe and nearly ready for the harvest. God declares that Israel would find herself in the position of a small cottage where such a watchman resided after the field had already been raided and the crop destroyed.

Cucumbers held a much more prestigious position in that part of the world than they would in that of the present day resident of the western nations. Cucumbers were very carefully cultivated as a refreshing food. They were grown in the midst of communities. Again, lodging places were constructed in the cucumber field to guard against thieves. In the case at hand, the thieves had already done their damage and there was not need to occupy the lodge.

Isa 1:9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

The “remnant” was a very important part of God’s plan for the future. There would be a small number of persons who remained faithful. From that small number, God would produce a new spiritual nation known as “Christians.” First, however, there would be a terrifying destruction which would leave but a fragment of the two or three million persons who once made up earthly Israel.

Isa 1:10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

Although the words of this verse appear on the surface to be addressed to the rulers of the cities of Sodom and

Gomorraah, they are more likely meant for the ears of the rulers and people of Israel who were acting as if they were citizens of those two wicked cities which God utterly destroyed.

It is not enough to hear the words and warnings of God in the sense of simply knowing they were uttered. Salvation can only come when the Word of the Lord is made a foundation for the thoughts, words and actions of those who have been exposed to His Word.

Isa 1:11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

To live a life dedicated to one's self and to sin, and then come before the Lord with sacrifices is only a mockery of His wisdom. Anyone of any day or time who pretends to believe in God, and then leaves the place of worship to live as if God is non-existent is placing himself or herself in danger of hell fire. Such behavior is complete folly.

Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Does the true worshipper appear before the Lord only because of habit, or because he feels he must do so? If so, his sacrifice will be rejected. God wants those who delight in His law to come before him. Surely one must be fearful of the consequences of failing to appear, but that is only the negative motivation. The positive motivation is in loving fellowship which inspires worship in spirit and understanding.

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**Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.**

That which is vain is empty and useless. The feasts and sacrifices of Israel were but an insult to God. May we add that such is just as true at any time. God willingly offered His Son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of those who would come to Him. He expects willing sacrifice on our part in return.

**Isa 1:14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.**

In present day language, we might say, “I am sick and tired of putting up with your insults. We should at least partially understand God’s attitude when we consider our own feelings as our children repeatedly go their own way, knowing full well that they are grieving us.

**Isa 1:15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.**

The Holy Scriptures often speak of lifting up holy hands to beseech the Lord’s blessings or to off Him our thanksgivings. When hands that are stained with sin are lifted up toward Him, He will turn a deaf ear to our words. Hands that have damaged others are not to be honored by the One who IS LOVE.

**Isa 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the**

**evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;**

What can men do to assure God's recognition of their uplifted hands? They must first wash those hands; then lift them up. When the evil has been removed, the ears of the Lord will be open to men's pleas.

**Isa 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.**

The self centered person should take the advice of verse seventeen very seriously. God has been rich toward us. By His very nature, He offers that which we cannot provide for ourselves. He expects similar attitudes on our part. Those who are in need are to be aided. This, of course does not apply to those who do not try. It applies to those who through no fault of their own find themselves in need. We sometimes say, "God helps those who help themselves." He expects us to follow the same guidelines.

**Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**

Religion is not limited to tradition and emotion. Religion is reasonable. If one will carefully and honestly sit down and weigh the evidence for the existence of God, the truth of the Bible and the reality of heaven and hell, he will find the weight of the evidence way over on the side of God and His Word.

Impure hands do not have to be lifted up to God. He

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has presented a means of cleansing the soul. Sins as red as blood can be washed away, leaving the hearts of men as white and pure as unstained snow, or bleached wool.

Isa 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

These next verses remind one of the words of Joshua when he said, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Those who desire the blessings of God must give Him both the heart and the hands. They must turn from evil and cleave unto that which is good. Only a foolish man would expect to be able to bite the hand that feeds him.

Isa 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

David faced Goliath with only a sling, a stone and the aid of the Lord. Without the aid of the Lord the lad would have been slain easily. David is not alone. Any man or woman who turns their back upon God has given up the battle before it begins. Satan's weapons are too powerful for the natural man to overcome. But when God is called into action on the part of one of His servants, the tide is turned drastically in favor of the one who is godly.

Isa 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

The faithful city is first of all, the city of Jerusalem, which had been the center for the worship of the Almighty. God acted as a husband to it. He expected it to be faithful to Him. In spite of His love for those of His city, those who had

received His love had loved sin more than they had loved Him. Their lives had become dominated by greed and love of self.

Isa 1:22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

The riches the people so desired were corrupted. Silver and gold are valued only when they are pure. God expects His followers to be pure.

When they make offerings of silver and gold, He despises those offerings. Pure grape juice is delicious. Diluted grape juice is less desirable than fresh water. The wine which His people were offering to Him in their feasts and Holy days was despicable to Him because those who offered it were diluted with sin.

Isa 1:23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

The leaders of the people are in a position to take advantage of those whom they are expected to serve. That was just what was happening to Israel. Bribes were commonplace. There were few who cared about others who were in need. Everything was focused upon self satisfaction. At the same time those self centered persons expected God to bless them. This would not happen.

Isa 1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

Who were these enemies of whom God said He would avenge Himself. Were they the Edomites, the Moabites or

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the Assyrians? Not this time. They were His own people. They were fighting against Him rather than for Him. This would result in dire consequences.

**Isa 1:25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:**

God was ready to purify His precious treasures. He would put His hand to the task and when it was completed, the impurities would have been removed. There would be but a remnant left, but that remnant would be precious in His sight because the pollution had been removed.

**Isa 1:26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.**

**Isa 1:27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.**

The evil judges who cared nothing for justice would be replaced by honest judges who would condemn the wicked and justify the righteous. Those who advised evil actions by the people would be replaced by others who would promote godly behavior. Jerusalem would once again be recognized as a faithful city.

**Isa 1:28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.**

This time the transgressor may be the one who invades God's faithful city. He will be punished for his transgression and the misery he brings upon God's faithful. He will be joined by the sinners among God's people who have allied themselves with the enemy.

**Isa 1:29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.**

The oaks and the gardens which they have desired were places where idols were worshiped. The time would come when those who were left of His faithful would be ashamed of the day in which they bowed before those vain statues which had no eyes, no ears and no heart.

**Isa 1:30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.**

Those who persisted in worshipping these vanities would perish just as surely as an oak whose leaves had become shriveled and brown, or perhaps had even fallen to the ground. The pools which fed the gardens where the worship of the idols took place would dry up and the gardens would become dry and barren.

This would be true of the literal oaks and gardens. It would also be true of the people who bent the knee before them.

**Isa 1:31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.**

The idols which the unfaithful considered to be strong would be shown to be no more than kindling. Those who made such idols would be like the sparks which set off the burning of the kindling. Both those who worshipped the idols, and those who made them would burn together. Destruction was to be their fate.



## *Chapter 2*

### **Isa 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.**

Normally we do not see words. We hear them. What then does this first verse mean when it declares that Isaiah “saw” the word? It is used in the same manner we use when we say “I see what you mean.” Isaiah, through the inspiration of God, understood certain truths which God revealed to him concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

The purpose of identifying Isaiah’s father is merely to make certain that he is not confused with some other person called Isaiah. Today, we use last names in much the same way.

### **Isa 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.**

Some very important events are to take place in the “last days.” At what point in time are we to look for these “last days?” Are they the last days of the prophet himself? Are they the last days of the nation of Israel? Are they the last days of mankind in general? There are those who would contend for each of these positions.

Let us turn to the words of Daniel and of Peter for our answer. In the time of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which he asked Daniel to interpret for him. The king had had a dream in which he saw an image made of four different substances. Daniel, as a prophet inspired of God, told him the four portions of the image represented

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four great empires. They were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires. Daniel said that in the latter days God would set up a kingdom which would endure, while those previous would pass away. According to Daniel, the “latter days” were those of the Roman empire.

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter made reference to Joel 2:28 as days in which those things which Samuel and the prophets of earlier times had spoken when they revealed that in days “afterward” God would pour out His Spirit on servants and handmaidens and they would prophesy.

Christ came during the days of the Roman empire, and the Spirit was poured out in the days of Peter and the other inspired apostles. Dear friends, we live in the ‘last days’, in the “latter days” and in the days “afterward.” The Christian dispensation is the last days.

Isa 2:3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

In the scriptures, a mountain may refer to a literal mountain, or it may refer to a government which exerts power over it's subjects. Mount Zion in Jerusalem had been a center of government for the Jewish people. Thus it qualified for both definitions. Zion was an elevation upon which the city of Jerusalem was located. Jerusalem had been the capitol of the Jewish world. That, however, was literal Jerusalem and literal Zion. In the last days multitudes of people would agree to come to a spiritual Jerusalem and a spiritual Mount Zion. They would be

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taught the Word of the Lord, and that Word would flow outward from literal Zion to spiritual Zion. From this spiritual capitol, God's truth would spread to every nation of the earth.

**Isa 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**

The truth would be presented to all nations and those nations would be held responsible for the response they made to that truth. This new spiritual nation of Israel would be made up of those who loved peace and turned from their ways of violence and bloodshed to follow the Prince of Peace. Cultivated fields would replace battle fields. Spears and swords would be replaced by the tools of agriculture.

Those who came to the spiritual Zion would abhor war. They would seek peace and ensue it. Does this mean the entire earth will be at peace with one another? It may be that the thousand years pictured in the book of Revelation does relate to the whole of mankind, and that this has to do with an extended period of peace on earth. Yet this seems to run counter to certain other scriptures.

For example, the entire twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew tells of the situation when Christ returns to earth in judgment. Men are urged to live according to the will of God in order than they will be among those who are told when Christ appears at the "last day" of judgment and the righteous are told to enter into the joy of the Lord, while the wicked are told to depart and are cast into eternal fire.

May we suggest that the ones who are cast into the eternal fire are those who have walked in their own ways, and that those who enter into the heavenly joy are those who have come unto Mount Zion and have learned war no more. In the world there will be war and violence until the end. In the spiritual mountain of the Lord swords and spears will have given way to plowshares and pruning hooks.

**Isa 2:5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

This verse sounds very much like the invitation which is extended following a Sunday morning sermon, or a talk with one who has expressed interest in learning the truths of the Bible. Joshua once said,

*“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

With all of his heart, Isaiah pleads with Jacob's descendants to walk in the ways of Jehovah rather than to live in selfishness, pride and idolatry.

**Isa 2:6 Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.**

God's people are not to be replenished through the provisions of men. His people are to be filled with His wisdom and His goals. The ways of the Philistines were not the ways of Jehovah. Israel was making a fatal mistake in adopting such things as soothsaying.

Soothsaying seems to have been attempts to gain knowledge of the future through what we might today label as fortune telling, etc.

By mixing with the philosophies of heathen nations Israel was ignoring the truth which the Lord offered them and reaching out for goals which were corrupting their souls.

**Isa 2:7 Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:**

The word “full” is used three times in this verse and the one following. Each time the word is applied to something which God has warned His people to avoid. It is certainly not wrong to receive compensation for honest labors. Wise persons will save enough of their earnings to provide for emergencies. That is not what is being condemned here. This is the heaping up of riches and the placing of confidence in those riches at the expense of trust in the providential care of the Lord. Bank accounts will never take the place of trust and faith in the Divine hand.

Horses and chariots were often used for war and for display. Horses have a place. Chariots have a place. But when the land becomes overrun with such, the power and display may well crowd God out of the picture. Such is true today with the modern automobile. Thousands and thousands of dollars may be spent for no more than making an impression on those around us. The impressions which God desires from His people have to do with holy living rather than bragging rights. One might recall that Egypt had a large supply of horses and chariots which were left in the depths of the Red Sea when Israel escaped from the clutches of Pharaoh.

**Isa 2:8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:**

How ridiculous it becomes when men worship that which they have made with their own hands! Even to this day when one visits what is known as the “Holy Land” it is possible to see such idols on display. They are vain and useless. They cannot see. They cannot hear. They cannot protect or care for those who have created them.

While most of us would criticize those who worship such items, it is tempting to create idols out of our businesses, our homes, our educations, or various other substitutes for leaning on the everlasting arms of the One who created heaven and earth.

**Isa 2:9 And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.**

The mean man is contrasted with the great man. One is the opposite of the other. Both are seen bowing down before vanities which can only bring vexation of spirit. Isaiah calls upon the Lord to hold them responsible for their ridiculous behavior. Unless they repent, they must face the horrible consequences of their foolish choices.

**Isa 2:10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.**

These sinful creatures had better attempt to hide themselves because of their rebellion toward the power of God. The time will come when they will wish to dig

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down into the ground or hide in caves to escape from His wrath. There will be no way to hide!

Isa 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Those persons who are convinced that they stand above spiritual danger because of their reputation among men will bow down some day. They may maintain their haughty manners for a time, but that time will come to an end. The day which is spoken of is the day when one comes face to face with the judgments of Jehovah. The haughty man will then come to an abrupt realization of just how powerless he is in comparison with the wisdom and might of his Maker.

The time will come when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that God is infinitely more able than the most powerful men who ever have lived, or ever will live

Isa 2:12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

What is meant by saying that our God is the Lord of hosts. The Bible speaks of the angelic hosts which are at the disposal of God. If one angel had the power to deal with 186,000 Assyrian soldiers, think what the capabilities of a host of angels could present.

Isa 2:13 And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

There is discussion over whether these cedars and oaks are literal trees, or whether they are figurative and symbolic. Powerful men could be represented by cedar and oak trees. But, the groves in which the idols were worshiped were quite literal. There is the possibility that the admiration God's people were showing toward the groves and idols is being condemned.

Isa 2:14 And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,

Isa 2:15 And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

Mountain fortresses would be meaningless if God decided to destroy them. Towers and fenced walls could be demolished as if they were but children's toys. When man decides he is his own master, he has made a tragic error. The walls of Jericho came tumbling down under the pressure of God's hand. Even the atomic weapons of the present age would be powerless if used to oppose the will of the Lord of lords.

Isa 2:16 And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

The same is true of warships or other weaponry. Every enemy of the Lord can be brought down when God decides the time is come for Him to cease extending mercy and start executing wrath.

Isa 2:17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Isa 2:18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

One after another of the men who have thought too highly of themselves have been brought down to the dust. We can go back through history as far as we wish and find this to be true. Alexander the Great, Hitler, Stalin and others fancied that they could conquer the known world. They now lie buried in the ground.

The same is true of the idols which men worship. They receive adoration for a time and then are crushed to powder. This includes athletic fame and trillion dollar bank deposits. Only God stands supreme. His place of prominence shall stand forever.

Isa 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

When God calls men to account for their sins, they will find that caves in the rocks will be no protection whatsoever. If God wishes, He can cause the most durable mountain to come toppling down into a heap of gravel. Anyone who had chosen to hide in it's caves would be crushed beyond recognition.

Isa 2:20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

When God's longsuffering has reached an end, the idols of silver and gold will be but excess baggage which will be cast aside. The bats and the moles can have them. They are but dead weight.

Isa 2:21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the

LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

In some parts of the undeveloped world today, soldiers come from hideouts in the rocks of the mountains. They strike the enemy and then retreat and hide in those rocky caves. They are very difficult to find. This will make little difference to Jehovah, who sees all and knows all. There will be no place where safety can be assured for the one who has attempted to belittle the commands of his Creator.

Isa 2:22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

It is God who gives life and breath to every man or woman who walks the earth. To place one's confidence in the one who receives that life and breath is the height of folly.

Chapter 3

Isa 3:1 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water.

God's people had convinced themselves that it was quite possible to guide their own lives without calling upon the revealed wisdom of the Lord. This was a drastic error. God knew well that it would lead them to self destruction. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.

God was not willing that man should commit suicide without being warned that such awaited him if he continued in the path he had chosen. God was not only the Creator; He is also the Sustainer of life. It would become necessary to demonstrate the truth of His warnings concerning their danger. He would begin by letting them suffer from lack of food and water.

Isa 3:2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

The leaders upon whom they had so fastened their affections would be removed. This would include the heads of the military forces, and also the brave soldiers who followed their orders. The judges who determined guilt and innocence would no longer apply the principles of justice between men. The prophets who declared truth would be replaced by those who could be bribed. The elderly who could offer the advice of experience would be ignored. Those who advised impulsive actions would

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dominate the land. The prudent who looked before leaping would no longer be heard.

**Isa 3:3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.**

The captain of fifty would be a military man of lesser power. The honorable man would be one upon whom one could depend in business transactions. The artificer would be one who could design and build new objects, from the small to the large. The eloquent orator is the effective speaker who can move the masses to action.

All of these who could have been effective leaders would be seen no more. The result would be chaos.

**Isa 3:4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.**

Rather than having experienced persons in high places, such roles would be filled by those who lacked the ability to perform such duties. Those making the decisions would be childish. They would prove just how ridiculous it was to leave God out of the picture of either personal or national goals.

**Isa 3:5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.**

Most of us have seen examples of what happens when leadership is weak and those who are supposed to be following decide to take things into their own hands. We have seen basketball umpires make poor decisions

with respect to those who have broken the rules of the game. Soon the players take things into their own hands and physical violence flares up. It is just as true in the spiritual realm. When leaders are weak and followers become insolent, holy thoughts and actions rapidly become vicious.

**Isa 3:6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:**

Under such hideous conditions those who are suffering will reach out for anyone who appears to have been slightly successful and invite them to take over the leadership. Just the possession of enough to provide clothing would be enough to cause a man to be called upon to lead. Perhaps he would be able to turn the ruin into something less disastrous.

**Isa 3:7 In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.**

The reply from the one who was asked to lead would be “No!” I will not take the responsibility. You have made a mistake in thinking I can heal the sickness of this society.

**Isa 3:8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.**

Isaiah is not talking here about heathen nations who had not been blessed by the Lord as Judah and Jerusalem

had been. He is addressing these words to his own people. They have insulted the divine wisdom of Jehovah. They committed sins of both word and deed. He had suffered enough disobedience from them that He had determined to let them suffer some of the consequences of their independent spirits.

**Isa 3:9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.**

All one had to do was take a quick glance at these impudent rebels against the wisdom of the Almighty. They were so proud of their sins that anyone who observed them could see them. The last thing they thought of was to be ashamed. They paraded the sins where all could see. If one had to make a choice between the conditions in Sodom and those among God's own people, it would be difficult to decide which was the most corrupt.

This kind of blatant disobedience to God was to result in nearly indescribable misery. One of the major principles of the Word of God is that men shall reap as they have sown. Judah and Jerusalem had sown wicked seed. They were about to reap a harvest of destruction. Any evil which they suffered was due to their own disregard for the Word of the Lord.

**Isa 3:10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.**

There would be a remnant who did not follow the self serving majority. God wanted this remnant to be assured that He had not overlooked them. They would also reap



as they had sown. Their ultimate harvest would be a pleasant one.

**Isa 3:11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.**

It was not to be so with the wicked. Men work out their own salvation. The wicked have had no regard for righteous actions. They have put their trust in that which is of the world. The reward of their handiwork will be most unpleasant

**Isa 3:12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.**

Since divine discipline has been rejected, authority will be assumed by those who are not qualified to make decisions. God has placed man at the head of families. Instead, spoiled children who throw tantrums will rule the roost. Women were created to be helpers, not supervisors of their husbands. When women and children assume the leadership the paths taken will be filled with hazards of many kinds.

**Isa 3:13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.**

**Isa 3:14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.**

The Lord will be the Judge. He will call the disobedient people to account for their sins. He will be able to call

upon the truly spiritual of past generations to witness the horrors which are to be suffered. There was no excuse. Both the Lord and those of days gone by would agree that wickedness was running wild. There had been abuse of the weak through the hands of those who had the power to rob them.

**Isa 3:15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.**

There was no excuse for the injustice of those who held the power. They had treated the weak as if they had beaten them with hammers. They had forced the poor to put their noses to the grindstone, with no pity for them whatsoever. If these oppressors treated others in such manner, they might expect God to deal with them in the same way.

**Isa 3:16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:**

The value of godly women to a nation is beyond price. There were intended to be keepers of the home and producers of an oncoming generation of God fearing citizens. This present writer was once asked when the series of commentaries on the Bible began. The answer was that it began with the truths imparted while sitting in his mother's lap.

The kind of women described in the verse before us will not develop spirituality in the hearts of the children whom they bring into the world. These women are self-

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centered. They place the temporal pleasures far above the practicing of the will of the Lord.

Isa 3:17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

The attention which they so crave by walking in mincing steps, wearing revealing clothing and flirting with men who are just as wicked as they are will turn to pain. They will be covered with sores and diseases. They will be raped by those men toward whom they cast those “come hither” glances.

Isa 3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

God will see to the disappearance of their jingling anklets. The round tires like the moon could have been crescent moon shaped ornaments for the hair.

Isa 3:19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

Chains could have been used at various places on the body; necklaces, ankles, neck, waist, etc.

It is wise to note that not all of these decorations would have been worn by one woman. These were a number of objects which could be selected by many women. If one had worn all of these, she would hardly have been able to stand up under the weight.

Isa 3:20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

If one wished to make a corresponding list at the time I write, it might be just as astounding as the one we are examining. Earrings, headbands and elastic bands around the knees are all seen quite commonly.

Isa 3:21 The rings, and nose jewels,

Rings on the fingers and pierced nostrils with glistening rings inserted are found in some societies more commonly than in others, but can be seen in most.

Isa 3:22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,

Is there anything sinful in having several dresses to wear on various occasions? Not unless the collection is accumulated for the purpose of showing off outer beauty at the expense of a heart dedicated to the Lord. In that case, it would be far better to burn the entire collection and impress both God and man.

Isa 3:23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

The fine linen could well be soft and luxurious undergarments. Veils would be coverings for the face to increase the mystery of just what beauty was being covered.

Isa 3:24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

God would see to it that the perfumes with sweet smells would become stinking odors. The clothing would become torn and ragged. The permanent waves would turn to bald heads where captors had shaved them. The beautiful girdles around the waist would be torn away to make place for sackcloth, or what we might call burlap.

Scars might be burned into the skin which was once beautiful. These scars would be made by those who had taken them as slaves and wished to identify them as just that.

Isa 3:25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

The men of the nation would be killed by invaders, or perhaps even in war with one another of the nation itself.

Isa 3:26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

The city of Jerusalem is spoken of here in the feminine case. She will have nothing over which to rejoice. Her women are to be disgraced. Her men are to be killed and taken captive.

And all of this occurs because God's way has been replaced by the wisdom of men.

Chapter 4

Isa 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

It is unfortunate that those who decided upon the chapter divisions of this book of Isaiah separated this first verse of chapter four from the material in chapter three. It is obviously and logically related to the condemnation of the women of Israel which was found in that chapter.

The violence which would come about as a result of ignoring the will of the Lord would reduce the number of men in the nation to the point that there would be far more women than men. These women would compete for the names of the men who were left alive. Instead of expecting the men to provide for their wives, these women were so ashamed of being left single that they promised to relieve the men of any obligation to provide food and clothing for them if they would consent to become their husband. This inequality of numbers between the sexes would mean that seven women would agree to share the attentions of one man. This sounds socially abominable, but we must remember that multiple wives was not looked upon in the same way that it is at present. Solomon had one thousand! God initially intended a one woman for one man relationship.

Isa 4:2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

At this point we come to a prophetic view of the past,

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present and future of God's nation. Up to this time we have had a look at what God desired that His people be. Then we were presented with the filth and corruption of Israel when they adopted the idolatry and wickedness of the nations around them. Now we shall permitted a view of the new Mount Zion and the New Jerusalem for which God was making preparation.

**Isa 4:3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:**

The time would come when that which was filthy and corrupt in Zion would be removed. Either the people would be separated from God's nation, or they would have been cleansed and made holy.

Those who were written among the living would be those whose names God had entered in His book of life. This list would be made up of the spiritual citizens of God's new kingdom.

**Isa 4:4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.**

Without serious doubt this verse includes God's attitude toward the women whose character He had just described in chapter three. It is reasonable to think, however, that what is said about the cleansing of the women would apply to the men also. God intended to remove the filth of sin through two tools. One would be the presentation of judgments which would point out

the seriousness of their way of life. The other would be by their destruction if they did not heed the truth. The captivities in Assyria and Babylon would certainly have made a contribution to this cleansing.

But, can we not see the Spirit of Truth in the presentation of the gospel plan of salvation, followed by the casting of those who would not obey into the eternal fire of hell?

**Isa 4:5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.**

The new Mount Zion would have many dwelling places and assemblies throughout the world. Those congregations of God's New Jerusalem would have divine protection and guidance similar to that of the pillar of fire by night and the cloud of smoke by day which the Israelites enjoyed while marching through the wilderness toward the promised land.

**Isa 4:6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.**

A tabernacle is a temporary dwelling place in which one is protected from various dangers which could make life unbearable. In the New Mount Zion there would be special protection against destruction from the storms of life. The tabernacle could well be the church which will be caught up into heaven at the time of judgment and given permanent mansions where there is no sin, no death, but where there is fellowship with the saints of all the ages and access to the fountain of life.

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Chapter 5

Isa 5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

The prophet Isaiah presented a contrast between what God wanted, what God received, and the consequences of the contrast. In this chapter the picture is that of a Husbandman and His vineyard. The reader will note that The word Husbandman is capitalized indicating His divinity. The present commentator does not believe the Husbandman is Christ as some do. I am convinced that Isaiah himself could speak of God as being his Beloved. This would mean that Isaiah was talking about God, and Israel which was God's vineyard. I realize that Christ is called the only Begotten Son of the Father in heaven, but in the case at hand the reference seems to fit the Father more accurately than it does the Son.

This chapter is written as a song in the original Hebrew language. It is an inspired song which Isaiah was using to teach a vivid lesson about the results of ingratitude for God's uncountable blessings to Israel.

God's vineyard had been planted in a place where it could be expected to produce abundant fruit of high quality. Israel was that vineyard. The promised land was God's own choice of the best location possible for it's health and vitality. The hills of Palestine do not appear to a human visitor to that land as being an ideal location. But, the Bible is speaking in spiritual terms and not agricultural terms.

Isa 5:2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also

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**made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.**

The Husbandman did everything possible to insure the productivity of His vineyard. He placed a wall of protection around it, such that wild beasts could not run roughshod over it and destroy both the vines and the fruit. He did not just choose weak and spindly vines to plant and start the vineyard. God knew the potential of Israel, if they had been willing to live up to it. He built a tower where a constant watch could be maintained over His precious vines. He prepared for the harvest by constructing a winepress which could be used for extracting the juice from the ripe grapes. After all of this preparation, He expected a fine harvest. How sadly He was disappointed. All that was taken in the harvest was a small amount of "sour grapes." Some even claim that the description here includes poisonous as well as sour.

**Isa 5:3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.**

In this verse the Husbandman Himself is speaking whereas previously Isaiah was speaking for Him. God calls upon Israel to face the facts. They were to make a decision as to where the guilt lay. Had God failed to do anything for His vineyard which would cause it to bear such a poor yield; or had Israel failed to respond to the care which they had received at the hand of the Lord?

**Isa 5:4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore,**

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**when I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
brought it forth wild grapes?**

God's disgust could not have been pictured more vividly. No honest Israelite could possibly find fault with the level of care which had been provided by the Husbandman. Yet all it yielded was wild and sour grapes.

Isa 5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

God's response to the disappointment of the poor yield was to allow the vineyard to see what would have taken place if He had ignored it. He would allow strangers to break down the hedges and they would act like wild beasts, devouring everything in sight.

Isa 5:6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

God's care for His vineyard would be ceased. Where the soil had the potential to bring forth the finest of fruit, it would now produce only that which would make life painful. Rain is enriching. God would discontinue pouring out blessings from heaven. This would cause it to wither and die.

Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but

behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Next God is ready to show through the words of Isaiah just how hideous the sins of His people were. He will pronounce six woes upon them for six different types of sin.

Isa 5:8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

First He points out the greed which can hardly be overlooked. The well to do are grabbing up the land to such an extent that those less fortunate have no place to live. The wealthy build their mansions in the midst of wide open fields where they will not be disturbed in their fine homes.

Isa 5:9 In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

How will all of this be changed when God turns His face away? Even the finest of those houses will be left without an inhabitant. This, took place when the Assyrians took Israel into captivity far from the land of Canaan.

Isa 5:10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

According to those who have made a careful study of the weights and measures listed here, the yield they could

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expect would be only one tenth of the quantity of seed or vines which had been planted. Their fields would be as unproductive as His vineyard had proven to be.

**Isa 5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!**

Drunkenness has been one of man's greatest's weaknesses. It caused a person to get up early in the morning to get that first drink. Then since the bottle was in plain sight, he would take another and another throughout the day. By evening, if he was still sober enough to stay awake he would get ready to join a drinking party. His heart might be inflamed with anger. Thus he could become violent. His heart might become inflamed with lust and he would corrupt both himself and others with fornication and adultery.

God's people are not to be given to strong drink. This is not speaking of the unfermented wine of the grape.

**Isa 5:12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.**

The feasts they enjoyed were not those of thanksgiving to the Lord. They were loud with boisterous music and drunken revelry. They had not the slightest concern for honoring God or anything for which God stood.

**Isa 5:13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.**

God looks ahead at what is to happen to these sinful creatures. They would be captivated because of their lack of knowledge of the truth. They were not hungry and thirsty for righteousness. As a result they would become hungry and thirsty in slavery.

**Isa 5:14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.**

The word which is translated as 'hell' here is sheol. It refers to the place of the dead. These wicked people had lived such lives that they had walked right to the doorstep of both physical and spiritual death. All of their glory and their large numbers would not protect them from being cast into outer darkness.

**Isa 5:15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:**

The mean man here is not the cruel one. He is the one of low estate. It will not matter whether the sinner is a member of the elite, or a tramp; if that man is proud and haughty God will see that he is called to answer for having thought more highly of himself than he ought.

**Isa 5:16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.**

These evil persons have dishonored God by their defiance of His will. The reward will be that they will



be dishonored and God will be exalted because He has judged them.

**Isa 5:17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.**

God's sheep will be allowed to feed according to their choice of pasture. Some will hunger after righteousness. Others will grow fat at the expense of others. The latter will find that they shall be devoured by the enemy who overruns the land for which they should have thanked God and lived in purity.

**Isa 5:18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:**

Now the picture changes. The sinners are shown as pulling sin along with them as if it was impossible for them to leave it behind. They would not leave it because it meant more to them than the freedom which comes to those who know that the truth will make you free.

**Isa 5:19 That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!**

These evil persons even go so far as to challenge God to hurry up and bring His punishments upon them. "They know not what they ask." Mocking God is the most dangerous thing any human can do. These persons want to prove they can separate themselves from God's commandments. They will find that they have separated

themselves from joy, peace, love, brotherly kindness, and all that is good and pleasant. And the separation will be eternal.

**Isa 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!**

Surely the reader will have seen what takes place when the head of a chicken is cut off. His body is in a state of complete confusion. It does not know what it is doing or where it is going. These wicked people who think drunkenness is great, and illicit sex is a mark of freedom, are in precisely the same condition. Their spiritual chaos is unimaginable.

**Isa 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!**

Most of us have had the less than delightful experience of working in the company of another person who was convinced that they had the correct answers to all of the questions. Even while they are boasting of their achievements, they think they are being modest. It is sometimes difficult to accurately evaluate the abilities of someone else. But God can do it. He will one day humble those who think too highly of themselves. There were many in Israel who were headed for just such a letdown.

**Isa 5:22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:**

There are foolish persons who like to brag about how much liquor they can hold. The Lord does not care for that

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kind of records. He wants sober minded servants who do not have minds distorted with alcohol. In the present day we could well add a large number of psychedelic drugs.

Isa 5:23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

These persons with altered minds think nothing of false witness for a bribe, nor do they feel guilty about making lying accusations about the innocent. They call the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty.

Isa 5:24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

As fire might spread through a wheat field destroying both the stubble and the chaff, these sinners have roots which are not firmly planted and are rotten, plus they have upper parts such as the mind, which subject them to destruction by the fire of the Lord.

Isa 5:25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

The end of these rebellious persons is hideous. God holds His outstretched arm out in their direction. There are

two reasons why God stretches out His arm over men. One is that He desires to offer them blessing because of their faithful service to Him. The other is that He has determined to punish them for their sins. There is no condition more wonderful than to receive His blessings. There is nothing more horrible than suffering from His curses.

Isa 5:26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

The anger of the Lord would be avenged on these unfaithful Israelites by the hand of their fellow humans. God would bring them from a long distance to assemble them for the conflict. An ensign is a sign by which they would determine to take action. The nations in the case of immediate fulfillment of this prophecy were the Assyrians or Chaldeans. They would move so swiftly that Israel would have little chance of organizing for self defense.

Isa 5:27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

The invaders would be determined and energetic. Nothing would hinder them from their goal of conquering Israel. Their belts would not even be worn or their shoelaces be broken. God would not interfere with their progress in any way. His people needed to be taught a powerful lesson.

Isa 5:28 Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:

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Conditions which might normally keep an ancient army from being effective would not appear. They would have a supply of sharp arrows in bows that were prepared to send them flying. Horses hoofs would withstand the stony ground over which they would run. The chariot wheels would spin around like a whirlwind.

**Isa 5:29 Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.**

Confident warriors often try to intimidate their foes with roaring voices as they advance over a battlefield. These invaders would roar as loud as hungry lions. The prey would be the people of Israel. They would be captured and carried away to the land of Assyria. Nothing would keep the invaders from succeeding in their victory.

**Isa 5:30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.**

When the conflict closed there would be victorious shouts from the enemies of Israel which would remind one of the roaring of the waves at the seashore.

What a terrifying picture this is! God is merciful and longsuffering. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Yet, when His long-suffering and mercy come to an end, He will punish rebellion with great severity.

I take the liberty of making a comparison between this conflict and the one which is described in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Revelation. In the case of the

Assyrian invasion of Israel, God was using the Assyrian armies to punish fleshly Israel. The opposite is true in the book of Revelation. In the battle of Armageddon God has called the angels to pour out His wrath upon spiritual Babylon. In this conflict, God is on the side of spiritual Israel. They have proven to be faithful and the enemy is doomed to defeat.

The reader is urged to keep himself or herself from joining the forces of Satan. The patience of the saints will be rewarded with victory. Peace that passes understanding waits for those who do not falter in following the paths of righteousness to the end of the journey.

The Lord warned His people far ahead of time that if they did not repent of their sins they would suffer horribly. His word proved to be absolutely true. The Assyrians came and took the ten tribes of the northern kingdom into Assyria. Even so, He has warned all men upon the earth that if they do not repent of their sins, the suffering they will endure in eternity will be enough to cause them everlasting regret. The gates of heaven will be closed to prevent their entry. The gates of hell will be closed to prevent their exit. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!

## *Chapter 6*

**Isa 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.**

In the first chapter of this book Isaiah gave us the names of the kings who reigned while he was receiving visions from the Lord. Uzziah died in 740 B.C. His death was to mark a great change in the spiritual atmosphere of Israel. Times had been prosperous. As often happens, the people could not stand spiritually strong when their material needs are not as great. They had fallen away from respect for God and were being swallowed up in pride and lust. Isaiah had lived to see these changes. God chose him to deliver a serious message to the erring people. Repent or die!

This chapter tells about the scene at the time of the call of the Lord. We cannot help but wonder why five chapters were covered before introducing the challenge which God placed before Isaiah. Perhaps He wished to draw a picture of that which Isaiah would have to face in delivering God's message. It would not be easy.

We should note that much which is described in this chapter is closely related to similar scenes in the book of Revelation, as pictured by the apostle John

We must ask ourselves just what it was that Isaiah saw. We are told that no man has ever seen God. God is Spirit and spirit is invisible. It follows that Isaiah saw a vision of the glory of God. We do know that Jesus Christ came into the world in order that men might see a perfect example of what man might be if he lived a perfectly righteous life. Between what we know of the appearance of Christ, and the information gained from



such visions as Isaiah and John saw, we come as close as it is possible for humans to come to a picture of the True and Living God.

God is Ruler of the universe. He sits upon His throne in heaven with Jesus Christ seated at His right hand. Isaiah knew that what he saw was a supernatural vision which was expected to fill him with respect for the commands which were to be given to him.

**Isa 6:2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.**

Above the throne of God were a number of seraphim. We are not told that number. These seraphim were impressive spiritual beings. They were one of two spiritual groups. The other is the cherubim. Both the cherubim and the seraphim gave glory and honor to the One seated on the throne.

Your present commentator one time had a very interesting conversation with an atheist. The atheist referred to such scenes as this and declared that if there is an afterlife, he did not wish to eternally flitter and flutter around the throne of God. I replied that whatever God has in store for the faithful will be utterly satisfying. We will not wish for it to come to an end.

Why does each seraph have six wings? Earthly objects which fly, such as birds and aircraft normally have two wings rather than six. We suggest that the two which covered the face were intended to shield the face of the seraph from the full glare of the glory of God. The two which covered the feet may have shown the willingness to go wherever the Lord commanded. The two which were used to fly would then represent the power to move in



accordance with the will of the Lord. Since we are not told the meaning of the three pairs of wings, it may be that they are only intended to be a means of making the scene more impressive.

**Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.**

God is a trinity. We have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each of these is perfectly holy. Like the seraphim, men should cry out to the fellow humans that the entire Godhead is Holy. We are charged with causing the entire population of earth to accept, and properly respond to that Holy nature.

**Isa 6:4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.**

The voice of the seraph which cried out was so powerful that the temple door trembled. We can understand something of this by thinking about the rattling of the windows of our houses when trains pass nearby.

God had two altars in the time of Isaiah. One was the altar of incense. The other was the altar of burnt offering. This smoke may represent the evidence that both heaven and earth are expected to offer their lives in service to Jehovah.

**Isa 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**

The more completely men grasp the holiness and perfection of God, the more they realize the vast difference between their uncleanness and the one in whose image we were created. All men sin and come short of the glory of God. No man is what he ought to be without the cleansing power of the Almighty.

**Isa 6:6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:**

Isaiah's plight was recognized by God. One of the seraphim proceeded to offer help. He used tongs to take a burning coal from the altar. It is not clear whether he kept the coal in the tongs, or whether he had transferred it to his hand. Either way, the red hot coal would have struck terror into the heart of a human such as Isaiah who wondered what the purpose of the coal was to be

**Isa 6:7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.**

Isaiah soon had the answer to any question which he may have had about the reason for the burning coal. It was used to burn the sin from his lips and allow him to speak the fiery message of God to the people. Isaiah would speak with righteous and energetic words which should burn into the consciousness of the sinful persons to whom he was expected to preach.

**Isa 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.**

Next Isaiah heard a serious question from God. He needed a messenger to declare the need for righteousness to His people. The implication was clear to Isaiah. His lips had been cleansed in order that he might proclaim the holy message. How would he respond to the call. It would be a momentous task. Should he accept the charge?

He did accept it, clearly and most positively. If God needed him, he would do everything within his power to produce that which God expected. We badly need persons in every age and place who will react the same way that Isaiah did. The world must hear the Word of the Lord. God has commanded that those who believe in Him are to preach to all the world. This must be done through thought, word and deed. Can you answer as Isaiah did, "Here am I; send me?"

**Isa 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.**

Before Isaiah set out to obey the command of God, he needed to understand that the task would not be easy. The people would hear the words, but would fail to apply them to their lives. They would see Isaiah's way of life but would ignore it.

**Isa 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.**

Isaiah was to understand that God was testing the character of the people. Many of them would shut their eyes and close their ears to that which was preached

to them. Even worse, they would refuse to open their hearts and let the importance of the truth enter in. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If the heart is right, the life will be right. If the heart is impure, the life will follow suit.

**Isa 6:11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,**

Isaiah understood the nature of the problem. He asked God the same question which would have arisen in the mind of any of God's faithful. If the people are not going to obey the Word, how long must the preaching continue.

The answer was that it would require great patience. The preaching must continue until the people are taken into captivity. There must be no excuse that they did not know what God expected. The houses were to be left empty, and the people were to be removed from the land until God was ready to take further action.

**Isa 6:12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.**

We can only grasp at the thought of what things were like when the people crossed the Jordan and entered the holy land, and what they were like when He removed them by allowing the Assyrian army to take them from that land.

**Isa 6:13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast**

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their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

One tenth is an important fraction in the Word of God. The Israelites had been commanded to give one tenth of that which they received, back to God who had made it possible for them to enjoy their possessions. Now God is telling Isaiah that one tenth of the people who are taken into captivity will be allowed to return to the land at a later time. Just as some trees will sprout and grow from the trunk which has been left after they are cut down, God's people will have a remnant which will flourish and grow from that which is left after the captivity is finished. God always looks for the wheat after the chaff has been blown away by the wind. There was to be a purified people who would come back and continue His plans for all mankind.

Chapter 7

This seventh chapter of Isaiah is one of the most fascinating of the entire Bible. Verse fourteen is one of the most recognized verses. It predicts the coming of the Son of God, as He is brought into the world through the womb of Mary. Let us examine the chapter very carefully.

Isa 7:1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

The reader would do well to make constant comparison between the words of the prophets of the Old Testament and the time periods in which they lived. This is especially true of the books of Kings and Chronicles.

After the separation of the ten tribes in the northern kingdom and the two tribes of the south, we see great differences in the attitudes of the people, toward each other. At times the two kingdoms were even at war with each other. At the point in time we are dealing with at the moment Pekah was the king of the northern kingdom and Ahaz was king of the southern.

Assyria was growing more powerful and threatened to invade the northern kingdom of Israel. In answer to this threat, Pekah and Rezin, the king of Syria made an alliance which was intended to ward off any attack by the Assyrians. They desired that the southern kingdom of Judah join forces with them. They actually began an attack upon Jerusalem which was the capitol of the southern kingdom of Judah. However, the attack was not successful.



Isa 7:2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

Word came to the ears of Ahaz that there was danger from the northern alliance. He was very much concerned because of the power of the northern alliance. Both the king and his people were trembling like the leaves of a tree in a strong wind.

Isa 7:3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;

God commanded Isaiah to meet with Ahaz. He named the place where they were to meet.

Isa 7:4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

Isaiah was to calm Ahaz fears. He was not to be afraid of the armies of Pekah and Rezin. They might appear to be a flaming fire, ready to consume Judah, but they were actually about ready to burn out. They were like firebrands taken out of the fire and producing only smoke.

Isa 7:5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

Isa 7:6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it,

and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

Isaiah was to assure Ahaz that the efforts of the two northern kings would not be successful. They intended to conquer Judah and set a king over it who would cooperate with them against the power of Assyria

Isa 7:7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

Neither Israel nor Syria would be able to dominate the kingdom of Judah. God would not allow that to happen.

Isa 7:8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

Damascus was the capitol of Syria. Rezin was the king of Syria, and that was what he would remain. He would not add Judah to his domain.

Isa 7:9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

The king of the northern kingdom was Pekah, who reigned from the capitol city of Samaria. He would not be able to add Judah to his domain. If Ahaz did not believe what God had said through Isaiah, he would not be able to withstand. If he did believe God, he would prevail.

Isa 7:10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

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In order that Ahaz might believe the words of comfort, God presented a plan of action for him.

**Isa 7:11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.**

He could ask for a sign that God was ready to defend Judah against the northern kings. Ahaz could specify whether the sign was to appear in the skies, the earth, or the ocean depths. God would honor his request.

**Isa 7:12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.**

Ahaz did not wish to place himself in the position of checking on God to see if He meant what He said. Ahaz refused to ask for any sign, saying that doing so would be tempting God. He should have immediately asked God for a sign. Since God had commanded him to ask, he would certainly not be tempting Him by keeping the commandment.

**Isa 7:13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?**

Isaiah replied to Ahaz that it was one thing to try the patience of men. It was quite another to test the patience of the Almighty God. The implication is that this was precisely what Ahaz was doing.

**Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**

Here then is that famous passage predicting the birth

of the Son of God. If Ahaz would not ask for a sign, God would provide one Himself.

The sign would be that a virgin would conceive and bear a child without the aid of a human father. She would call the name of the child Immanuel, which means "God with us."

There has been much controversy over this prediction. The Hebrew word which has been translated as "virgin" is the word *almah*. This word normally refers to a young maiden, and has no indication as to whether or not she has been intimate with a man. It is claimed that if Isaiah had meant to say the woman would never have known a man, the word *bethulah* would have been used instead of *almah*.

This argument will not hold in view of the fact that Joseph was ready to put away Mary because he was afraid she had been unfaithful to her marriage promise. God assured him that Mary was true to Joseph and the child had a divine Father. He was to be Immanuel, God with us. would be the perfect link between God and man. He would have a human for His mother and God for his Father (See Matt. 1:23).

**Isa 7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.**

The next few verses should not be isolated from this fifteenth verse. The diet of butter and honey was not the food of the well to do. It is intended to inform Ahaz that the child who was to be born of the virgin would not be raised in luxurious palaces. While he was young, the child would see times in which diets would be limited to natural food such as milk from cows or goats, and honey produced by bees. The child would grow up from infancy to the age of accountability without the aid of human delicacies.

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Isa 7:16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

How old must a child be before it can recognize the difference between good and evil. This might vary from one child to another. We do know that Jesus is shown to be perceptive when he was found in the temple, discussing matters with the wise men.

Surely the date suggested was not later than the age of twelve. By the time Jesus reached that age, both Pekah and Rezin would have reached the end of their reigns.

Isa 7:17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

Isaiah added that rather than fearing Pekah and Rezin, it would be wise to consider the danger which Assyria would present. The days to come would be worse under Assyria than anything which had been seen since the northern kingdom and the southern had separated.

The problem would be that Judah would side with Assyria and the latter would take advantage of Judah and overrun that land. Judah had much more to fear from Assyria than she did from Israel and Syria.

Isa 7:18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.

When the time was right God would call for Egypt and Assyria to come against the southern kingdom of Judah.

Flies and bees can both be very aggravating. Bees sting, and flies swarm over food. Both of these lands seemed quite distant but their armies would come from those distances and would cause severe trouble.

Isa 7:19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

These nations who were like bees and flies would cover the land. They would be found in valleys and rocky hills. They would be found where crops had once grown but where thorns and bushes had replaced them. Conditions would be severe.

Isa 7:20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

Judah had been seriously considering alliance with Assyria in order to protect themselves from Syria and Israel. That would be a very serious error. The Lord would use Assyria to humble the land. The land would be shaved of all dignity. Men have been proud of their hair and considered it manly to have enough facial and body hair to show they were not feminine. Just as it would be shameful for a man to have his hair shaved of from his head to his feet, Assyria would come and shave Judah. That land would lose it's dignity.

Isa 7:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep;

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Now we begin to see more clearly what was meant by the Son of God eating butter and honey in his childhood days. A man's possessions might be reduced to where he had only one cow and two sheep.

**Isa 7:22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.**

There would be little to eat during the days of the Assyrian invasion. Many of the people would be carried off to Assyria. The few who were left would have only enough to keep body and soul together.

**Isa 7:23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.**

Where once there had been thriving vineyards, there would be briers and thorns.

The point is, my friends, that it does not pay to make alliances with those who are evil. Assyria was a very poor choice for help in defense against Syria and Israel. God's people of every age should avoid evil companions. We are to be influences for good to those who are evil. We are not to allow the wicked to influence us in the direction of disobedience.

**Isa 7:24 With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.**

Those who invaded Canaan would be well armed.

They would be able to claim victory because God's people had turned to idolatry. This must be removed in order than righteousness might prevail once again.

**Isa 7:25 And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briars and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.**

Any place where the hills had been cultivated in the past would see briars and thorns springing up. It would be useful for little but pasture. Plenty would be replaced by poverty. There are powerful lessons in this chapter. Let us list a few.

1. God is well aware of the spiritual condition of His people.
2. He goes to great lengths to show His patience and His mercy.
3. The solution for spiritual disease lies in having confidence in the Son of God.
4. We must recognize the real friends and the real enemies of the Lord and His chosen ones.
5. Alliances with God's enemies brings both spiritual and material poverty.

## *Chapter 8*

**Isa 8:1 Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hashbaz.**

Isaiah's own name had a special meaning. It was "Jehovah saves." He already had one son, Shear-Jashub, whose name means "A remnant shall return." He is now to produce another son, whose name is to be Maher-shalal-hashbaz, meaning "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth." Thus, the names of all three men have special importance in the announcing of God's plans.

Isaiah was commanded by the Lord to write on a great scroll in plain letters which could be easily understood. The message had to do with the meaning of his son's name. From that which was written on the scroll, those who read it could see that Isaiah was speaking for the Lord. The meaning of his son's name would become reality in the life of Israel. Realizing this, the people should understand the importance of what Isaiah was to tell them. Only God could tell one what to name a child, and then bring the meaning of that name into existence. Invading armies would soon surge over the land of Israel and Judah. They would take much spoil.

**Isa 8:2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.**

Isaiah would take two reliable men to bear witness that it was he who had written the material on the roll. There was to be no doubt that God's hand was in it.

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Isa 8:3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.

Isaiah had sexual intercourse with his wife, resulting in her conception and the birth of this son. He was clearly told what the name of the son was to be.

Isa 8:4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

Since the conception had already taken place, and the events about to be predicted were to occur before the son was old enough to call out Ma-ma and Da-da. The prediction would come to reality within a two year period.

What was this momentous event which was to happen? It was that the Assyrian king would send armies into both the capitol of Syria and Israel, the northern kingdom. Much spoil would be taken from those lands.

Isa 8:5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

Isa 8:6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

There was more! The reason the Assyrians would succeed in invading these lands was that God's covenant people had refused to listen to the quiet flow of God's truth. They had ignored and insulted His love and had turned to useless sources of help.

Isa 8:7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

Since His people had rejected the peaceful message of truth which He placed before them, He was now ready to send a raging flood of Assyrians into the land. No longer would the Assyrian power remain within its earlier boundaries. It would set out to overflow the kingdoms of Syria and Israel.

Isa 8:8 And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

Not only would Assyria overrun Syria and Israel. Her armies would move into the land of Judah. They would only be stopped short of taking the entire land by failing to take Jerusalem and Mount Zion. God would prevent them from conquering that city, which was very special to His long range plans. The gospel would be proclaimed first in Jerusalem, It would then proceed to Judea and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Isa 8:9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

The message of the Lord is now presented to any who would oppose His faithful. Such opponents are invited

to band together and try to blockade His will. They will find that in the end, they will be broken and defeated. He repeats for emphasis. No nation on earth will be successful in defeating God's purposes. They may rejoice for the moment. Their rejoicing will not last.

Isa 8:10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

The message is being given through Isaiah. He declares that any combined wisdom which His enemies may agree upon will be foiled. Those enemies may make any boast they care to make. When those boasts come face to face with the will of Jehovah, they will fall. When God is for us, who can be against us.

Isa 8:11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

The people of Judah, including king Ahaz, had been ready to make an alliance with Assyria to protect themselves against Israel and Syria. Isaiah was commanded not to agree with such an alliance. God made it as plain as it could be made, that Isaiah was not to approach Assyria for help.

Isa 8:12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

The people would accuse Isaiah of being a traitor to the people by failing to join hands with Assyria against Syria and Israel. That accusation was not to sway his

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message. He was not to fear those two nations as Ahaz and the people of Judah were fearing. He was not to be afraid, but was to tell them the Lord would be with them if they would call upon Him.

**Isa 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.**

The people of Judah were advised to recognize the holiness and power of Jehovah. It was He who should demand their respect and confidence.

**Isa 8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

If they would turn to God for help, He would be a place of protection. But, if they would not trust in Him, He would be like a stone over which one trips and falls. This verse is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament as Peter accuses the Jews of tripping over the Lord (See 1 Peter 2:8).

*1 Pet 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*

*1 Pet 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

**Isa 8:15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.**

Even though God has warned the people of Judah through the lips of Isaiah, many of them will stop their ears and fall into the hands of the Assyrians when they overflow the land. These will be taken into captivity in Assyria.

**Isa 8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.**

Isaiah is to see that the people hear the Word of the Lord and have the opportunity to choose trust in Him. Those who accept the testimony of Isaiah will be God's remnant. Those who ignore it will suffer grievously.

**Isa 8:17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.**

Regardless of what others do, Isaiah assured them that he would trust God and look to Him for help. The reason God was hiding His face from the house of Jacob was that they had rejected Him and had placed their confidence in human sources.

**Isa 8:18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.**

There was a serious need for the people of Judah to give their attention to the evidence which God had provided for them in the names of Isaiah's children before the fulfilment of the meanings of those names. These things were signs of the power and wisdom of the Lord. God's warnings were to be respected.



**Isa 8:19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?**

Many were looking for help from the departed spirit's of the dead. They were going to soothsayers and wizards to hear their mutterings about help from beyond the grave. The living should seek the Living God, not the human dead.

**Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**

The people should be listening to the testimony which came from the mind of God. If that which the counselors advised them did not agree with what God had testified, it was because they were not going to the True Source of light. When men speak from the spiritual darkness, they can only cause others to stumble and fall.

**Isa 8:21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.**

The word "bestead" has reference to difficulties. Those who went to other supposed sources than God for their help would face troubles of many kinds. They would be hungry and would end up cursing both their king and God. They would look upward, but they would not be praising God. They would be cursing Him.

**Isa 8:22 And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.**

Since they would not give God the praise and the glory He richly deserves, they would be forced to look to earthly help. It would not be sufficient. They would suffer in anguish and find themselves walking deeper and deeper into spiritual darkness.

## Chapter 9

**Isa 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.**

There was great spiritual darkness in the northern kingdom as a result of their idolatry and rejection of God's truth. God had afflicted that territory twice. The first time was of a lighter nature. Then, when that affliction did not bring about repentance, He arranged for more serious punishments. Zebulun and Naphtali took the brunt of the earlier chastisements. Afterward Galilee felt the more grievous suffering.

**Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**

It was those very territories which would have the opportunity to see a great light beginning to shine in the valley of the shadow of death. It was from Galilee that Jesus Christ first shone out as the light of the world.

**Isa 9:3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.**

The nation of Israel had multiplied in numbers, but the increased numbers had not been accompanied by

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increased joy. The problem was that they were rejoicing in material gains rather than spiritual riches. They were acting more like victorious soldiers who rejoice over the spoils they have acquired from the defeated enemy.

Isa 9:4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

In the day of Midian, a small force of Israelites were able to throw off the burdens the Midianites had placed upon them. Isaiah prophesies a time when the invaders of Israel will be defeated and their oppression thrown off.

Isa 9:5 For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

There is a contrast in this verse between the victory which was normally celebrated by military forces, and the victory which was in God's plan for the future of His spiritual army. There would be a release from the bondage of sin which was a very important part of the anguish which they faced from Satan's spiritual forces. Rather than shouting in the midst of garments stained with blood. This new victory would see the oppressors cast into a lake of fire. The armor which would be worn by the faithful would consist of a helmet of faith, and a breast-plate of righteousness and feet shod in the gospel of peace.

Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

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The child which was to be born had been spoken of as a sign when mentioned before. He would come into the world as the Son of God. He would be born of a virgin who had known no man. In the scene we see now, that Son is ready to take the leadership of this new spiritual kingdom which would provide release from the bondage of sin.

This Leader would be recognized from several characteristics which demonstrated His divine powers. He would be:

1. Wonderful — Jesus has etched His name in history by accomplishing that of which no man ever was capable. The teaching He presented and the miracles He did most certainly justify this first title. He is truly wonderful.

2. Counsellor — He came as the Word of God. Those who see the wisdom of accepting His truth will find that they have made a wise choice of pathways in this world of falsehood and self-serving political and spiritual leaders. Trust in the Lord and He will direct thy paths.

3. The Mighty God — In the beginning the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Jesus was more than a wonderful counsellor. He was God, born in the flesh.

4. Everlasting Father — Christ stated that He and the Father are one. He also said that he who had seen Him had seen the Father. A father produces children, and then provides for those children. Jesus fills both roles.

5. Prince of Peace — A prince is the Son of a king. Jesus was the Son of the Almighty King of all creation. A prince is expected to be a leader in the government. Jesus has assumed such leadership over the new spiritual kingdom.

**Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of**

**David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall. We can look back at Egypt, the Greeks, the Romans, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, etc. Each reached a climax and then faded as it's glory was passed on to another. It is not so with the Kingdom of God. Jesus was both the Seed of David and the Son of God. He sits at the right hand of God. David's throne and God's throne are actually one. If considered as two, Christ sit's upon both simultaneously today. His reign will ultimately be victorious over every foe. It shall never be replaced.

**Isa 9:8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.**

God had a word to say to those of the northern kingdom. They were altogether too confident that their wisdom, their power and the alliances with other governments would prevent any permanent damage to their society. There was a great lesson not far ahead.

**Isa 9:9 And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,**

**Isa 9:10 The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.**

Ephraim and Samaria were God's way of pointing out Israel in contrast to the southern territory of Judah. Ephraim and Samaria boasted that if enemies came and

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tore down the dwellings made with bricks of clay, they would be able to build back with even stronger materials such as hewn stones. If the enemy came in and cut down their Sycamore trees, they would simply grow up much greater and grander cedar trees as replacements.

Does the reader see an exceedingly strong spirit of independence here. The Lord seems to have been left in the background while the people had turned to idols and their own powers for security.

Isa 9:11 Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;

Rezin and Pekah had felt that they could withstand the power of Assyria, especially if they could invade and take control of Judah and enlist their military to fight along with them.

Isa 9:12 The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

The truth was that the Syrians and the Philistines would consume Israel. They would not help her in defending against Assyria. She would be eaten up whole. Nor would that be the end of the matter. There was yet more misery to follow. The hand of God's wrath toward their idolatrous ingratitude was still not finished.

Isa 9:13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.

Israel was showing such little judgment that they were turning to those who had proven to be her enemies in the past. They still had not learned their lesson as to a better way of life.

Isa 9:14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

If Israel was determined to separate herself from dependence upon God, He would allow it. He would cut them off suddenly. The head represented the leaders. The tail represented the followers. The branch was the highest of the vegetation. The rush was that which grew at the lowest levels, close to the ground.

Isa 9:15 The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

Isa 9:16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.

Both the leaders and the followers in Israel were responsible for the disaster which they were to suffer. They would be taken into Assyrian captivity where they could learn first hand about the folly of idolatrous worship.

Isa 9:17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Ordinarily the Lord had pride in the men of his chosen people. He was also known for His concern for the orphans and widows. This was to be different with respect to the northern kingdom. They had become such hypocrites and doers of evil, and they had chosen foolishness over wisdom, that He was ready to continue stretching out his hand of wrath over them.

Isa 9:18 For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.

Evil destroys like a forest fire. It starts small with sparks setting the briars and thorns on fire. Then it moves to the underbrush which is thicker. It then moves to the largest trees of the forest and leaves the entire land as charred cinders.

Isa 9:19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

The blazing fire of God's wrath would darken their land with its smoke. The people themselves would be caught up in the turmoil. Man would be turned against man; even brother against brother. When conditions reach this state of affairs, a fight between two male crocodiles would be just a joy ride in comparison. This condition is the logical conclusion of spurning the counsel of Jehovah. The wages of sin is death.

Isa 9:20 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

Hunger would run rampant among the people. Each would compete with his neighbor for the necessities of life. Even after eating what was forcibly taken from others, the hunger would still not be satisfied.

Isa 9:21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

The tribes of the northern territory would turn against one another. The northern tribes of Israel would then combine forces to fight against Judah in the south. Even then God's outstretched hand of wrath would not be pulled back. The captivity was still ahead.

It is pathetic that the various denominations of the Christian world are presently in a condition much like that of the tribes of Israel and Judah at the time we are discussing. The enemy is Satan. Yet those who profess to be followers of the Prince of Peace waste their energies in following pride filled human leadership when they should be obeying and glorifying God. We had best be careful! At that time God cut off both the head and the tail of Israel. He has promised that such unprofitable leaders and followers shall one day be burned.

Chapter 10

Isa 10:1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;

God has standards of behavior which He expects His people to meet. He is extremely unhappy with those in places of authority in Israel. They have been making decrees which reflect an attitude far from what He desires. They are using their positions of authority to pass regulations which take advantage of those who are less powerful than themselves.

Isa 10:2 To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

Those who do not have the influence to fight back are cheated out of what is rightfully theirs. If God were to follow that recipe in dealing with humanity, we would have nothing. He has the power to take all that men have. What He does do is to look with compassion upon those who are in need of His help. It is His nature to lift up the fallen. What an abomination it is then for His people to prey on the helpless and rob them of the pitiful substance which they have!

Isa 10:3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

The Lord has some serious questions to present to

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those who abuse others. “When the tables are turned and the land is overrun with enemies from distant nations, to whom would they go for help. Could they truly expect Him to help them when they act in just ther opposite manner?” “When they are oppressed, who will be ready to protect their well being?”

**Isa 10:4 Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.**

The prisoners and the slain are those whom the well to do and influential among His own people have treated like slaves and have even killed. When the enemy arrives, these haughty ones shall find that they are a part of the unfortunate. They will suffer along with those they have caused to suffer.

**Isa 10:5 O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.**

The Lord is ready to call for the Assyrians to discipline His wayward people. We sometimes hear the old saying, “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” God is not going to spare the rod. He is going to use Assyria as a rod to punish the sins of both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

**Isa 10:6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.**

A hypocrite is one who pretends to be something which he is not. God's nation was full of those who were far from what they pretended to be. They had provoked Him to anger and He was sending Assyria to prey upon them. Their possessions would be taken. They would be walked on as if they were muddy mire in the streets.

God speaks of Assyria as if the nation was a person. He will permit Assyria to chastise His own nation.

**Isa 10:7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.**

The Assyrians would not think that was what they were doing. In their hearts, they was saying they would add God's nation to the list which had already placed under their power. The Assyrian aimed for a world empire. He would think this was but a step in achieving that goal.

**Isa 10:8 For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?**

After all, did the Assyrian king not have those serving under him who had once been kings of the nations he had conquered? He wished to be known as the "king of kings." There is but one "King of kings." That title belongs to either Jehovah the Father, or Jesus Christ the Son.

**Isa 10:9 Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?**

The cities which he intended to take were, in his opinion, not any more powerful than the ones he had already taken. He had conquered Carchemish, Arpad and

Damascus. Surely those whom he was eyeing now were no more able to defend themselves than those were.

**Isa 10:10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;**

Another reason for the Assyrian's confidence was that he felt all of the idols and gods of the nations were in the same class. When he compared the graven images of the fallen cities with those of the ones ahead, he was convinced that they were not able to defend those who worshiped them.

**Isa 10:11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?**

At this point the Assyrian made a fatal mistake. He ignored Jehovah and compared only the idols whom the Israelites were worshiping with the idols of the surrounding nations. It is not wise to blaspheme Jehovah by including Him among gods who were carved into wood or stone.

**Isa 10:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.**

The Assyrian was in for a surprise. When Jehovah had used him to discipline His wayward nation, He would turn his attention to the punishment of the proud heart of the Assyrian. The fruit of the Assyrian's heart had been selfishness and arrogance. Such things would come

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crashing down when God had completed the work He was doing without him even realizing what he was doing.

Isa 10:13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:

Assyria had experienced very little serious opposition to their appetite for a world empire. Their feeling was that everything which they had accomplished had been a result of their own wise choices and powerful forces. All who stood in their path had been defeated because of their own abilities.

Isa 10:14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

The opposition which Assyria had faced was no more hindrance than as if a man had found the nest of a bird which had left it's eggs without protection. He had gathered those eggs with almost no resistance. The mother bird had not uttered a peep. It would have been useless.

Now the Assyrian ruler, felt that he could take God's nation just as easily as he had taken the others. There would not be a peep of resistance.

Isa 10:15 Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod

should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

The Lord had quite different thoughts concerning the abilities of Assyria. Without Assyria being aware of it, He had used them as a rod of correction for His people. Assyria was no more than an axe, a saw, a rod or a cane. It was being utilized to accomplish that which the Lord intended.

An axe does not attempt to control the axeman. A saw does not try to control the man operating the saw. A rod in the hand of a parent does not punish the parent. A cane is used by the person who walks with it. The cane does not use the person.

Neither was Assyria in a position to claim her achievements were her own. They were but a tool in the hand of the Almighty.

Isa 10:16 Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

Fatness is used to symbolize prosperity in such language as that in the present verse. God was going to slim down the success of the Assyrians. He intended to build a fire under the Assyrian glory which would leave it in ashes.

Isa 10:17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day;

Instead of Assyria consuming Israel, the opposite



would prove to be true. God's people would be used as a flaming fire to burn the briars and thorns which Assyria presented to their opponents. Nor would it take centuries for this to happen. An angel of the Lord descended upon the Assyrian army as it approached Jerusalem and 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were left dead the next morning. Assyria never recuperated completely from that blow. The empire was to be supplanted by Babylon, Greece, Rome and ultimately by the Kingdom of God, the church.

Isa 10:18 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.

Assyria's glory was like that of a magnificent forest. That glory would not last. It would be burned up by the flaming fire of God and His people Israel. They were far from being as helpless as the Assyrian thought.

Isa 10:19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

When Jehovah was through with Assyria, his great forest of trees would be reduced to the point that a child would be able to count them.

Isa 10:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

Would Israel be eliminated from power? Not at all! She would also be reduced to no more than a remnant of

that which once was. In addition, Israel would no longer turn to Assyria or Egypt for help against those who threatened them. The nation would finally learn that the Lord Jehovah is the true support of the holy nation.

Isa 10:21 The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

That part of Jacob which remained would forsake their idols. They would no longer seek out aid from those who would later turn against them. God's rod of correction would serve the purpose which He intended.

Isa 10:22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

Abraham had been promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the sand of the seashore. He had not been promised that all the vast number would be a part of that blessing which was to be passed through them to the world. It would be through that faithful remnant which was left that the promised blessing would be transmitted.

Isa 10:23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

The consumption which God would bring upon both Assyria and Jacob would leave but a small portion of that which had existed before. But, in the process, Jacob would no longer find it necessary to fear the Assyrians.

Isa 10:24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

Yes, it was true that Assyria would be allowed to strike fear into the heart of God's people, just as Egypt had done in the years gone by. God had used Egypt to train His people. Now He was using Assyria.

Isa 10:25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

The wrath of God upon His people had about reached it's end. His outstretched hand had almost finished it's purpose. His anger would turn upon the Assyrian host in a relatively short time, and His people would find relief.

Isa 10:26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

Gideon and his very small force had won the victory over the Midianites through the power of the Lord. God's rod had been extended over the sea and Israel had escaped the horde of Egyptians who pursued them. Now the same Lord would rescue His people from the hand of the Assyrians.

Isa 10:27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy

shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

The burden which His people had worn would be removed. The yoke upon their shoulders would be lifted off. Those who had remained faithful throughout the purification process would be treated as God's elect. They would be protected by the same hand which been outstretched to discipline them.

Isa 10:28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

The Assyrians had moved from their own land and had penetrated city after city. Terror had been struck into the hearts of cities closer and closer to Jerusalem.

Isa 10:29 They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

Isa 10:30 Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.

Isa 10:31 Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

The people were fleeing before the onward march of the Assyrians until they were drawing very close to Jerusalem. Some estimate that the distance may have been no more than three miles.

Isa 10:32 As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

From the site of Nob, the Assyrian forces could shake their fists at Jerusalem and Mount Zion. But, that would be the end of their arrogance.

Isa 10:33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

The Lord of the very hosts of heaven would cut off the highest limbs of the Assyrian forest. The very highest of their captains would be taught of the power of the Lord. Their haughtiness would be turned into humility.

Isa 10:34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

God was the woodcutter. He was using the axe of Assyria to cut down the pride of Jacob. When that was accomplished, He would break the axe with another power even greater than the forest of Lebanon.

Neither the enemies nor the friends of Jehovah can fully appreciate the manner in which He operates in the lives of both individuals or nations. One thing is certain. In the end, all things work together for good to those who align themselves with His eternal purposes.

Chapter 11

I think it is needful to add a bit of introductory material before entering into our discussion of this eleventh chapter of Isaiah. There are very sharp differences as to the nature of the triumph described here. These differences come about because of the extensive use of figurative language in the Bible, especially is this true of the prophetic books.

Some are very determined to see figurative language in the latter part of the chapter. Others take a far more literal approach. This results in at least three different views of the period of peace which is pictured. We have a premillennial view which contends that Christ will return to earth and rule for a literal one thousand years, with the removal of all forms of violence between man and man, between man and beast and between beast and beast. Secondly we have a post millennial view which sees Christ coming in judgment after a literal one thousand year reign from a throne in heaven. Thirdly, we have an amillennial view which denies a literal one thousand year reign and sees that period as being a figurative expression for a very long time.

Obviously, all cannot be correct. It is necessary to determine just which portions of the material are figurative, and to what degree. If one is tempted to accuse God of being less specific than He could have been, we must remember that His reasons for presenting the material in the manner He did may well be beyond our human powers of comprehension.

We shall do our best to arrive at the truth of the words. It is quite possible that God did not intend for all of the details to be as clear as crystal until after the predictions have been fulfilled.



Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

The kingdoms of Israel and Judah had both become so badly corrupted that God had cut them off at the ground. There was still a spark of life present, but as far as was evident to the onlooker, the dynasty of David was gone.

Our present chapter declares that this was not correct. From the stem or stump of Jesse, new life would spring up. A sprout, or branch would spring forth and grow vigorously. We now know that this branch from the stem of Jesse was Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, who is called the root and offspring of David.

Isa 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

At the time John the baptist baptized Christ, it is said that the Spirit of God descended upon Him. It is true that the Spirit of God is given to all persons who are baptized for the remission of sins, after having believed in Christ as the Son of God, confessed that belief and repented of their sins. But we are told that Christ received the Spirit without measure. That is not true of others.

As a perfect channel for the operation of the Spirit, Christ was endowed with abilities greater than any human who ever lived, or who ever will. We note three pairs of characteristics which the Spirit made available to him.

1. The spirit of wisdom and understanding. Understanding is the ability to comprehend the meaning and relationship of facts and principles. Wisdom is skill in the application of that understanding.

2. We have the spirit of counsel and might. Jesus could impart his wisdom to others who were able and willing to receive it. He had the might to assure success if his counsel was accepted.

3. Was the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. He knew the mind of God, and He feared the Father as an obedient Son should.

Isa 11:3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

His judgments would be made after careful weighing of the facts. His would reprove only after it was certain that the one reproved needed that reproof.

Isa 11:4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Christ assured his followers that the meek and lowly would inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. The humble would be exalted and the proud would be brought down. The “breath of His lips” refers to His teaching. There are two ways one can look at the slaying of the wicked. All Jesus had to do was to speak the word and an enemy could lose his physical life. But the verse probably has a spiritual application and applies to the slaying of the old man of sin, who is then replaced by the new man in Christ.

Isa 11:5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

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The soldier wore a girdle around his loins to give him added strength for the battle. Righteousness was that which gave Christ such strength. The reins usually means the kidneys. Just as righteousness gave strength to the loins, faithfulness to the will of the Father protected Him from the weapons of the Devil.

**Isa 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.**

We turn now from the characteristics of the Branch or Root of David, to the effects of His life and teachings upon mankind. He is the Prince of Peace. That becomes evident in the transformations which take place as a result of His spiritual power.

**Isa 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**

It has been reported that the Barnum and Bailey circus featured an exhibit in which a lion and a lamb were placed together in the same cage and people were able to observe them lying peacefully together. When asked how such a situation could possibly take place, the keeper of the animals admitted that the lion was kept extremely well fed. Then he added that at regular intervals they had faced the need to replace the lamb. It is far from natural in this present time to find the lion and the lamb behaving like friends. It is also still true that wild beasts prey upon one another and fight bloody battles over their territories.

**Isa 11:8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.**

Here we have a picture of a nursing or a very small child innocently placing it's hand in the hole of a poisonous snake. Both the cockatrice and the asp are said to have been deadly reptiles. It would be most strange to see children playing with these animals without harm.

**Isa 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**

Are these scenes literal, or are they only figures telling of the change in personality which takes place when the sinner makes peace with God and his fellow man?

It is not impossible that some day a return to the conditions of the Garden of Eden might come about. Originally the animals were vegetarian. If they could become carnivorous because of the entry of sin into the world, we can see a possibility the the removal of sin might bring about a reversal of that change.

The other possible explanation of this peace may be more likely. In that case we would find men who behaved like beasts turning to follow in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace, and treating their fellowmen as they would like to be treated themselves.

The twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation speaks of a one thousand year period in which wars will cease and peace will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. How wonderful it would be if men were to turn to Christ and bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit to the extent that for a very extended period of time individuals

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and nations would put away their swords and nuclear weapons.

The strong possibility is that this peace is not to be found among all men in every nation, but is limited to those who dwell in God's Holy Mountain, which is the church.

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

The root of Jesse is the Christ, who was the grandson of Jesse. An ensign is a banner which can be displayed for the purpose of uniting persons in support of a cause. Christ would be held up before the Gentile nations, giving them the invitation to share with the Jews in the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes, His rest is glorious. It consists of no longer carrying the burdens of sin in one's heart here on earth, but goes farther. In heaven there shall be rest from the battles which must be fought here on earth against the temptations of Satan. Just imagine the contrast between living with God's redeemed round the throne of God, and existing in close quarters with those who cry out in agony eternally. Let us seek peace.

Isa 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Who are God's remnant that will be gathered from lands where they have been captivated, and be recovered, even from the islands of the sea? And why speak of this recovery being a second one?

May they not be those who have survived the hideous pressures of the Satanic forces and remained true to the will of God? The first recovery could have been the return under Ezra and Nehemiah. The second could be God's collection of the saints from whatever places they had been when they were converted to the gospel of Christ.

Isa 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

This verse is very comprehensive. The nations are usually the Gentiles. Thus this ensign would call the faithful of both Jew and Gentile to the universal congregation of the Lord. There they would live together in peace. There is no restriction on the entry of the Gentile nations into the Kingdom of God today.

Isa 11:13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

In this new and better day, the animosity between the two tribes Judah in the south and the ten tribes of Israel in the north was to be dissolved and the combined nation would cooperate.

Isa 11:14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil

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**them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.**

There was to be a complete victory of God's people, over the enemies on every side. This would include the Philistines on the west, and also the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites. These were age old foes of Israel. Such a victory would be a cause of great rejoicing.

**Isa 11:15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.**

The tongue of the Egyptian Sea would be the Red Sea, over which Israel passed in leaving Egyptian bondage. The river appears to be the Euphrates. The Assyrian captivity had been located beyond the Euphrates river. The point seems to be that none of the people of God would be forced to live in captivity any longer.

**Isa 11:16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.**

To this present writer this seems to be a statement from God that in the Christian age there would be a way made to leave the captivity of sin, as the highway of holiness which Christ provides may be traveled by any who choose to move from the bondage of sin to the freedom of the Kingdom of God.

There may be no man on earth who can completely

explain the mysteries of this chapter. But, there is one thing very certain. A promise is made by God in heaven that those who remain faithful unto death shall receive a crown of life. There shall be rest from the guilt of sin in this world, and there will be rest, happy rest in the company of those who have overcome the spirit of Antichrist.

## *Chapter 12*

**Isa 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.**

“In that day” is speaking of the same time period discussed in the eleventh chapter. It is a day in which God’s wrath has been reduced and the enemies of His people have been defeated. Rather than allowing the neighboring nations to invade the land, the Lord is now providing a peaceful and happy rest to settle upon the remnant who have been true to Him through the difficult period.

This chapter is a song of praise to God for the brighter day which has arisen over their horizon. Is Isaiah looking forward to the earthly rest which Israel enjoyed after the enemies had been turned back? Is he looking forward to the rest which the Messiah will bring in the Christian age? Or, is he resting his eyes upon the final rest which awaits the faithful in eternity?

**Isa 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.**

In every time of struggle, Jehovah is the answer. Earthly minded men and women place their confidence in riches, in medicine, in weapons of war, etc. But spiritually minded persons know there is a far more secure source of support than that which human wisdom can provide. That support flows from the hand of the Almighty who will protect them from every threat.

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Dear friends who read these words, if you have not already recognized Jehovah God as your salvation, do so without delay. You will find that security a source of rejoicing. The Lord will also rejoice in your decision.

Isa 12:3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Christians have the opportunity of refreshing their souls with the living water which can only be found in these wells of salvation. There are physical wells which flow at times, and then at other times they dry up. It is not so with God's wells of salvation. They flow without ceasing. Without drinking from the living water, life can become parched. Israel had found those wells in their wanderings. They were delighted.

Isa 12:4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Anyone who has discovered God's refreshing wells and drunk deeply from them will most certainly join those who tell of their experiences to others over the world. They will make certain that every man and woman on earth has the opportunity to partake of such joy along with them.

Isa 12:5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

Yes, sing unto the Lord in praise for the wonders He has made available both on earth and in heaven. Join in the heavenly chorus that lifts it's voice to give God the glory He deserves.

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But wait! What if one cannot sing. There are those who have no power of speech. There are also those who have difficulty in carrying a tune. The reply is that everyone can sing and make melody in the heart.

**Isa 12:6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.**

The inhabitant of Zion is that person who dwells in God's Holy Mountain, the Church of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. They know that the eyes of Jehovah are on them continuously and hear both the sounds made by the tongue and also those made in the heart. How happy must be that one who gives glory to God in thought, word or deed. Join us dear reader.

## *Chapter 13*

**Isa 13:1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.**

This is the first of ten chapters which predict a burden upon various nations. The word which is translated as “burden” can also be translated as “oracle” It is used in this prophecy as God predicts a burden which will be placed upon the back of the glorious city of Babylon. It is a burden of utter doom. Isaiah has the distinct displeasure of announcing it.

**Isa 13:2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.**

Isaiah is doing the writing, but he is presenting the word of the Lord. God is calling for an army which will move against the wicked city and turn it from its position of glory to one of complete desolation. He gives instructions to raise a banner upon a high mountain where it can be seen by many. A call is then to be rung out and a hand to be raised to beckon the forces into action. These forces are to go into the city and into the presence of the leaders or nobles of Babylon.

This would be no minor task. The walls and gates of Babylon were unbelievably difficult to break through. History has described the walls as being double with the Euphrates river flowing through the midst of the city. It was also said to have covered two hundred square miles with sufficient space to feed the inhabitants for several years if the city was surrounded. The citizens felt extremely secure.

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Isa 13:3 I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

The “I” here is the Lord himself. He states that He has given the command for those he has set apart for the task to prepare. These are forces which have proven that they are happy to do His will.

Isa 13:4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

The action begins. A very large number of people have responded to the call. They have gathered to unite in the destruction of the evil city of Babylon. Although the task looks to be impossible from the human point of view, no battle is ever lost when God is on one’s side. No battle is ever won when it is fought against God.

Isa 13:5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

As far as the present situation was concerned, the Medes and Persians who were sent against Babylon had come from the end of the heavens. Information about the American continents was unavailable. These Medes and Persians had come from the farthest part of the world which they knew of.

But there is more here. Babylon is a type which is followed up in the latter part of the book of Revelation. This wicked city stretches across the entire globe, wherever men persuade themselves they have the wisdom

and power to direct their own steps. The day of the Lord has been at hand a number of times. In that last day of the Lord, pictured in the Revelation, Babylon represents the city of Satan and Antichrist.

God makes it abundantly clear in this present verse that He is about to vent His wrath upon the evil land.

Isa 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay. Babylon has done her best to destroy God's faithful. Now the day of vengeance is approaching. There will be good reason to howl. The rapidly approaching disaster is not limited to the abilities of men. God Himself will see that it accomplishes the punishment which is due to the rebellious city.

Some object to the use of the term "at hand." They point out that Isaiah wrote his prophecy at approximately 740 B.C., and that the destruction of Babylon did not take place until Cyrus invasion in 539 B.C. How, then could Isaiah write concerning events which occurred two hundred years later?

The answer to this objection lies in the fact that it was not the message of Isaiah. It was a message from the eternal God who can simultaneously see the past, the present and the future. If one dispenses with predictive prophecy he eliminates a vast portion of the entire holy scripture.

Isa 13:7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

When God's army begins the attack on Babylon, such fear would reign that the hearts of men would be



turned to jello. It would be immediately clear that human strength was not sufficient to defend against the power of the Almighty.

Isa 13:8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

The feelings of helplessness would be much like those of a woman giving birth to a baby. Each of the Babylonians would look at his companions to see if they were more courageous than himself. They would find that the faces of those companions would be flushed with fear. No man, or group of men, would have the courage to stand against the invader.

Isa 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

What a contrast there is between the security of the faithful servants of God, and the sinners who defy Him! When a human becomes angry there is a limit to the destruction which he can bring about. With God there is no limit. His wrath may seem cruel to those who do not realize the horror of shaking one's fist in the face of God. To ally one's self with the forces of the devil is the greatest folly possible. His punishment is the fire of hell. The destruction of Babylon is but a foretaste of that everlasting misery.

Isa 13:10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the

sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

Both the heaven and the earth of the Babylonians was to be utterly destroyed. These are not literal entities. The heavens had to do with the rulership of the people. The earth represented the people themselves who would be left in darkness by the absence of enlightened rulers. We might even go so far as to say that the Babylonian worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars and constellations. All hope that might rest on them was vain.

Isa 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Notice that the word "I" comes into the forefront here. There is to be no guesswork as to the cause of the shaking and quaking which would come to pass.

This chapter, along with the others which follow will declare God's intention to turn the creation upside down as He cuts off the proud and defiant sinners who terrorize His faithful remnant.

Isa 13:12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Gold has always been precious to men. It was true in the time of Babylon, and is still true today. The gold which is mentioned here is not just gold. It is the very finest which can be found. We do not know the location of Ophir. The most logical suggestion is that it was mined in an area not too far from the wicked city.

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The point being made is that when God finished with His punishment of the city, there would be but a very small percentage of the population left alive.

**Isa 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.**

The rulership of Babylon was to be eliminated or replaced. The people of the city who were left would be removed to other locations.

**Isa 13:14 And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.**

The population of Babylon had become large because people from many other places had become aware of the wealthy living conditions there and decided to become a part of it. Now, with the disturbances God was about to bring upon them, these foreign people would scatter like sheep without a shepherd. They would be glad to get out of Babylon and return to those places from which they had come.

**Isa 13:15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.**

There would be no mercy upon the proud city. Spears and swords would be used to kill everyone who tried to defend it. Automatic rifles and nuclear weapons were not available, but such weapons may well not be as fearsome

in some ways as the swords and spears. Rifles and nuclear weapons do their work quickly. Spears and swords leave the victim bleeding to death.

**Isa 13:16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.**

Little children at play can bring a twinkle to the eyes of most who watch them. The twinkles would turn to torrents of tears as parents watched their children taken by the feet and slung against the walls of houses.

Personal possessions of the Babylonians would be stolen and carried off. The women would be raped and carried off.

**Isa 13:17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.**

The Medes and the Persians had united to form a great power. Sometimes one of these words is used. Sometimes the other is used. In either case, it is the Medo-Persian alliance which is discussed. The Babylonians had much wealth, but when God stirred up the Medes against them, there would be no amount of money which would turn them back. They would prefer conquest to bribery.

**Isa 13:18 Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.**

We can almost see the choice young men of Babylon with arrows penetrating their bodies, at times even piercing bodies and emerging on the other side. Pregnant

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women would receive no consideration as a result of their condition. Unborn babes would die along with their mother.

Isa 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Just how complete would the destruction of Babylon be? Would it be for a few days? Would it be for a generation or two? NO! It would be complete and it would be forever. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed in the time of Lot, Babylon would meet her doom.

Isa 13:20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

This would have been absolutely unbelievable to those who lived in the glory days of the great city. It would be as if someone were to predict the utter destruction of New York city, or London. We can visualize a great disaster coming upon either of these cities, but to think of either of them becoming a desolate area with no life but wild animals is beyond our imagination. It was precisely the same with respect to what God was predicting through the lips of His prophet Isaiah.

Isa 13:21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

The present writer of this commentary was a part of a group that visited the land of Palestine. We did not have

the opportunity of seeing what is claimed to be the site of Babylon. The reason we did not go there was that there was nothing to see. The prediction of God was fulfilled completely.

Isa 13:22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

The site of ancient Babylon is today far better suited for the dens of wild animals than it is for the homes of humans. It does not pay to fight against God!

Chapter 14

Isa 14:1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

This verse helps understand what was meant in the last chapter by saying there would be a rest for the Israelites who were living in captivity in foreign lands. Living under bondservant status can hardly be called rest. It is better described as hard labor. Isaiah is looking forward to a time when Israel would be back in the promised land and respected by outsiders to the point that these strangers would choose to live under the supervision of the Israelites.

The house of Jacob is simply another way of speaking of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Isa 14:2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

“Their place” is the promised land. The people of Israel would accept these strangers who desired to live under their oversight and would be servants and housemaids to them. In this new arrangement, the Israelites who had been servants would then become rulers, and some of those who had oppressed them would find themselves to be the servants.

There is a hint of these latter days in what is written here. Christians have escaped from the bondage of sin.

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They have the opportunity of inviting non-Christians to accept the yoke of Jesus Christ and become fellow-servants with those who were already Christians.

**Isa 14:3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,**

**Isa 14:4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!**

When that day of reversal became reality, the Israelites would be able to look back upon the contrast between the hardships of the captivity and the rest from those labors. The feeling would be most welcome.

In the previous predictions of the city of Babylon someday lying in ruins, the rulers of the Babylonians had not been dealt with. That is now to be made a part of the predictions.

The king of Babylon is not necessarily limited to any one of the wicked and oppressive rulers of that empire. It is likely that the king who is spoken of here is representative of each of the Assyrian rulers who had humiliated God's chosen people. It would be a most amazing change to see the humiliator humiliated, and the gold rich city of Babylon deserted.

**Isa 14:5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.**

Rulers in the days of Babylon's power often had a magnificent sceptre or staff which symbolized their authority. That sceptre of authority would be broken to

pieces. The Babylonian kings would no longer strike fear into any they chose to intimidate.

**Isa 14:6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.**

All the Babylonian ruler had to do in the time of his rule was to raise the sceptre and proclaim what he desired to be done. It was as good as done when he made his proclamation. After the conditions were reversed, the hateful ruler would find himself persecuted and there would be none to stand by his side.

**Isa 14:7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.**

The release from the oppression of Babylon would cause not only Israel to rejoice. Many other nations would have rest which they had not enjoyed for some time. Those of these nations would be singing a song of redemption from slavery.

**Isa 14:8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.**

The fir trees and the cedars of Lebanon may be symbolic of rulers of the previously persecuted people. Then again, it may be literal. The Babylonians were known for burning the forests of the people whom they conquered. After the fall of Babylon, those trees would not feel the axe of the woodcutter.

**Isa 14:9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for**

**thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.**

The word translated as “hell” here is the Hebrew “sheol.” It is not the eternal fire to which the wicked dead will be consigned after the final judgment. It refers to the state of the dead. Those who had already found their place in that region would meet the king of Babylon with emotion. Those such as Alexander the Great, Adolf Hitler and others of similar character would meet the newcomer with words of mockery.

**Isa 14:10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?**

Death is the great equalizer. The man who lived in a palace on earth is no more powerful than the beggar who slept in the street. Those pompous rulers who had little opposition to their will during their reign on earth will lie still and cold while others take their place among the living. Those who had already tasted of the humiliation of sheol found it surprising that the great king of Babylon had taken his place beside them.

**Isa 14:11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.**

Centuries later we still have written records of the pomp of the Babylonian rulers and also of the city of Babylon. But those records tell a sad story of that which once was, and is no longer. The noise made by the musical instruments played by the musicians in honor of their



rulers is silenced and no longer heard in the land of the living.

Some rulers were buried in tombs prepared long before their death. It would not be so with the king of Babylon. He would be allowed to rot in the dirt, lying on a carpet of worms and covered with a layer of them, feasting upon the remains of the flesh;.

**Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!**

The word “Lucifer” was once thought to refer to the devil. He is described as a fallen angel who was cast out of the heavenly places. Today this thought has been discarded. The word “lucifer” means “light giver.” The king of Babylon had considered himself to be the light of the world, standing above all other sources of glory.

**Isa 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:**

It is thought that there was a mountain upon which the gods ruled somewhere to the north; of Canaan. The king of Babylon saw himself as ascending to heights above every authority on earth.

**Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.**

The Most High is God. The imagination of the king was running wild to the point that he had seen himself as the equal of any power in existence, be it man or God.

**Isa 14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.**

This would be quite a fall. All the way from the throne of God to the pit of hell. Men become very subdued and full of despair when they lose prestige. The king of Babylon would have more reason to feel that despair than any except Satan himself.

**Isa 14:16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;**

Those who observe the tremendous loss of prestige would gasp in surprise that a man who could instill fear in the hearts of human rulers was now in such a state as they saw him. He would no longer be causing kingdoms to tremble before his armies.

**Isa 14:17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?**

What a terrible thing to be remembered by! This king went about with his armies removing people from their cities, then destroying what they had built, and then refusing to let those he had captured ever go free and return to their land.

One of the things remembered about Cyrus, who ruled after Babylon was defeated, was that he opened the houses of the prisoners and allowed them to go back to their homes.

**Isa 14:18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.**

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Many other rulers rest in graves previously prepared. They died, even as the king of Babylon did; yet they were remembered for their accomplishments and not for the fear they cast into the hearts of others.

Isa 14:19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet.

This man found himself without a grave. He was discarded like one would throw away a branch which had fallen from a tree in his yard. He was no more valuable than the clothing of someone who had been killed by having a sword thrust all the way through him. Such clothing would be soaked in blood and good for nothing. The body of such a one would be thrown out on the stones of a garbage dump and would be tromped down by those who passed by.

Isa 14:20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

The reason this king would not be given decent burial was that he had destroyed both his foes and the land upon which they had dwelt. He was an evil doer. Not only would he be abominated, his descendants would be forgotten.

Isa 14:21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

His children were to be killed. God knew that the same attitudes which he demonstrated would be passed on to them if they were allowed to replace him. They must not be permitted to rule and build cities such as the Babylon which he developed.

Isa 14:22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

God made a promise. He would make certain that no relative of this wicked ruler would ever sit upon the throne of that hated city. God kept that promise. There is no throne. There is no city.

Isa 14:23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

History has passed down the reason for the city of Babylon becoming a swamp where waterfowl would make their nests. The Euphrates river, which had watered the city, was diverted into dozens of small streams which allowed their contents to sink into the earth, leaving it a miry and muddy mess.

Isa 14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

Even as powerful as Babylon and it's rulers were, it could not stand against the will of the Lord. When God determines that a plan shall be put into action, it will be!

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**Isa 14:25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.**

The yoke which the Assyrian empire had placed upon God's people would be lifted. The burden would be removed and they would have rest. Note that the land which the Assyrian had been misusing was not his own. It was God's land. As he had trodden others under his feet. He would now suffer the same fate.

**Isa 14:26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.**

The plan for the punishment of the king of Babylon and Assyria was no different than would be the case for all of the nations of all time. Nation after nation has had the same delusions of grandeur. Nation after nation has risen and fallen.

**Isa 14:27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?**

Such a purpose has come from the mind of God. He stretches His mighty hand over the most powerful of potentates and leaves them without a throne and joined to the dead in Sheol.

**Isa 14:28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.**

King Ahaz died in 715 B.C. The upcoming words were spoken by Isaiah at that time. The Philistines had been

a foe of Israel from the time of her entry into the land of Canaan. They were an idolatrous people and God had commanded that Israel drive out all of the inhabitants of the land. The Philistines were not driven out. A judgment is now pronounced against them.

**Isa 14:29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.**

The Philistines did not need to rejoice because Israel and Judah had been removed from the land for a time. If they thought Israel was a pest, they could look forward to far greater aggravations. The Assyrians and the Babylonians would be a more serious burden than were the people of Israel.

**Isa 14:30 And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.**

Who are these firstborn of the poor and needy who shall lie down in safety. The present writer believes from what is said in the last verse of this chapter, that they are those of God's people who have been uprooted and who were one day to return to the land God had promised to them. Cyrus made this possible.

**Isa 14:31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.**

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The name Palestine comes from the Philistines. They dwelt in a fertile area along the coast of Canaan. The smoke which came from the north was that of the enemies who moved into the land when Israel and Judah were removed.

Isa 14:32 What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

Who are the messengers of the nation, and what nation is meant? The nation is the people of God. When they cry out for help God will hear. Israel would not be eliminated even though it would suffer great sorrow over its punishments at the hand of God. He was the builder of Israel. He ruled from Mount Zion and Jerusalem. His people could have confidence that He had not forgotten them. In His own time they would come back. They did just that under the decree of king Cyrus.

Chapter 15

A word or two of introduction may prove to be useful here. When Israel approached the promised land under the leadership of Joshua they had come from the west as they left Egypt and traveled toward Canaan. They found it necessary to move around the southern end of the Dead Sea and attempt to enter Canaan from the east of the Jordan. They were refused permission to pass through Edom and Moab. Balaam was hired to place a curse upon Israel. This stragegy failed.

The Moabites were related to Israel in that they were descendants of Lot through his incest with his two daughters after his wife had lost her life in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot was a nephew of Abraham.

At one time the women of Moab seduced the men of Israel and God was angered by this development. And so, even though the two nations were related, there was a great amount of ill feeling between them.

Chapters fifteen and sixteen of Isaiah describe the burden which God pronounced upon the Moabites because of their evil influence upon His people.

Isa 15:1 The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;

There are many names of sites in Moab found in these two chapters. About half of them can be located. The rest are uncertain. The first two of these are the cities of Ar and Kir. These two cities were undone in a very brief time. Whether both were silenced in the same night, and whether it required only one night for each

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of them to be vanquished cannot be determined from the text of the chapter. What is certain is that neither of them was capable of putting up any resistance to the Israelites passage.

**Isa 15:2 He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.**

The result of the quick conquest over Kir and Ar caused the Moabites to head for the high places on which their idols and false gods were worshiped. This did not help them. Isaiah declared that Nebo and Medeba would also fall. The Moabites would weep bitter tears over them also. The shaving of the head and cutting off of the beards was a sign of extreme humiliation.

Nebo was, of course, the mountain to which God led Moses as the latter was shown the land into which Joshua would lead Israel.

**Isa 15:3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.**

The Moabites would be putting on rough fabric like burlap which would tell of their pitiful condition. They would climb to the tops of their houses mourning with sorrow. As they met in the streets, they would weep with great feeling.

**Isa 15:4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.**

Two more sites are added to the list. Heshbon and Elealeh would cry so loudly that their voices could be heard from a great distance. Instead of facing the Israelites in battle, the soldiers of Moab would join in the pathetic wailing which stretched across the entire land.

**Isa 15:5 My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.**

Although the message came from the Lord, Isaiah felt a certain amount of sympathy for the coming victims of the disaster.

Why is the heifer of three years old mentioned? It seems that God was comparing the easy life which Moab had enjoyed in the past with a heifer who had never been forced to work hard. Her leisure in time past would cause the burden to be more difficult.

**Isa 15:6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.**

The streams which watered the land of Moab would be dried up, leaving the vegetation brown and withered. There would be no pasture for the grazing animals.

**Isa 15:7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.**

In a short time all the goods which had been accumulated and stored for leaner days would be used

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up. What little was left they would try to carry away to the very borders of the land.

Isa 15:8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim.

We are not certain of the location of either Eglaim or Beerelim. The point being made is that from one border of Moab to the other, the howling and wailing would be heard.

Isa 15:9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

Some of the rivers of the land would run red with the blood of the wounded. But even that was not the end. The Assyrian army would move over the land like a ferocious lion, eating up everything in sight.

Chapter 16

Isa 16:1 Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

Although some of the modern critics of the Bible view this chapter as an isolated fragment, we will treat it as a logical extension of the discussion found in chapter fifteen. We are still dealing with the Assyrian threats. At this point Israel seems to have thrown off the oppressors, at least for the time being. In contrast, the Moabites are faced with extinction from the same source.

Through the wisdom of Jehovah, Isaiah offers relief to the Moabites. If they wish to humble themselves before Israel, that help can be obtained by sending tribute to Jerusalem. The tribute was to consist of “the lamb.” This probably refers to tribute of lambs which were offered in time past to obtain peace with Israel. It had apparently been discontinued and Isaiah was informing them God was willing to help if they would humble themselves and show that humility by the tribute.

There is a problem with the sending of the tribute to Sela. This was another name for the capitol city of Edom, usually called Petra. There would be no reason for the tribute to be sent first to Edom and then to Jerusalem. The answer may be that Petra also means a ledge of rock. This could mean the tribute would be gathered at some well known mass of rock in Moab and then sent on to Jerusalem.

Isa 16:2 For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

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The time was coming when the terrified women of Moab would be acting like a mother bird who had been driven from her nest, and they would be gathering at the places where the Arnon river could be crossed. The people of Moab would be frantic from fear.

**Isa 16:3 Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.**

The counsel and judgment which are mentioned here can apply to Israel rather than Moab. Israel may be receiving advice to care for the fugitives who are fleeing from the invading forces.

The reader needs to be reminded that it is not Isaiah who is the source of the advice given. It is the Lord, speaking through Isaiah. This verse can well be directed toward Israel. Thus, Israel would be wise to offer a hiding place for those of Moab who were in flight. They were not to mistreat the Moabites if Moab was willing to pay the tribute.

**Isa 16:4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.**

God has a very real concern for all men who will appeal to Him for protection. If the fleeing Moabites were to humble themselves by paying the tribute, He would advise Israel to admit them and protect them.

**Isa 16:5 And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in**

**the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness.**

What throne is being spoken of here? It is the throne of David. The throne of David was representative of the rulership of the Lord. By humbling themselves to Israel and asking for help, the Moabites would have been hastening the development of the coming Kingdom of heaven. That same type of mercy which was being offered to Moab would be the mark of the Messiah who would sit upon the everlasting throne of God's kingdom.

**Isa 16:6 We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.**

The response of Moab was not the best choice. Because of their pride, they rejected the offer of protection. They would find that their haughtiness and pride had left them believing they need not depend upon Israel for help. Such false hope would lead to a terrible fall.

**Isa 16:7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.**

As a result of their poor decision, Moab would find themselves howling in distress. Kirhareth is very likely the same as the Kir mentioned earlier. The very foundations of their principle cities would be demolished.

The remaining verses of the chapter give some of the details of what Moab might expect.

**Isa 16:8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.**

The particular location of Heshbon and Sibmah are not as important as the fact that their condition was to be made intolerable. These were fertile places in the land of Moab, where the crops were the finest. The products of these fields had been used in Moab and had also been used by those afar off.

**Isa 16:9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.**

The grape vines of Sibmah would be destroyed. The fruit of the fields of Heshbon would offer no harvest. The only watering which these places could expect would be the tears of the prophet who could see how awful the conditions would become.

We get some insight into the heart of Isaiah as he is ready to weep over the possible grief of that nation which had been hateful in her relationships with Israel.

**Isa 16:10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.**

The happiness which had been a part of harvest time in the past would be removed. It would be replaced by mourning over the failure of the fields and the vineyards. When Isaiah used the word “T” here and then said “T” have made their vintage shouting to cease, he was representing the Lord. He appears to speak both for himself and for God at different points in the text.

**Isa 16:11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh.**

Is it then Isaiah's bowels which sound like a harp for Moab, or is it the bowels of God. It seems obvious that in the previous verse, it was God who caused the failure of the harvest, but in this verse it is Isaiah whose bowels are vibrating in sympathy for the future misery of Moab.

**Isa 16:12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.**

Moab would seek help by going to the high places where their false gods were worshiped. They could pray until they were exhausted. Their prayers would be useless. They would not turn from their false gods to the true God of all nations. Since that was the case, they would have no relief from their sorrows.

**Isa 16:13 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.**

Jehovah had warned Moab over and over again through His prophets that continuing in the path they

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had chosen would result in disaster for them. Some trace these warning back to Amos, Zephaniah and others. Others believe it was warnings Isaiah himself had delivered concerning them.

Isa 16:14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

Whichever was true, Moab had waited too late. What had been only a general warning in the past was now to become much more specific. Within three years the grief would come upon them. They could expect no extension of the time. A hired worker did not work beyond the time for which he was being paid; nor would God extend His mercy beyond the three year period.

The number who would escape from the sorrows would be so small and weak that it would be hardly noticeable. The student of the Word of God will quickly recall the statement that “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Chapter 17

Isa 17:1 The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

The prophet now turned to the burden which would be laid on Damascus. Damascus had been a city as long as any in the world. It was the capitol of Syria which was located to the north and east of Israel.

In order to protect themselves from the power of the Assyrians, Syria and the tribe of Ephraim had made an alliance. Ephraim was but one of the northern tribes, but it was much more influential than the rest. Both Syria and Ephraim had decided it was best to combine their forces to oppose the Assyrians.

Isaiah predicted that this would not succeed. Damascus would be left in ruins. This did not necessarily mean it would be unrecognizable. But it would certainly suffer drastically.

Isa 17:2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

The cities of Aroer were located along the border of Syria and Ephraim. They would be so desolate that sheep might lie down in their midst and have no fear of being disturbed.

Isa 17:3 The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

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Any protection for Ephraim would be dissolved and Damascus would have no governmental authority left after the burden was laid upon them. Israel had suffered the loss of glory through their acceptance of idolatry. God had reduced them to but a remnant of what they had been before. The same was to be true of Syria and their proud city of Damascus.

**Isa 17:4 And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.**

The twelve sons of Jacob had been the heads of the tribes of Israel. Just as a person who had suffered from starvation or from some serious disease would become only skin and bones, Jacob's descendants would meet the same sort of fate.

**Isa 17:5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.**

It would be as if the Lord had gone through the land and left it as bare as a corn field which had been picked so clean there was practically nothing left. Assyria would act as the harvestman for the Lord and would leave very little.

Other passages tell us that God was only using Assyria and Babylon for His own purposes, and later would punish them for their disrespect of His rulership over all men. God would permit Assyria to ravage the northern kingdom, but would not condone the sins of that people.

**Isa 17:6 Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.**

It would be true that a small number of the people would survive the attacks. However; compared with the number who were destroyed, the remnant would be like the difference between the grapes or olives which were harvested and the few which were left on the vines or the trees.

God has always had His eye open toward the few who remain faithful to Him through trials and temptations. He would not forget that small number who were true to His Word.

**Isa 17:7 At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.**

Those who did survive would realize the importance of leaning on the everlasting arms of the Almighty. This attitude has been seen many times when disaster strikes men. When they come to the realization that they are absolutely unable to solve their problems by themselves, they will lift their eyes toward heaven.

**Isa 17:8 And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.**

The land of both the Syrians and the Ephraimites



was covered with altars and images honoring that which the people had considered gods. Now they would cease offering sacrifices and bowing down before statues made with their own hands. Their altars and totem poles would be abandoned. The groves where such images were found would no longer have an attraction for them.

History verifies the accuracy of Isaiah's prediction. After the return from captivity idolatry was no longer practiced.

**Isa 17:9 In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.**

The proud cities of Israel would be left like the branch of a vine which had been passed over because of its insignificance, or the bough of the olive tree which was left when the harvestman passed on. This last phrase is not just an added afterthought. God meant business!

**Isa 17:10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:**

If a person were to plant a field with fine seed or set fine looking young plants, but fail to care for it properly, that person would be in for a disappointment.

The strange slips mentioned could perhaps have been the idolatrous worship which was being practiced.

**Isa 17:11 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.**

The field might look healthy until the time of the harvest. Then when the harvest proved to be nearly non-existent, there would be a sad awakening. The lack of wisdom of the people in the worship of false gods would lead to a horrible harvest.

**Isa 17:12 Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!**

Isaiah then hears the noise of a great multitude of people rushing along toward Syria and Ephraim. The sound is like that of raging waves of the sea, foaming out their fury. There is somewhat more here than just the situation at hand. What Isaiah hears is entirely too similar to the chaos John describes in speaking of the antichristian spirit of the nations in the end time.

**Isa 17:13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.**

Note that the word “nations” is in the plural. Those nations that choose to overwhelm God’s people may appear to be victorious. The apparent victory will turn to dust. When God decides His own people have been



sufficiently punished for their misdeeds, He will see that those who have been a tool in His hands are themselves punished. They will have glory only for a brief time. Then they shall become as weak as chaff or dust swirling along before the wind.

**Isa 17:14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.**

This last verse of the chapter makes the point more clear. The change will be as surprising as if the glory was there in the afternoon, but by morning it is gone. Those who attack God's people, robbing and stealing from them, will wake up to find their glory missing.

It can hardly be overlooked that when Sennacherib assembled his troops to attack the city of Jerusalem, the situation looked like a simple venture for him in the evening of one day. By morning 185,000 of his Assyrian troops lay dead at the hands of an angel of the Lord. From that point on Assyria declined.

## *Chapter 18*

### **Isa 18:1 Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:**

There is great disagreement over a number of points in this chapter. I shall try to do the best I can, just as many others have tried to do.

The difficulties begin with this very first verse. It seems strange that in other cases the word “burden” is used rather than the word “woe”, as is done in this verse. It is possible that the emphasis here concerns a lesson which the ambassadors from this land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia were to learn, and not upon great burdens which were to be placed upon them.

Secondly, the relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt is blurred. Sometimes the two are almost considered to be one. At other times they appear to have separate identities. For example; in this chapter and that following it, Ethiopia is addressed first, then Egypt.

The phrase “shadowing with wings” seems to refer to either insects which are found in great numbers, fluttering around, or it could apply to the unusual boats which are mentioned in verse two.

### **Isa 18:2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!**

This land with shadowing wings sent ambassadors riding in vessels made of papyrus to Israel. They



apparently made this contact to create an alliance with Israel against the Assyrians who were running roughshod over nation after nation.

These messengers were chosen because they were swift. They were to go to a nation which was scattered and peeled, and had been terrible from times of old, but which was now meted out and trodden down. This description fits Israel which had been able to break the bonds of Egypt and conquer the nations of Canaan as they moved into that land. They had now been measured and persecuted, scattered and treated with a degree of scorn. The Assyrians were on the way. It seemed they had little hope.

The last phrase of this second verse is a mystery. This does not seem to be true of Israel. No rivers had spoiled Canaan. They had flooded Egypt at times. Assyria had also dealt with flood conditions. But it is hard to associate flooding of the Jordan with the general tone of this second verse.

**Isa 18:3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.**

Beginning at this point, we may have the reply which Isaiah delivers to the messengers from the land of the shadowing wings. God is not panicked in the least. It will not be long before He will lift a banner high where all can see it. He will also blow a trumpet to call His forces into action. Everyone needs to pay careful attention to what happens when this is done.

**Isa 18:4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling**

**place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.**

God had informed Isaiah that He was waiting patiently until the time was right. The occasion was somewhat similar to the waiting period for a harvest. The husbandman waited night after night and day after day for the ripening to take place. God was waiting for the Assyrian nation to reach a point where it would be most disappointed in the results of its attempt to take the entire known world.

**Isa 18:5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.**

Just when the Assyrian thought he was about to pick the Jerusalem plum, God would step in. The harvest would be made absolutely impossible. As pruning hooks could put any gathering of the grapes out of reach, God would wake the Assyrians out of their dreamland.

**Isa 18:6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.**

The Assyrian host would be left lying on the ground where the birds of the air and the beasts of the fields could feast upon them. The feast would be so great that the birds would be able to eat all summer and the

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beasts of the earth could do the same through the entire winter.

This prediction was fulfilled to the letter. One hundred eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian soldiers were slain just outside the city of Jerusalem when the Assyrian numbers were thought to be overwhelming.

Isa 18:7 In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

When this amazing event took place, the attitude of other nations toward the people of God would become one of the greatest respect. That same people who were described in the first verse of this chapter would rise from their downtrodden position to the point that others would send presents to them either in gratitude for the victory over the Assyrians, or to gain their friendship in case of any future threats.

There can be no question that the nation of Israel is meant. Mount Zion was the place where the name of Jehovah had been honored and His praise had been offered.

The reader would be wise to compare the situation here with that of the end times, as described in the book of Revelation. In that place the forces of Satan are gathered in massive numbers to inflict a defeat upon God's faithful. The result of that final battle is disastrous for the devil and his followers. Does this not give every faithful follower of the will of God in all of the world confidence that a pattern is appearing in world history.

Satan's followers outnumber those of Jehovah. This will be true until that decisive battle of Armageddon. Then there will be a drastic change!

Chapter 19

Isa 19:1 The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

Egypt has been a durable nation. Some of the oldest records of human history have come from that territory. For many centuries Egypt had been a foe of Israel. It had also been recognized as a cultural leader. Moses, for instance was instructed in the wisdom of the Egyptians.

The relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt varied from time to time. Sometimes they are considered separate nations. At other times they seem to be considered as one nation. The fact that the burden of Egypt is considered in the chapter following the woe of Ethiopia may not be coincidental.

Isaiah warns Egypt that God is coming upon them, riding on a swift cloud. When He came, the idol worship which was common would be “moved.” Since idols are vain nothings the moving does not have to do with personal feelings on their part. It applies to those who foolishly worship them. In addition, the coming of the Lord would cause “heart failure” over the entire land of Egypt.

Isa 19:2 And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.

God would cause such chaos among the people that they would fight among themselves. Individuals would

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fight. Cities would fight. There would also be war with other nations. Such disturbances result when the word of God is rejected. Man does not have the wisdom to guide his own footsteps. We must trust in the infinite wisdom of our Creator.

Internal fighting in any organization weakens that organization. Energy that could be used in constructive activities is wasted in such conflict. This is true in families, church congregations, businesses and national politics.

**Isa 19:3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmners, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.**

When the Egyptian wise men failed to solve the problems facing the nation, the people would turn to a variety of useless advisors. Each of the groups listed above presumes to have supernatural power to deliver truth. None of them are capable of supporting their claims.

When the Lord says He will destroy their counsel, He is declaring that there is no source of ultimate wisdom other than Himself. May I suggest that the same pattern has been seen in other nations since the time of Egypt. Germany was a proud nation. After denying the power of the Holy Scriptures and setting out to conquer the world, it is now a second class nation. Russia, Rome and other infidelic nations have found themselves humbled when they sought counsel in human wisdom and have ignored that of God.

**Isa 19:4 And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.**

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We are not able to clearly identify any single person who fits the characteristics of this cruel lord. It could have been any of several who ruled over Egypt after the prophecy of Isaiah was given. The possibility that this is speaking of cruel rulers in general may have some credibility.

Isa 19:5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

Commentators in general believe that the “sea” mentioned here was the Nile river. It was the lifeline of the nation and when it did not overflow, drought followed. If the Nile either did not get enough water to overflow, or if it received too much, there was disaster. Too little produced drought. Too much left the fields flooded after the time of planting.

It is not necessary that we understand the sea to be the Nile river. The river was dependent upon the evaporation of water from the sea, and the distribution of that water through wind patterns. God is in control of both.

Isa 19:6 And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

Regardless of the meaning of “turning the rivers far away”, the point here is that the failure of the Nile would leave the nation devastated. It would be unable to properly defend itself. It would be deprived of the products which were dependent upon the vegetation which grew in the flood plains.

Isa 19:7 The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the

brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.

Papyrus grew in the areas which would be dried up. This was an important commercial product and would lead to economic hardship.

Isa 19:8 The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

Those who made a living by fishing in the river would be left in a hopeless condition. The word “angle” refers to the fishhooks. Some used these. Other threw nets into the water. Neither of these would have any success.

Isa 19:9 Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded.

Those who occupied themselves in making linen and cotton cloth would find it impossible to obtain the ingredients necessary for their efforts.

Isa 19:10 And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.

Some used the water to make ponds where fish could be raised commercially. These would also find no sufficient supply of water to create the ponds.

In general, the wisdom of men would be proven to be completely inadequate for the problems facing the people. There was a serious need for answers!

Isa 19:11 Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

In view of all the distress which came upon the nation with the failure of the wise men, it was to become the consensus that the bragging of these men about their long line of descendants from wise ancestors was no more help than could be received from dumb animals. They were utterly embarrassed.

Isa 19:12 Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

All the ego of the wise men had disappeared. They were now silent. What they really needed to do was to learn what God had said in the past, and what He declared He would do to the nation in the future.

Isa 19:13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.

Zoan and Noph were centers of leadership and human learning. God condemned the greatest of the wise men in those two locations as being fools. Not only were they deceiving themselves; they had deceived the entire land. They were supposed to be the ones upon whom the rest could depend. They had not discharged their responsibilities.

Isa 19:14 The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

These princes were in such a sad condition that they had no idea which way to turn. Everywhere one looked, it was the same. The entire population was staggering around as if they dead drunk and wallowing in their own vomit.

Isa 19:15 Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

Neither the leaders nor the followers could accomplish anything profitable. The head represents the leaders. The tail represents the followers. No class of the population was doing more than wandering around aimlessly.

Isa 19:16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.

Some men are timid, and some women are aggressive. However, this is not the general rule. Normally men are more aggressive than women. The nation of Egypt would more closely resemble the timidity of women because of the terrors God had allowed to fall upon them.

Isa 19:17 And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel

of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

The memory of the ten plagues which fell upon Egypt at the time Moses led Israel out of that land could well have been alive at the time Isaiah is describing. Also, the events which are mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter would have terrified anyone who understood that the Lord Jehovah had brought these shock waves over the land. Judah was the land where Jehovah was worshipped. The connection would have been enough to strike fear into Egyptian hearts.

Isa 19:18 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.

Why should only five cities be mentioned? Some start looking for the names of exactly five cities of Egypt that began to promise allegiance to Jehovah. This probably means only that a small portion of the Egyptians would be converted. And why does the verse mention the language of “Canaan” rather than the language of Israel or the language of Judah? I do not agree with those who say the language of Canaan was that of the Canaanites rather than the Hebrew of the Israelites. The Israelites lived in the land which the Egyptians might well have called Canaan.

Yet another question is why one of the five cities was called, “The city of destruction.” Our suggestion is that this does not speak of the destruction which this one city would visit upon others. It is more likely that one of the cities represents that part of the five which is to be destroyed because of turning back from their commitment to Jehovah.

Isa 19:19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

The altar and the pillar were symbols of the willingness of the Egyptians who were converted to honor the true God of heaven. It is true that God warned men not to build Him altars in places other than the temple at Jerusalem. Still, this could have been done without His approval, even by those who had committed to Him.

Isa 19:20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

In times of affliction, men turn to prayer. The altar and pillar would encourage them to do just that. While Egypt had oppressed others in days gone by, she was not being oppressed by others. But there would be a sufficient number of His sincere followers that He would send a Saviour to deliver them. This Saviour who was to be sent gives a Messianic tone to the promise. There were others who aided Egypt over the years, but this appears to be a way of introducing the Lord as the coming Saviour.

Isa 19:21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

Does the Saviour inform the Egyptians about the Lord, or is He Himself the Lord? Whichever is true, He

will impress them with the need to offer sacrifices to the Lord. After they have been instructed concerning the Lord's will, they will make vows to Him and will see that those vows are kept.

Isa 19:22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

My earthly father used to give me a spanking and then tell me that he did not enjoy it. He was doing it for my own good. God was smiting Egypt in order that they might be healed of the disease of idolatrous worship. Even when they go astray, He chastises them that they may be healed and recognize their need for Him.

Isa 19:23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

God tells us of a "Highway of holiness." It is the Way, the Truth and the Life. When men walk that highway they are pleasing to Him. They also deal with other men in love and mercy. While Egypt and Assyria had used Israel as a highway to attack one another, they would in "that day" discard their malice and replace it with brotherly kindness.

Isa 19:24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

Those who had been vicious foes of days before would in that day become united in service to God. By doing

this they would help to bring about the blessing which Jehovah said would come about through the seed of Abraham.

We must not pass on without a reminder that the Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip converted, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts, had come to Jerusalem to worship God.

Isa 19:25 Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

What a tremendous climax this verse makes for the present chapter. God speaks with great approval of Egypt, Assyria and Israel. Egypt has recognized Him as their God, and He responds by calling them "My people." Assyria had turned about through God's efforts. They were the work of His hands. Israel had long been very special to the Lord. They were His inheritance in that they had been His people through the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would never be completely disinherited.

Chapter 20

Isa 20:1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;

We have in this chapter a very vivid lesson which God used to warn His people not to depend upon Egypt and Ethiopia for help in turning back the powerful Assyrian forces which were steadily moving through the various countries and adding them to it's dominion. The Assyrians had already conquered the city of Ashdod with ease.

Sargon is a well known name in profane history but it is mentioned only this one time in the Bible. He ruled for several years over the Assyrian nation. Tartan is not the name of the person whom Sargon sent to fight against Ashdod. It is a title for a military commander.

Isa 20:2 At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

The fear of Assyria had left Israel wondering which way to turn. They concluded that even though Egypt and Ethiopia had been foes in the past, there was a need to unite with them in order to secure protection from the Assyrians.

God knew this was a mistake. He chose a means of getting their attention and warning them that an alliance with Egypt and Assyria was not going to afford the security which they sought.

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God told Isaiah to take off the sackcloth from his loins and remove the shoes from his feet. He was to move about among the Israelites barefoot and naked. This was to last for a period of three years. It would have been impossible to ignore Isaiah's actions.

**Isa 20:3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;**

The Lord informed His people that just as Isaiah had walked about naked and barefoot, the Egyptians and Ethiopians would be taken captive by the Assyrians and would demonstrate the humiliating defeat which those two nations would suffer. Even though Israel, Egypt and Ethiopia were to unite, they would be unable to defend themselves against the invaders.

**Isa 20:4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.**

The two countries upon which Israel was about to pin their hopes would be embarrassed beyond measure. The Assyrians would cause them to march as captives to the territory controlled by that proud and haughty nation. They would not even be allowed to mourn in sackcloth. Their buttocks would be exposed for all to see and mock.

Practically every commentator tries to soften the word naked, thinking that a prophet such as Isaiah would

object violently to exposing his nakedness, and that also the Lord would not ask a good man to suffer such embarrassment. It is usually suggested that he would at least have been left with a thin loin cloth to cover his sexual organs. We hope that was the case. We do not know that is was.

**Isa 20:5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.**

When Israel saw Isaiah in this condition for an entire three year period, that should have been enough to instill fear in their hearts and persuade them not to lean upon those two nations. Egypt would have it's glory dimmed. Ethiopia would fall far short of Israel's expectation that they could help.

**Isa 20:6 And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?**

What "isle" is that spoken of here. Israel is not an island. Neither are Egypt or Ethiopia. It may be that the original language means coastal land rather than island.

The key point is that if Egypt and Ethiopia were to be brought into the same pathetic condition as had the prophet Isaiah, Israel had no reason to think an alliance with them would rescue them from the powerful Assyrians. They should have realized that the Lord was their help. Their faith had been worn thin.

Their idols, their wise men and their magicians had failed them. The two nations upon whom they had placed some hope were to be taken captive. Their only escape route was God, and they had not been true to Him. How could they escape?



## Chapter 21

This chapter presents the burden which was to be carried by three foes of Israel. They are Babylon, Edom and Arabia. As is true of vast numbers of persons in the present day, these nations did not realize the ridiculous position in which they were placing themselves when they opposed the Israel of God. Here we see the picture of their plight.

**Isa 21:1 The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.**

Babylon was located in a region which would have been almost uninhabitable if it had not been for the irrigation provided by the Euphrates river. The rulers of the city had dug irrigation canals which allowed water from the Euphrates to spread out through the city. This caused Babylon to be in the unique position of existing in the midst of deserted wilderness, yet being a showplace of gardens and luxury.

In the book of Revelation, John the apostle says that the many waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues. And so, Babylon was literally a city set upon a sea of water, and spiritual Babylon gloried in the vast multitudes who chose the luxuries and pleasures of this world over the hope of heaven.

This first verse predicts a whirlwind of trouble coming from a powerful foreign force. That power was almost certainly the Medes and Persians, with Cyrus as the leader.

**Isa 21:2 A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.**

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Isaiah sees the invader already at work. It is not a pleasant sight, but it is God's will that Babylon receive her just dues after having caused the Israelites much pain and sorrow in their captivity.

The invasion would punish Babylon who had dealt treacherously in dealings with other nations and who had removed treasures from those nations, particularly Israel. The griefs of the captives would be removed through the edict of Cyrus, who allowed Israel to return to Palestine.

Isa 21:3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

It is not a pleasant experience to sit in a courtroom and hear a life imprisonment or a death sentence passed upon a vicious murderer. Yet such sentences appear to be necessary to discourage other wicked persons from following the same paths. Isaiah is horror stricken by his vision. The suffering was deep within as it would be felt by the woman who was in the process of giving birth to a child.

Isa 21:4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

Perhaps we could substitute the word "pounded" for the word "panted" and aid our understanding of the emotional turmoil passing through the soul of Isaiah as he receives the vision. It would have seemed that the release of the Israelites would cause great pleasure. Instead, the horror that surrounded the release was heavy indeed.

Isa 21:5 Prepare the table, watch in the

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**watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.**

It was going to be necessary for the princes of Babylon to maintain a constant watch while they reveled in their pleasures. Even while the banquet table was loaded with delicacies, the watchman must keep a sharp eye open and the weapons of war must be kept in constant readiness.

**Isa 21:6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.**

God had instructed Isaiah to appoint someone to oversee the territory and continually report on that which he saw. We have the results of those reports in the next few verses.

**Isa 21:7 And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:**

The watchman reported that he saw a group of messengers with news of great importance. There were a couple of riders on horses. There was a chariot pulled by asses, and another pulled by camels. He had very carefully and anxiously waited to see that they would do or say.

**Isa 21:8 And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:**

The watchman had been obeying the command to observe carefully what was happening. He had spent both day and night surveying the scene.

**Isa 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.**

The watchman's report was that a chariot and a couple of riders on horses had come into hearing range. They had cried out that the mighty and beautiful city of Babylon had fallen to an enemy.

**Isa 21:10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.**

Thus the burden of Babylon had been revealed to Isaiah. That which he had seen in the vision was passed on to those of his day, as well as to those of these latter days who care to know the truth.

**Isa 21:11 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?**

We now turn to the burden of Dumah, or Edom. The watchman had been observing from Mount Seir in the territory of Edom. Isaiah wishes to know how long it will be before the burden of Edom will be finished. He asks the watchman for his report. Is the punishment of Edom about to come to an end?

**Isa 21:12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.**

I can only present what seems to me to be the heart of this verse. Morning comes. Night follows. This repeats again and again. Edom would continuously feel the burden laid upon them because of their opposition to Jehovah and Israel.

The book of Obadiah deals with some of the same material as is given above.

**Isa 21:13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.**

We have now covered the burden of Babylon and that of Edom. Here we come to the third of the trio; the burden of Arabia.

Arabia is a very large land. The conditions would be so dangerous to the normal travel in parts of that land that it would be necessary for those who were moving from place to place to hide in the forest for safety.

**Isa 21:14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.**

Those who normally dwelt in the land through which the travelers passed would bring food and water to those who were forced to hide from the invading forces, probably Assyrians.

**Isa 21:15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.**

At least some of the victims of the invading army

were trying to escape from the horrors of war. They had neither the power nor the desire to fight back.

**Isa 21:16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:**

Within one year of the time the vision was given, the burden of Arabia would come down upon that land. The years of an hireling are specific. He will not work for more than the appointed time. He will not be paid for more than the appointed time. He will work for one year. He will be paid for one year. This vision would be accurate. Kedar would fall within one year, no more.

**Isa 21:17 And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.**

Kedar was known as a place where travelers in the land of Arabia could find rest and provisions. It was an oasis city. Within one year of the vision, that city would have been ruined. Those who presumed to defend it would be defeated.

The Word of the Lord, as spoken through the prophet Isaiah and written for our admonition, does not allow the everlasting power of those who persecute others. They may flourish for a time. Then they will be replaced. Ultimately their wicked replacements will themselves be replaced until God brings a New Heaven and Earth replace this old one.

## *Chapter 22*

We have now noted the burden which the Lord was to lay upon various nations surrounding Israel. Among these were Egypt, Babylon, Edom and Arabia. Now we will be presented with the burden which was ahead for the people of Israel, and Jerusalem in particular.

**Isa 22:1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?**

The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by valleys. The city was known for the visions which had been presented to the prophets. Some of these dealt with the immediate future. Others looked far ahead to the gospel age, and even to the end of the present heaven and earth.

God's nation of Israel was not immune to the miseries which would be placed on the backs of the pagan nations around them. When Israel acted as if they had no God, they could expect to share in the burdens of those who were not of Israel.

The housetops were the places where men and women entertained themselves in ways that did not always fit into harmony with the guidance of Jehovah.

**Isa 22:2 Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.**

The city of Jerusalem had become filled with pleasure seekers. There were confrontations and parties. Some had died from their own activities, and not in actual physical combat with invaders.



**Isa 22:3 All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.**

While the tumult was going on, and the people were involved with their entertainment, enemies had come against them. The rulers of Israel had noted the danger and had fled. Strangers who had come from elsewhere had come into the city and united in opposition to the long time residents of the city.

**Isa 22:4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.**

Isaiah seems to say that those who are in trouble need not to look to him for a solution to their problems. He was shedding tears which could not easily be wiped away. He wept for the breaking down of the spiritual strength of the citizens of Israel. We call Jeremiah the “weeping prophet.” It seems that Isaiah could well be given that same title.

**Isa 22:5 For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.**

We can put three other words in the place of those which are used in this verse. It was a day of misery. It was a day of persecution. It was a day of confusion. The walls of Jerusalem were being broken, allowing foes to break through. The inhabitants looked to the high places to find some degree of comfort. This was not helping much.

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Isa 22:6 And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

The weapons of war were being brought forward and prepared for battle. Shields which had been covered while they were unused were being brought out in readiness for whatever might be ahead.

Isa 22:7 And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

The time would come when those beautiful valleys surrounding the city would be covered with chariots of war. Riders upon horses would gather at the very gates of the Holy city.

Isa 22:8 And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

To say that the covering of Judah was discovered is to say that the city had become laid bare before the enemies who would have loved to see the city torn to shreds. The result would be that the people of the city would turn to the armory which Solomon had built, and in which arms were stored even to that day.

If the people had been true to the Lord, God would have been their covering and they would not had been forced to use such measures.

Isa 22:9 Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

They were to see the walls of the city of Jerusalem broken. They would attempt to guarantee a water supply while under siege.

Isa 22:10 And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

In order to fortify the wall of the city, they would take stone from the houses inside the city and use that for the strengthening of that wall.

Isa 22:11 Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

One of the last ditch efforts to defend themselves would be to fill the space between the inner and outer walls with water. This would prove to be of no avail. What they should have been doing was turning to God. At the point they had reached there was no other means of security. The word "Maker" should be capitalized in this verse.

Isa 22:12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

Isaiah speaks as if the day had already passed. It was so certain to come that the prophet could speak in what we call the prophetic past. The people would find themselves demonstrating all of the characteristics of sorrow. There would be tears shed. They would be shaved heads. There would be groaning. There would be the wearing of sack cloth, or burlap. What a sad plight!

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**Isa 22:13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.**

Some would react in a very illogical manner. They would begin acting as if all was well. They would begin feasting and getting drunk. After all, if they were about to die, they might as well “live it up” while they could. This was as far as they could get from the penitent behavior which God desired from them.

**Isa 22:14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.**

God heard!! The deadly way which they had chosen would leave them with the curse of death upon their souls. They saw death as a motive for sinful attitudes and actions. If that was the pattern, they would find those sins passing with them into that valley of death. Revelry was not to be the solution to their defense against the enemy.

**Isa 22:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,**

If the people were so bent upon revelry as a way of meeting the danger, they might well go to Shebna, the treasurer. He seems to have been an example which they would follow. By examining the future of Shebna, the Israelites could envision what might well happen to the rest of them. They needed to go to this high official and ask him some questions.

**Isa 22:16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?**

They would find that he was carving out a sepulchre which would serve as a monument to his importance after his death. He might be buried, but his memory would live on.

**Isa 22:17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.**

The message of Isaiah concerning Shebna was that he would be taken captive by those who attacked the city. He would be buried, but it would not be under the conditions which he was planning.

**Isa 22:18 He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.**

The enemy would capture him. They would toss him around like a young lad throws a ball far off into the distance. It would not be in his precious sepulchre that his body would lie.

We do not know just where Shebna was buried, but we can be certain it was not with the prestige and glory which he had been surrounded while acting as the treasurer of the city.

**Isa 22:19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.**

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Men might have difficulty in bringing about the resignation of one with the power and influence of a Shebna. That is not the case with Jehovah. He would see to it that this proud man who had been instrumental in leading the citizens of Jerusalem to trust in material weapons and wealth was removed from his position of glory.

Isa 22:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

The Lord had an acceptable replacement for Shebna. His name was Eliakim. It is interesting that the name of the father of Eliakim is given here. This is usually the case in introducing influential persons. Why was the father of Shebna not even mentioned? Is it possible that he was not from the lineage of Abraham?

Isa 22:21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

In replacing a man of importance in a large corporation, his office space is given to his successor. The authority which he had over others is placed in the hands of the incoming person. All of that which Shebna had abused was to be transferred to the supervision of Eliakim

Isa 22:22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

In one sense, Eliakim points toward the authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Note the words of Revelation

Rev 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

My friends, the key of David has been placed in the hands of the disciples of Christ today. Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter and the apostles. They have made it possible for diligent students of the Word of God to loose and bind. Through the accurate teaching of the Bible, the gates of heaven may be opened to one who is wise enough to recognize the wonders inside.

Isa 22:23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

Eliakim was to serve as a source of glory to both the Father in heaven and to his earthly ancestor. Unlike Shebna, Eliakim would lead men to spiritual riches and not to those which rust corrodes and moths consume.

Isa 22:24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

Just as Shebna had served in this office of influence in a shameful way, Eliakim would serve in humility before the God of heaven. However, there was a need for sharp warning. Though Eliakim himself would serve in honor,



and many would fail to follow his example, those of his earthly father's house, and perhaps numerous others, would become very insecure nails upon which to hang hopes.

Isa 22:25 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.

The time would come when that nail in the sure place would fall. When that happened, everything which hung upon it would fall with it. Neither Shebna, nor Eliakim would be able to insure the security of the city of David.

Chapter 23

In the past chapters the attention has been on several nations at varying distances from Israel. The Lord has now turned his eye toward some much closer to home. This time the focus is upon Tyre, Sidon and the territory of Phoenicia. They have been arrogant and proud. God will humble them by demonstrating their helplessness in the face of the enemies He would bring upon them.

Because of the fact that Isaiah speaks of conditions which did not arise until long after his own death Bible critics attempt to use this as a basis for suggesting a late date for the book of Isaiah. In order to take this stand they must refuse to allow the possibility of inspired predictions. This attitude reduces the Bible to a history of human tradition. It would accuse the greatest book in the world of being filled with falsehood. Why waste one's time on a book filled with lies? This is a divinely inspired book. It holds the only hope for humanity!

Isa 23:1 The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

Tyre was a seaport on an island just off the western shore of Canaan in the territory of Phoenicia. It had become so successful as a center of trading that it became known as the marketplace of the world at that time. Food supplies such as grain were sent from Egypt and other nations to be shipped out to different nations located around the Mediterranean Sea. In return for that which was produced in the south and the west of the great Sea, other produce was sent back from those nations to Tyre and sold to Egypt, etc.



The merchants of Tyre had become immensely rich and powerful through the profit made on these transactions. God now informs the shipmasters that Tyre is laid waste. It had been turned into a heap of ruins. The houses had been demolished. Chittim was a great distance from both Tarshish and Tyre. The word had been so shocking it had been passed on for many miles.

Isa 23:2 Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

The devastation which was destined to come upon the city of Tyre would be heard from for many a mile. Those who were told would be brought to complete silence by the contrast between the glory of the past, and the wreckage after the hand of the Lord was lifted up against them. That which had been the market place of the Mediterranean world would be left in shambles.

Present day readers can draw some comparison between what their feelings would be upon seeing the towers of the magnificent buildings in New York city when they were buzzing with activity, and what they were after two large aircraft were driven into them, leaving them lying in a pile of debris.

Isa 23:3 And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations.

Sihor has reference to the Nile delta region. The fertile soil of the delta produced an abundance of grain. From Egypt to Tyre, to the shipmasters, to the port of Tarshish in Spain, the suffering would be most horrible. It would be about the same impact on the world of that day as

the destruction of the city of New York would produce in today's world.

Isa 23:4 Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.

Sidon, or Zidon, was but a few miles from Tyre. It had profited by the success of Tyre. Without the riches which came from the shipping trade on the Mediterranean, the people would have difficulty in raising their children.

Isa 23:5 As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

When Egypt reported a drought, those of Zidon suffered from lack of business. When Tyre became a heap of ruins, even worse suffering could be expected. Such nations had tried to take advantage of God's people in the past. The troubles they endured should awaken them to the need for honoring the Lord.

Isa 23:6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.

Isa 23:7 Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

God invited those of Tyre to investigate the city of Tarshish. It would offer no escape from the tribulation. They would have to travel far to find any relief. Neither Tyre nor Tarshish would be of any comfort whatsoever. This passage may even refer to the captivity which

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would come through the defeat by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

**Isa 23:8 Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?**

Who was it that had brought about this tragedy? After all, Tyre was as important as any city in the world. Those who headed the operations were as powerful as national rulers. They were looked upon as the elite of the known world. One would have to be enormously powerful to bring about such havoc as these rich and distinguished men had suffered.

**Isa 23:9 The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.**

There could be but one possible answer. The Lord of the entire creation had brought these things to pass. Those of Tyre and her success had been lifted up through their efforts until they felt they were above the need for respecting Jehovah. They were to find out that those who exalt themselves will be brought down. Man cannot live by bread alone. He must feed his soul with the Word of God. Only then will his riches and power be properly applied. Merchandising is not evil within itself. If it is used for the welfare of others it can be a glory to God. Often it is not used in that way.

**Isa 23:10 Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength.**

A daughter is one who depends upon a parent for survival. Tyre and Sidon are pictured as dependent upon Tarshish to which they had exported goods in the past. Such relationships have been eliminated.

**Isa 23:11 He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof.**

As if the Lord was playing with a toy, He stretched out His hand over the entire Mediterranean area to bring chaos upon the organized greed of Tyre, Chittim, Sidon, Egypt and Tarshish.

**Isa 23:12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.**

Tyre is represented as being dependent upon Sidon. She may have thought she could find relief by going to Chittim. That was only a delusion. Chittim would offer no more help than Sidon.

**Isa 23:13 Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin.**

One empire paves the way for those which follow. Assyria had attacked Tyre without much success. Babylonia launched an attack on that city which was much more successful, but did not completely vanquish

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the city. The armies of Alexander managed to break the back of Tyre in 332 B.C.

Isa 23:14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

Isa 23:15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

There would be much weeping and howling from the shipmasters who had shuttled back and forth between Tyre and Tarshish. For seventy years the power of the famed city would be brought to the ground. After the seventy years Tyre would make an effort to resume her former seduction of the nations. All she would accomplish would be to behave in the fashion of an aged prostitute who has lost her powers of attraction.

Isa 23:16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

Tyre would do her best to get her old customers back. The sweet songs which she sung in the past would be tried again in order that she might regain her wealth and power.

Isa 23:17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

After a lengthy period of time, Tyre would resume her influence among the nations. Her merchandising would reach out across the globe.

Isa 23:18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

There would be a vast contrast between the impact of Tyre after she built back to a respectable position among the nations. This time she would benefit those who loved the Lord rather than those who were only defying Him to enrich themselves.

This last verse is puzzling. It causes one to wonder if the Lord was predicting a major change of attitude not just around the circumference of the Mediterranean Sea, but perhaps throughout the world. Would it not be wonderful to find that one day those nations and organizations which have centered their activities around greed had repented and turned to more altruistic goals! The book of Revelation seems to predict a period of peace on earth before the final judgment arrives.

Chapter 24

The next four chapters of Isaiah are not as pleasant as we might like for them to be. They describe actions God will take against those who have felt they were capable of ignoring the commandments of the Lord and setting out to direct their own steps. Present day society does not punish lawbreakers either sufficiently or consistently enough to prevent the increase of serious crime. These chapters show that God's laws cannot be successfully ignored.

We have in these chapters, a picture of what happens to those who set themselves up against the wisdom of God. The prophet Daniel agrees with the lessons taught in this chapter. Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome all rose to power and then found themselves reduced to impotence. The present chapter gathers all of the Devil's agents into one vast army and tells of its defeat.

Isa 24:1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

Note that it is the Lord who declares this earth will be emptied and its inhabitants will be treated like the remains of a dish which have become moldy and rotten. The sin which has spread across this planet has caused the Creator to prepare for a cleansing. Those who have caused the contamination will receive the punishment which they so richly deserve.

Isa 24:2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress;

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**as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.**

No one will be exempt. The powerful and rich will find that the power and riches mean absolutely nothing before the Judge of all the earth. The priests, the masters, the money lenders and the interest takers will meet the same Judge as will the common people.

**Isa 24:3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.**

The word “spoiled” as used in this verse is applied in the same sense as “spoil” is used of what is taken by an army when they have conquered an enemy and gathered in the spoils of the victory. Nothing of value to the powerful and rich will be left untouched.

**Isa 24:4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.**

The concentration of unpleasant words in this verse leave no doubt of the horror which was promised. Mourneth, fadeth away, and languish which is used twice are intended to picture the most hideous despair which can be imagined.

**Isa 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.**



It is not just the dwellers on the planet earth which are contaminated. The planet itself suffers from the folly practiced by the self centered and sinful inhabitants. In the beginning God promised blessings to man if he dressed and kept the land. Very shortly Adam and Eve polluted the land by breaking God's covenant. We see the end of that disobedience in the sorrows which cause God to cleanse the earth of the effects of such sin. Men are constantly seeking to build towers to heaven where they can govern themselves. Those man made towers will crumble to ashes and God will prove Himself to be the only personality capable of building the perfect society.

**Isa 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.**

What is the relationship between men's pride and lust, and the curse God promises here upon the entire globe? In the days of the plagues of Egypt we can see God's direct and miraculous hand bringing flies, frogs and death of children. It is all too easy in our present day to see the miseries brought on by robbery, false advertising, drug addiction, fornication, and other actions which God's law forbids.

Is the burning of the earth's inhabitants symbolic or it is literal? It could be either. Nuclear weapons are sufficient in number to make a shambles of the entire surface of our globe.

It is of interest that not all the inhabitants lose their lives. However they are few and far between.

**Isa 24:7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.**

The partying will turn to weeping. The intoxication will be reduced because of lack of agricultural production of the materials to make the liquor. Rather than laughing at crude jokes, the people will be filled with gloom and doom.

**Isa 24:8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.**

Tabrets were musical instruments. The riotous music which had formed such a great part in the lives of sinners would fall silent. "Noise" is the correct term for much of what passes for music. When sinners entertain themselves with thumping sounds and screeching voices which can be heard for long distances and which work the listeners up into a frenzy they may expect dire consequences. Under such conditions, men and women lose their logical skills and turn themselves over to their passions. God will turn such to silence.

**Isa 24:9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.**

One needs only to walk along the side of the street in practically any town and he will see beer and wine bottles lying where they have been tossed from passing automobiles to litter the roadsides. Drinking intoxicating liquor may appear at the moment to be a means of magnifying pleasure and reducing the problems and pressures of life. In the end it will be just the opposite. This will be true of individuals, and also of the entire population of the globe.

**Isa 24:10 The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.**

The conditions God describes here are those where fear has taken over. No one dares to leave their doors unlocked for fear of robbery or molestation. One hears police sirens continuously. Order is dissolved in chaotic confusion. Even the production of the necessities of life is brought to a halt.

**Isa 24:11 There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.**

The wine which is “cried for” here is that which produces joy in the heart. There is some question as to whether this might be fermented or unfermented grape juice. Much grape juice which is unfermented is consumed in large portions of the world. If that was to be made unavailable, those who had depended upon it before would be unhappy. If it was the fermented wine, the drunken giddiness would be heard no longer.

**Isa 24:12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.**

This “city” is not a city in the sense of Jerusalem with its walls and gates, or Sodom and Gomorrah. It represents the entire city of Satan’s followers. That city is an association of sinners who work together to fight against the Lord. Their “city” will be attacked and left empty. God is far more powerful than they have ever begun to imagine.

**Isa 24:13 When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the**

**shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.**

As mentioned above, there will not be a complete annihilation of every man, woman and child. There will be a few left who did not share in the rebellion. The number of these compare with that of the ones destroyed will be such as we see when the pickers go through the olive orchard or the grape vineyard. By far the vast majority will be brought down.

**Isa 24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.**

Those who are not destroyed will be changed in the opposite direction from those discussed above. These will have previously been suffering and weeping as a result of persecution. After God comes calling, they will replace their tears with singing and praise to the glory of God.

**Isa 24:15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.**

Now our question is as to the nature of the fires in which the Lord is to be glorified. It is your present writer's belief that it is a reference to the persecution which has been suffered by the righteous at the hands of sinners. Such persecution is not a reason for surrender. The fires had extended from one part of the globe to the other. But, those who had suffered were to realize that the fires would end in the glorification of Jehovah from sea to shining sea.

**Isa 24:16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.**

This seems to be Isaiah speaking of the emotions which he is feeling at the thought of just how needless the suffering of the sinners was. All of this could have been avoided if the treacherous had repented of their sins and turned to God. But, they would not. The punishment had to come! That did not make it any easier to preach.

**Isa 24:17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.**

**Isa 24:18 And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.**

If the rebellious think they can escape from the terrors which face them, they are in for a shock. If they make an attempt to separate themselves from the weeping, they will fall into a pit. If they manage to crawl out of the pit, they will be ensnared in a trap. They will be like hunted animals who have no chance against the skilled hunter. They have acted like wild animals. The Lord will treat them accordingly.

The windows on high are those from which Jehovah pours His wrath. The storm will reach every enemy of God.

Jesus once declared that men need to build their

house upon a rock. These evil workers who have built their houses upon the sand will discover that those who have built their houses upon the rock of the teachings of Jesus Christ will find those house have stood firm after God has sent His gigantic earthquake.

**Isa 24:19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.**

Under the shaking at the hand of the Lord, the opposers of God will be shaken out of the earth like a might shake a rug in the wind. God is so much greater than this physical earth upon which men live, that He can shake it clean. If the reader has been in even a very minor earthquake, he will realize that nothing could stand if God chose to shake it apart.

**Isa 24:20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.**

The schemes of the unrighteous will come tumbling down. A drunkard does not know where his next footstep will take him. The city of Satan will find itself shaken until it falls down. It's sin will rest so heavily upon it that there will be no hope of rising to walk the paths to hell once more.

**Isa 24:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.**

In that same time during which God shakes the earth, He will take action against the angelic host which have listened to the call of the Devil. Both those who are defiant in the heavenly spiritual realm and those who are defiant in the physical environment here below will be properly dealt with.

**Isa 24:22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.**

Death will bring such men and angels together in the grave. There they shall be confined and caused to wait for the time of the end when all are rewarded and punished according to their deeds.

**Isa 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.**

A time will come when the glory of the moon and of the sun will become no more than that of a birthday candle when they are compared with the glory of the God of heaven. Mount Zion is the place of God's throne. In the new heaven and the new earth, God will be in control. His adversaries will have been cast into the eternal fires of hell. There will be Victory in Jesus.

## Chapter 25

This chapter contains a song of hope for the faithful of the Lord. Clearly God's children will feel sorrow and anguish from time to time. But, when all is over they will experience the fullness of joy which only God's own may enjoy. The spiritual battles must be fought, but the victory is assured by the promise of Jehovah.

**Isa 25:1 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.**

Isaiah wishes to share with all men the confidence he has in the only true and living God. There is excellent reason for this praise. God has made many wonderful promises in the days before. He has also given careful instructions as to the proper behavior of men. The praise which should be offered to Him is due to the fact that His promises have been kept and His instructions have proven they come from a wisdom greater than that of either men or angels.

**Isa 25:2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.**

What kind of promises are these which have been so dependable? He has threatened punishment for such cities as Ninevah, Babylon and Sodom. Those promises have stood firm. They have been kept. When one visits the remains of such cities centuries later, it is found that they are but a pile of ruins. Great palaces of emperors are only stacks of rubble.

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Above these ruined cities of the past, there is one more great city which will someday lie in the dust. It is the city of “man.” It is all that man has built with the idea that his own skill and knowledge will render the Word of God as of no effect. Such is not so.

Isa 25:3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

There will be two quite different reactions to God’s lessons. The people who are of strong faith will praise and glorify His name. The people who make up the city of human confusion will find that they are weak and puny in contrast with the strength of the Lord. Some in those pride filled nations will come to the realization that they need to bow down to His will.

Isa 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

The rich and the mighty of this world are convinced that they need no help from divinity. The poor and weak are far more apt to call out for the help of the a power much higher than themselves.

And God has responded to that call from the poor and week. When it appears that God’s faithful are pinned to the wall and about to be blown away by the storms of life, He sends His protective cloud to cover them in these times of distress.

Isa 25:5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the

heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

God is well able to protect His people from the boastings of the wicked. The blistering heat of persecution will be interrupted by the refreshing shade of the covering which He sends to lift up His fallen. While His own are being lifted up, the arrogant persons and nations will be crying out in suffering.

Isa 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

“This mountain” is mount Zion. In the Christian age Mount Zion is the church of Jesus Christ. Those who trust in the Son of God will find a bountiful feast available to them. The present commentator is not particularly fond of fat on his plate at the dining room table. The fat that is being considered here is more likely the full fleshed animal which was butchered. It was far more than skin and bones. It was the best one could desire. The wine “on the lees” was wine which had been pressed from the pulp and had then been allowed to remain in contact with the pulp for a while to gain a rich taste. This is not talking about fermented liquor.

This feast to which God's own are invited is intended to surpass that which might be provided through an invitation to the home of the ruler of a nation. God is the Ruler of ALL NATIONS.

Isa 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

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The veil in this verse is that separating covering which stands between all those alive today and the Holy of Holies in the heavenly places. Jesus death upon the cross caused the veil of the temple to be rent from top to bottom. Isaiah was writing long before the time of the crucifixion of Son of God. That did not prevent him from giving us these inspired promises that the veil which now separates men from the presence of God could be removed that the faithful might enter into the highest of the heavens.

**Isa 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.**

Yes, this is precisely what Jesus did when He rose from the grave. Satan had brought death into the world by persuading the first couple to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden. Death held dominion for over six thousand years before Jesus broke that bondage and called for all men to follow Him.

**Isa 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**

That day is here. We have waited patiently for the time when God would provide the Way, the Truth and the Life through His own Son. But, He has come. He was born of Mary. He lived and died as do we mortals. Then the wondrous promise of Isaiah came to reality. Jesus

rose to the throne of Jehovah and the faithful may wipe the tears from their faces and the grief from their hearts. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

**Isa 25:10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.**

In the spiritual Mount Zion the Lord will tread down every enemy. Moab is but an example of the entire combined city of man which opposes the Lord. Moab will be treated like the manure which is pitched into a pit where straw can be mixed with it as the manure and straw rot in the liquid urine which saturates it.

Those of the readers who have never used an outdoor toilet can not grasp the full force of this statement.

**Isa 25:11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.**

Moab will do his best to swim and stay afloat in the dungpit. It will be impossible. When he spreads forth his hands in the attempt to swim, he will only sink into the spiritual feces.

**Isa 25:12 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.**

Speaking directly to Moab, Isaiah relates God's further pronouncement that no fortress can resist the power of the Lord. He can turn the strongest fortress into a heap of useless dust.

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Chapter 26

Chapter twenty-six flows quite naturally from the material of chapter twenty-five. God had brought the strong city of the world down from great power to a heap of ashes and dust. Now we see another step in his plan for man. A new strong city will be made available to the faithful. Unlike the one which was brought down to ruin, this one will be composed of righteous persons.

Isaiah is called the messianic prophet for good reason. This chapter is much brighter than the one before it. A new age is to appear which brings joy and peace rather than tears and chaos.

Isa 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

After all those long centuries in which fleshly Israel was buffeted about, the situation which is prophesied now envisions an end to such horrors. God is going to construct a city made up of the saved. No enemy will be successful in breaking down it's walls and fortifications. It will be able to stand against all invaders. The reason for this safety is that God oversees those who have sought His protection. Unless one deliberately walks back out into the perils of the world, his position is absolutely secure.

Isa 26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Not only are those inside the city secure and blessed, God commands that the gates of His city be opened for the entry of the righteous nation which will populate it. The invitation is open to both Jew and Gentile. All who love

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the truth and obey it are eagerly welcomed. Wealth, social prestige, skin color or political influence are secondary to godly virtue.

**Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.**

The Hebrew language here uses a special technique for emphasizing things. The two words which are translated into English as “perfect peace” are actually the same word repeated. It is “peace, peace.”

God will see that this great peace continues because the citizens of this city of God have placed their lives in His hands and are convinced that He will never forsake them.

**Isa 26:4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:**

One need not be concerned that the Lord can be trusted today, but not tomorrow. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Unlike men, His abilities do not decrease with age, nor do His promises fail to be kept. He has promised blessings to the righteous, and punishment to the sinful. Trust Him!

**Isa 26:5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.**

The “lofty city” is only typified by Babylon, Sodom and Ninevah. Those who make up the city spoken of here are those of every age and location who defy the will of the



living God. Those who oppress others may prosper for a season. That prosperity and power will be dissolved and ground into dust.

**Isa 26:6 The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.**

Whose foot will tread down the lofty city? It will be the feet of those who have been persecuted when they ruled. The poor and needy have God on their side. When time has come to an end and eternity is much more evident, the tables will be turned.

**Isa 26:7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.**

It is this commentator's conviction that the word "Thou" in this verse should be capitalized. God is the one who determines what is upright, and who is upright. He is perfectly just. He is the one who will place every human soul in the balances.

**Isa 26:8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.**

It may seem that God's judgments are long in coming. Both nations and individuals find themselves wondering if the oppressors will ever be punished for their unrighteousness. However, if patience wins out, God will see that justice is done. Praise His name. Remember His dependability in the past. It did not look very optimistic for Daniel when he was thrown into the lion's den. It would have seemed utterly hopeless for David to have

defeated Goliath. It would have seemed absolutely impossible for He who was crucified and mocked to later become the King of kings. But it is taking place.

**Isa 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**

The upright will meditate upon the truth of the Lord when they lie upon their bed at the close of the day. They will begin each day with the determination to learn more of the will of God and do a finer job of incorporating it into their lives. They will learn the lessons placed before them.

**Isa 26:10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.**

The wicked are just the opposite. Instead of seeking out the truth, they will not accept it when it is facing them eyeball to eyeball. They believe that any success which they have enjoyed is due to their own philosophies of life. God has no place in their lives. They live in the "Lofty City."

**Isa 26:11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.**

These proud sinners will ignore the evidences of God's wisdom and power. To them he wonders of nature are





thought to have come about by happenstance. The Bible is no more than a collection of sayings brought into being by the fear of disasters.

Such convictions will not endure. They will be destroyed by their own kind. Notice that the verse does not say they will be destroyed and burned by the upright. It says their way of life creates enemies among themselves which results in deadly conflict. War is not the result of good men fighting good men. It is the end product of covetousness, jealousy and greed.

**Isa 26:12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.**

The city of God is quite the opposite. It is ruled by the Creator, who is perfect in love and peace. He can, and will oppose that which is wicked. The war He advises His people to take up is the one which is fought by those who take upon themselves the whole armor of God. These are the ones who promote love, joy and peace among men.

**Isa 26:13 O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.**

These other lords could have been rulers of the city of men; those who have attempted to conquer the world for their own satisfaction. They could have been the idols which men have sought to put in the place of the real Lord of all. The righteous citizen of the strong city of God will have claimed victory over these evil workers. They will call upon the name of Jehovah for their support. They will conscientiously speak those words, "They will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**Isa 26:14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.**

Does the reader disbelieve the truth of this verse? Oh yes, we can still call out the names of Hitler, Nebuchadnezzar, Zeus, Diana of the Ephesians, etc. That is not the point. Though their names may still be found in the ancient history records, their power has died along with their physical bodies. Their lofty city of sin will turn into dust when the everlasting day comes.

**Isa 26:15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.**

The nation which God has increased is that one made up of His servants. That nation will never die. It will learn the lessons the Lord has placed before it. As a result, it has been spread over the entire earth. Sometimes this was due to being taken into captivity to learn the lessons. At other times it came about because men loved the Lord enough to go into all nations and preach the gospel to every creature. In both of these cases, the name of the Lord has been magnified. More are being added to His people every day. These are the ones who will live, and not die.

**Isa 26:16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.**

The tendency of men is to call upon God when trouble comes. That has happened over and over, in nations

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and with individuals. The righteous will learn from these situations. They will realize their need for divine wisdom. A child does not like to receive punishment for misbehavior. Nevertheless, the punishment will usually bring about a respect for his parents.

There are some children who only become more rebellious when punished. This is also true of Satan's followers. When they are punished for their sins, they curse God and die.

Isa 26:17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD.

How very often God uses childbirth to teach the most serious of lessons. This time He compares the woes of His people while in captivity to those of a woman who is nearing the time of birth. Israel suffered much at the hands of those who hated her. She groaned with the pain of the whip. She longed for better days.

Isa 26:18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

There were promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that the world would be blessed through their seed. At the time Isaiah wrote the words of this chapter, the delivery of the Son of God was still but a promise. If you do not give up on God, He will not give up on you. It seemed to Israel as if all of the pain had produced nothing but air. At the same time the "Lofty city" was still there.

Isa 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

It is said that this is the very first verse of the Bible which clearly states the coming resurrection of the dead. Isaiah sees those who dwell in the dust arising as the earth opens to permit the dead to live again.

Some may question as to whether this rising from the dead is spiritual revival or physical in nature. Since the verse does actually use the word "body" the present writer believes it is the new spiritual body which comes forth.

There will be reason to sing. When one awakens in the morning of the resurrection it will be even more refreshing than the sunrise when the dew is sparkling on the grass and all seems well. That will be the everlasting day where there are neither tears nor suffering. The fact that there is joy and singing is proof the the verse is to be applied to the resurrection of the righteous, and not that of those who dwelt in the "Lofty city."

Isa 26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Here then is the conclusion to the whole matter. The citizens of God's "Strong city" must patiently wait for the works of the devil to be brought to an end. It may seem a long wait, but afterward it will prove to have been only for a moment. Then the New Jerusalem, the strong city, will be told it is time to enter into the joy of the Lord.

Isa 26:21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of
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**his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.**

When the night of wickedness has gone and the Son of Righteousness has arisen in the land of endless day, the sinners will be exposed. The blood they have shed will be visible to all. They will meet their just dues. The Judge of all the earth will see that justice is done. The “Strong city” will live with God.

## Chapter 27

The previous three chapters dealt with God's anger toward the enemies of His goals and His people. This one is the last of four dealing with the same topic. It is amazing that some men are so obsessed with their own pride that they absolutely refuse to hear the Lord of heaven and earth when He makes His will known. Do not fail to note the end of those who fall in this category. It is a very unpleasant destiny.

**Isa 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.**

God has a very sharp and potent sword. It is defined by the term, "And God said." The Word of God is the great and strong sword which will punish His foes.

There are three of these foes. They are: (1) The False Prophet, (2) AntiChristian Human government and (3) Satan himself. The teachings of this chapter parallel quite closely those found in the latter chapters of the book of Revelation. Those who escape the consequences of their opposition to God in the present life will find themselves answering in the final judgment.

**Isa 27:2 In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.**

There is a dual application. Israel was persecuted by enemies on all sides. God would preserve those of His people who remained faithful to Him unto the end. He would oversee their safety during the Christian age, and would usher them into heaven in the end.

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Isa 27:3 I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

God's children are His vineyard. He desires that they be spiritually productive. He places spiritual nourishment and refreshing to whatever degree such children will take advantage of it. Every moment of every hour, day and year He guards it with infinite care.

Isa 27:4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

Briars and thorns are not capable of providing serious threats who supports the Lord. His sword is too potent to be defeated by such trivial weapons. Those briars and thorns will be burned in the fires of hell, if not long before that.

Isa 27:5 Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

A far wiser path of action is to reach out to God for strength to meet the attacks of Satan and his allies. Make peace with God! Do not attempt to defeat Him with either your own powers, or even with those of the devil.

Isa 27:6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

Those who come of Jacob are Israel. Neither fleshly Israel of the time of Isaiah, nor spiritual Israel in the

Christian age, are going to be defeated as long as they rely upon the Word of God.

Isa 27:7 Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

The true Israelite will find that God will not destroy him as He will those who have decided to fight Him. His enemies will be punished severely for their folly. His followers will be cultivated that they may bear precious fruit of the Spirit.

Isa 27:8 In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

The wind from the east came off the hot desert territory. It was capable of turning the vegetation brown and leaving it dead as it passed through. When the punishing wind of God's anger passed through the land, His faithful would be tested and tried but would be found safe from the blasts of His breath.

Isa 27:9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

Without doubt there would be periods of difficulty for both friends and foes. Even among those who were physical descendants of Jacob there were imposters who could be found bowing before the altars devoted to idols. In the day of God's purging, all such false friends would

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be found out. The groves dedicated to idolatry, and also those who honored them, would suffer.

**Isa 27:10 Yet the defended city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.**

What is this defended city which would be made desolate? Is it the great city of Jerusalem which had been favored by Jehovah through the centuries? Or was it the false security of those who thought they could stand tall in a fight with God? The present writer is not satisfied with either of the above. He believes it embraces every evil power which sets itself up against the purposes of the Lord, whether that power be human or superhuman.

**Isa 27:11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.**

Anyone who fights against their Creator may expect to be broken off the spiritual tree and burned just as women would gather dead branches and use them for firewood. God did not create men for the purpose of having them ignore or defy Him. What a lack of understanding must be the case with those who follow the leadership of Satan!

**Isa 27:12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.**

The time would arrive when the enemies from the land of the Nile River would feel the force of God's anger. The same would be true of those from Assyria and the Euphrates.

Just as the foes would be defeated and driven from the land of promise, those who proved true to God would be protected.

**Isa 27:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.**

This verse looks forward to the time of Christ's gospel. Captives of Satan's forces, whether in Egypt or Assyria would be released to worship again in the land of Israel. This promise certainly proved to be true. There was a return from both Egypt and Assyria. However, some apply this to a literal return of the Jews from various lands to the area of Canaan in the latter part of the Christian age. This is not the thrust of the verse. It points to the time when those of lands near and far would hear the gospel preached and would worship God in the New Jerusalem.

## Chapter 28

The warnings now turn to Ephraim, representing the northern tribes, and Jerusalem as head of the southern kingdom. God had given the descendants of Abraham very special privileges which had not been extended to the surrounding nations which had already been warned. Ephraim will be discussed in this chapter and Jerusalem will be given attention in the next.

**Isa 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!**

The Lord warns of three great sins which man may commit. They are: the pride of life, the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh. Ephraim is to be especially condemned for the first of these three. They are drunken in two ways. First with alcohol, and more important with pride. As a result of their failure to think accurately, they were in grave danger of losing some of the blessings which had been theirs. Their spiritual beauty was rapidly dimming just as the glory of a flower fades after it has reached its peak.

The “crown of pride” is thought by some to refer to the fact that it had been made proud through the productive ability of the fertile valleys nearby.

**Isa 28:2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.**

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The mighty and strong one whom the Lord compared to a hailstorm, a hurricane and a flood, was the Assyrian army which would overrun the land of Israel. Rather than continuing to support their pride, God would permit the Assyrian forces to invade the land and bring woe upon the northern tribes.

Isa 28:3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

This is the other possible explanation of the crown of pride. It could be those who led the northern tribes and were drunken with their power.

Isa 28:4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

When the Assyrian moved into the beautiful countryside of the northern tribes, he would look at it as one might look upon the first ripe fruit of the summer. He would not just look upon it. He would eat it up.

Isa 28:5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

Those of His people who had remained humble and faithful would not be forgotten. God would bless them with His approval. They and also those who would attempt to destroy them would find that God would give them a crown of life.

Isa 28:6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

Those who had forgotten their need for Jehovah would find that He was no longer supporting them. They would find Him sitting in judgment against them. It is a most unwise decision to criticize the Lord. It is He who judges, not we.

Isa 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

There are two quite opposite ways. One is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The other is that which seemeth right unto a man, but whose end is death. Too many of the priests and prophets of God had chosen the latter path. They had become blind and were stumbling and falling from both alcohol and human fallibility.

Isa 28:8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Those who were so confused from their thirst for glory that they were sitting in their own vomit would find that spiritual and physical cleanliness had both disappeared.

Isa 28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

Apparently Isaiah's warning had fallen on deaf ears. He was so clear in his condemnation of their behavior that they decided he was treating them like infants. They were far too sophisticated for such pablum. He needed to realize how much he had misjudged their importance and their abilities.

Isa 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

He seemed to them to be oversimplifying the subject. With important persons like themselves, he should use more elaborate arguments. They should not be looked at as needing their ABC's.

Isa 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Those to whom Isaiah was pointing out the Word of God accused him of speaking to them in terms which might as well have been a foreign language.

Isa 28:12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

There was a clear need for those whom Isaiah was trying to teach to hear the lessons he was presenting. That made no difference to them. They refused to hear his warning.

Isa 28:13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept;

line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

May we ask the present reader an important question? Have you not met those who considered the Word of God to be no more than a nuisance which is of little or no real value to mankind? If so, you should understand the difficulty facing Isaiah.

Isa 28:14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

Since the rulers of the northern kingdom would not take heed to the clear instruction of God, there was a need to speak to them in a different type of language.

Isa 28:15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

These arrogant rulers of the people were convinced they were above danger. They knew how to handle death, hell and the grave. Any invader would bypass them and leave them undamaged. They had convinced themselves that the teachings Isaiah was presenting to them were untrue. God had favored them in the past. He would do so in the future.

Isa 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried

**stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:
he that believeth shall not make haste.**

Isaiah insisted that in spite of their rejection of God's directions, He would move onward with that small remnant which remained faithful to Him. He would provide a secure foundation for the future safety and growth of those who would believe in Him. Patience on their part would prove more than worth the effort.

The reader who is hungry for truth will have recognized the above verse as the one from which Peter quoted in 1 Peter 2:8. The Rock was to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1 Pet 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

1 Pet 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

1 Pet 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

1 Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

Isa 28:17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Isa 28:18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall

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**not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.**

Time would tell whether Isaiah was speaking the truth or not. When the invading storm had passed through the land, these overconfident and egotistic leaders would find that their covenant with death and hell was founded upon shifting sand. The lies which they believed would be tested and found wanting.

**Isa 28:19 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.**

They would find that every hour of the day, for day after day their lies were useless. They would only result in embarrassment during the period of persecution.

**Isa 28:20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.**

Their false sense of security would leave them in an unbelievable position. The comfortable bed upon which they chose to stretch themselves would become just the opposite. It would leave them in agony. The cover of the bed would be found too narrow to hide them.

**Isa 28:21 For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.**

God had proven to be true to His Word in several

cases of the past, for example the victory which was given to Joshua and Israel when they entered the land. The corrupt leaders needed to recall just a bit of their history and they would take a different direction.

**Isa 28:22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.**

**Isa 28:23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.**

It was past time for the rulers to listen. Mocking God would only bring misery. If they continued in their present path they would find themselves devoured. Satan and his followers march directly into the fires of hell. If they mock the truth they will live in future misery.

**Isa 28:24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?**

Much of Bible truth is presented in terms which a simple agricultural society would be most able to understand. A farmer does not spend all of his time in breaking up the ground. Neither was this true of what Isaiah was telling them. It was time to see the progression in the planning of the Lord.

**Isa 28:25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?**

There is a time and place for everything. After the ground is broken the farmer plants the seed for the

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desired crop. Every move will be planned and carried out carefully. The fitch, cummim, wheat barley and rye are all planted where and when needed.

Isa 28:26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

The farmer knows from his experiences with God that there is a right way and a wrong way to achieve goals. One does not plant all seed at the same time, nor plant that seed in the wrong season.

Isa 28:27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

Fitch and cummim were fragile. It was disastrous to use the force of a threshing instrument upon them. More durable seed is threshed by driving a cart across it and separating the straw from the grain in that more forceful way.

Isa 28:28 Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

Grain which is useful for the making of bread must be treated with caution. Each variety must be dealt with in a different manner. If the farmer knows this, God knows it! He may be trusted to cultivate His faithful in the way which He knows will produce the best possible outcome.

Isa 28:29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

The teaching which Isaiah was presenting to the leaders of the northern tribes was precisely what was needed at that time. The farmer did not ignore his past experiences. Neither should God's people expect to reap abundantly when they mocked the Word of the Lord.

Chapter 29

Isaiah is ready to pronounce woes which are to fall upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants who have become self confident to the point that they trust in their own traditions more than they do the Word of their Creator. They will be exposed to some extremely difficult times as God shocks them back into spiritual reality through oppression by their enemies.

Isa 29:1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

Ariel is identified in the verse itself. It is the city where David dwelt. It is the city which was the center of sacrifice to Jehovah. They had become routine in their worship. Year after year the same old sacrifices were to be offered. The spirit which should have been present had been replaced by habit. Yes, they killed the sacrifices, but they were only going through the motions.

Isa 29:2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

The word "Ariel" can mean two different things. Sometimes it is translated as "lion of God." Other times it means "altar of God." Altar of God seems to fit the context of the chapter before us. It would become necessary for God to take the dead and lifeless city in hand and prove that it needed to once again become the altar city.

Isa 29:3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

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When the Lord said “I will camp against thee” He was actually talking about the Assyrian army whom He permitted to sweep down over the land until it reached the gates of Jerusalem. These Assyrian forces would lay siege to the city from positions which they fortified.

**Isa 29:4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.**

The inhabitants of Jerusalem had been high and mighty in both their actions and their speech. This attitude would be reversed. When God finished teaching them the importance of respect for Him, they would be speaking in whispers, and from down in the dust where they had been trod upon.

**Isa 29:5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.**

After the punishment had been applied, the forces which came against the city would be blown away like chaff in the wind. The suddenness of this destruction of the enemy would be almost beyond belief.

**Isa 29:6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.**

The forces which were allowed to chastise Israel would

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be gone like a storm which brings thunder, lightning, earthquakes and loud noises and is then followed by a calm.

Isa 29:7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

Here again in this seventh verse we have an example of the dual application of critical scriptures. The situation which Isaiah was concerned with at the time would have been the Assyrians. However, we know Isaiah often reached out over the centuries until the gospel age. The book of Revelation pictures the church under persecution. Then there comes a victory in Jesus which leaves the faithful safe in the arms of their Lord.

Isa 29:8 It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

The change in conditions for Jerusalem would be as drastic as that which men experience when waking from a dream. A man might dream that he was hungry or thirsty and had finally found water to drink and food to eat. Then after having eaten and quenched his thirst he awakes and comes to the realization that he is still hungry and thirsty.

The enemies of Israel would gather round in anticipation of feasting upon that nation. They would

not succeed. They would find that the table had been removed.

Isa 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

Israel was advised to pay close attention to what was ahead. In the past they had paid little attention to God. They had become drunken with self pride. They staggered around as a result of their unwillingness to see the truth which the prophets had offered them.

Isa 29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

If a man wishes to believe a lie, the Lord will make it possible for him to do that. As Israel had been exposed to the teachings of the true prophets of God, they had yawned with boredom. In that sense God had caused them to go into a deep sleep. He was not pleased with it. He was ready to wake them up.

Isa 29:11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

The understanding of the truth was their own fault. When the educated man was presented the Word of God, he found it a waste of his time. It could not be understood. It was as if the scroll which had been presented to him contained riddles and fables.

Does this sound familiar to the reader? It should! There are vast numbers of persons alive at the time I write this material who see those that spend time in study of the Bible as wasted. They have more important things to do!

Isa 29:12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

It is no better when the uneducated person is handed the Word of the Lord. He replies that he cannot read it because he has never learned to read. As a consequence the majority of all men, either learned or unlearned, ignore the riches of the Word.

Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

God could see through the dishonesty of those who refused to hear Him. Their motives were transparent. They talked as if they walked with Him. In reality they were more interested in the wisdom of men than in that of their Maker.

Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

When God finished with His lesson plan it would become obvious that the wisdom of the wise men was

trivial when compared with that of the Lord. The events which would take place would prove who was wise and who was foolish. They would find out that an earthworm is not a rose, even though they might conclude that it was. Truth is found in the Word of the Lord.

Isa 29:15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Israel was in the process of subconsciously denying the presence of the Lord among them. If there truly was a God, He existed far off where that which they thought and did was beyond His observation.

Isa 29:16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

They truly had the cart before the horse. How foolish it was for them to conclude that He who had created them was incapable of knowing their thoughts. It is quite unreasonable for man to believe that his own brain came about because of natural accidents. The reasonable man will come to the conclusion that an infinitely intelligent Creator is the source of human mental ability.

Isa 29:17 Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

A time was not too far ahead when the enemies of God would find matters reversed. God's faithful would thrive like a forest. His foes would be reduced to pasture land.

Isa 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

When that reversal of fortunes occurred, those who had not heard the Word of God would hear, and those who had been blind to the truth would see the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

Isa 29:19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

The poor and the meek were destined to become joyful in the blessings which God poured out for those who were hungry and thirsty for spiritual riches.

We might well add that they would not awake to find out that it was all a dream!

Isa 29:20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

Isa 29:21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Three enemies of the Lord's people are described in this verse. The terrible one is the enemy that is so strong he can strike fear into the heart. The scorner is the one who ridicules everything which God stands for. The one

who watches for iniquity is he who tries to place guilt upon those who are truly righteous. Satan rejoices in all three of these allies. He will not rejoice forever. All three will be defeated.

Isa 29:22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was rescued from a perverted society. He was promised that through his seed all nations would be blessed. God explains that those who are truly spiritual descendants of Abraham, and of Jesus Christ need never worry that they will be afraid or bewildered in the hand of the Heavenly Father.

Isa 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

There are a number of personalities listed in this verse. They include:

His children.

Mine hands.

My name.

Holy One of Jacob.

God of Israel.

Can we correctly relate all of these to each other and gain the truth presented? We will try.

When Israel sees his citizens who have believed in God, many in Israel will awaken to the fact that God is the Ruler of the universe. The Holy One of Jacob and the God of Israel are the same. The events predicted by

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Isaiah would lead to the Jews becoming a center for the launching of the Christian dispensation.

**Isa 29:24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.**

Many of those who had not worshipped in spirit and in truth would be caused to understand the seriousness of their error. The conversions of the day of Pentecost prove the prophecy to have been accurate.

## Chapter 30

Woes have been pronounced upon Israel's neighbors who support idolatry and fight against Jehovah. Now the target is Israel itself. There are serious times ahead as a result of shallow religious attitudes. The nation cannot afford to continue in bypassing Jehovah and making alliances with the ungodly.

**Isa 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:**

With a lack of trust in Jehovah, Israel was tempted to align herself with one neighbor to defend herself from another. Like children who will not listen to their parents, but who eagerly take the advice of playmates, the nation was listening to men and failing to turn to the Lord. This was but one more sin added to that which they had already committed.

**Isa 30:2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!**

Egypt lay to the southwest of Israel. Assyria was to the northeast. Assyria was becoming stronger and stronger. She was eagerly looking toward Israel with hungry eyes.

But, why would Israel turn to Egypt for help against Assyria? Could she not remember the horrors of Egyptian captivity and also the power of Jehovah, as He delivered them from that land through the plagues which He

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brought on the Egyptians? In addition, He had warned Israel never to go back to Egypt for help in the future. Israel was ignoring God and was walking straight into a danger zone.

Isa 30:3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

Rather than finding help in Egypt, Israel would discover that Pharaoh's strength would be used against her instead of for her. Israel's problems would only be multiplied, leading to shame and confusion.

Isa 30:4 For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

Leaders of Israel had visited both Zoan and Hanes, which were points in the land of Egypt where it was thought that help might be found in defending against the Assyrian threat.

Isa 30:5 They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

The time was not far ahead when the confidence in Egypt would prove to be just the opposite of what they expected. Israel would bring shame and reproach upon themselves by the course of action they were considering.

Isa 30:6 The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery

flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.

It seems that Israel had decided to send tribute to Egypt in order that she might provide military power in the defense against Assyria. The caravans had to travel through the very wilderness Israel had passed through in leaving Egyptian bondage. The territory through which they were traveling and the dangers from Egypt were both unnecessary.

It is important to add that Egypt would not and could not provide what they sought in the way of aid.

Isa 30:7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

A far better answer to the troubles was to be patient and turn to the strength of the Lord. He had helped in the past. He would help again if they would but trust Him.

Isa 30:8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

God commanded Isaiah to write some things in two separate places that His advice might not be ignored. First it was to be written in a table where all could see it and take notice. Second, it was to be written in a book that it might be passed on to future generations. God was willing to help if they would seek that help.

Today, when we open our Bibles to the book of Isaiah, we read of Israel's foolish disregard of God's offer.

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**Isa 30:9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:**

**Isa 30:10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:**

Seers were those to whom Jehovah revealed His messages. Prophets were those who delivered those messages to the people. Israel did not wish to receive the truth. Therefore, they turned their heads away when the will of God was presented to them.

Like much of the religious world today, they were far more interested in hearing of God's blessings than in being told of the wrath of God when sin was found in their lives. Lies and deception were far more acceptable to them than the preaching of sin and repentance.

**Isa 30:11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.**

Isaiah used the term "the Holy One of Israel" much too often for their comfort. They were quite bored as well as unhappy that they kept constantly hearing of that "Holy One." They considered Isaiah to be an obstacle to their safety. Jehovah was to be placed in the background while they courted the aid of Egypt.

**Isa 30:12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:**

**Isa 30:13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.**

God accused His people of failing to listen to His advice and preparing to lean upon a wall which would not stand against their fearsome foe. They were trusting in a people who in the past had been oppressive and morally corrupt. How foolish it was to hide behind them as a wall of protection. That wall would bulge out from weakness and would collapse before their eyes.

**Isa 30:14 And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.**

The Egyptian wall of protection would be so completely shattered that it would be like a clay vessel which had been broken into tiny pieces that were so small they could not be used to carry a coal of fire from one place to another, or hold enough water to get a drink from a cistern.

**Isa 30:15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.**

Isaiah quoted the Lord as telling them the solution to their fears was to be found in depending upon Him; not in running down to Egypt for help. Why could they not remember the way Egypt had treated them in the past, and the way the Lord had rescued them from that treatment?

**Isa 30:16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride**

**upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.**

The people would not listen. They replied that they would find horses which could be used to flee from their enemy. It should be noted once again that Israel had been warned not to depend upon horses and chariots. They were to depend upon Jehovah.

God answered their excuse for turning to Egypt by telling them that they would most certainly ride upon swift horses, but it would not be a way of overcoming Assyria. It would be running from the Assyrians who would be chasing them.

**Isa 30:17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.**

The Israelites would become so terrified that a very small number of the enemy would cause them to retreat until they were practically defenseless such as a deserted lighthouse or a lone signpost on a hill.

**Isa 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.**

They were fortunate that God had not already deserted them. He was still found to be gracious and was waiting for them to learn the lessons which were so badly needed. When they did learn those lessons, they might expect blessings from Him. Until they learned them, the woes would continue.

**Isa 30:19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.**

After this series of events was concluded, a time would come when the people would be safe in Jerusalem. The tears would halt. God would hear their prayers. There was a reason for the corrective measures which were being taken. The nation had decided to depend upon human wisdom and power rather than that of the Lord. They would learn that such a course of action was deadly.

**Isa 30:20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:**

The unfortunate conditions into which they were about to be plunged were a way of persuading them to listen to the voice of the Creator. When their lesson was learned, they would be ready to bring their teachers of God's Word back into the limelight.

**Isa 30:21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.**

Whose is the voice which they would hear behind them. Was it the voice of the teachers telling them there was a right way and they should walk in it, turning neither to the right nor the left, or was it the voice of those with lack of faith telling them they were headed in the right direction as they sent their tribute to Egypt?



The context of the verses before and after this one indicate that even though the voice was coming from behind them, it was that of God's true teachers telling them to walk in His paths without departing from them. Jesus taught that there was a strait and narrow way which leads to life and there are few which follow it.

**Isa 30:22 Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.**

A time would arrive when they would discard the images made of gold and silver by human hands. They would so despise them that they would get them out of sight just as a woman would throw away a cloth used during her menstrual period.

**Isa 30:23 Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.**

When they learned that they could not depend upon human defenses, they would turn to God and He would bless them with fertile ground and productive crops. There would be a plenteous amount of food for both men and beasts.

**Isa 30:24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.**

The work animals which helped in cultivating the soil would eat of grain which had been carefully separated from the chaff. They would not have to graze in pastures which were barren.

**Isa 30:25 And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.**

This entire section telling of the blessings of God is hyperbole, or exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. Rivers and streams of water do not ever appear on every high mountain. But one does learn of the providential care of Jehovah in these verses.

**Isa 30:26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.**

Those who live in hot regions might wonder what would happen if the sun were to become seven times as bright as it normally was. That is the wrong line of thought. The verse is teaching that the blessings which come to man as a result of light from the sun would be increased several times.

These blessings would only come when the people had allowed God's Word to be respected, which would allow their present wounded condition to be healed.

**Isa 30:27 Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden**

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**thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation,
and his tongue as a devouring fire:**

This verse tells of the anguish which must come before these blessings can be enjoyed. Both Israel's neighbors and themselves will suffer much before the blessings mentioned above can be expected. This is not a pretty picture. However, it is a necessary corrective method in bringing men to their senses.

Isa 30:28 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

A bridle ordinarily is used to guide a horse. A bridle in the jaws of people would seem to mean that God would guide the people. If that is the point, then the bridle is God's means of determining which nations will hear and obey Him, and which will not. The bridle would cause them to err only in the sense that they would fight against that bridle.

Isa 30:29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

When God's corrective measures had been headed, Israel would find that holiness and a full life would follow. Musical instruments were used in the worship services of that time. The one using the pipe would be in a joyful mood as he or she went to praise God for His blessings.

Isa 30:30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

God was to demonstrate His power for all to see and hear. When His arm came down upon the enemy, it would be like a forest fire or a tornado with large hailstones. When Israel learned to depend upon the wisdom and power of the Lord, their foes would be devastated without dependence upon the fragile defenses of men.

Isa 30:31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

The same voice which said, "Let there be light" in the beginning of creations could most certainly bring about the defeat of such powers as Assyria. Such enemies will be beaten into pieces.

Isa 30:32 And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.

It was not just in the case of the Assyrian forces that God would bring a victory. Every nation on earth will be weighed in the balances of God's Word. He will shake all nations, particularly in the battle of faith. The staff of the Lord will be sufficient to support the righteous and defeat the wicked. If Israel will but be patient and await the manifestation of the power of God, the victory is certain.

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**Isa 30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.**

A tophet was a place where fires burned continually as garbage was burned outside the city of Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom. This was the place where babies had been thrown into the fire in worship to the false god Molech. A place of such continual burning is threatened for those who ignore the guidance of Jehovah, and depend upon the strength and wisdom of men. That place is HELL!

## Chapter 31

We now have a continuation of God's warning about going to Egypt for help against the feared Assyrian army. Israel was apparently without memory concerning just how feeble the Egyptians were when God sent the plagues as Israel was delivered from bondage to them. God did not intend for Israel to forget those lessons. The predictions of this chapter left Israel with no real excuse for leaning upon Egypt rather than upon Jehovah.

**Isa 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!**

We can imagine what must have been going through the minds of the Israelites as the Assyrian forces swept across the countryside conquering everything in sight. Israel knew it could not contend with the Assyrians. Their manpower was too much. In contrast to their own military weakness, they knew Egypt had amassed large numbers of horses and chariots. These were awesome in battle. Why not seek such help?

But Israel should have remembered the Word of the Lord which had clearly forbid them to base their hopes on horses and chariots. (See Deut. 17:15-16.)

*Deut 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.*

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Deut 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Isa 31:2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

God's people should have been perfectly aware that God is able to defeat any evildoers. There is never any reason for Him to break His Word. The only time in which God will repent of His warnings is when men repent of their evil deeds.

Isa 31:3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

The Egyptians might worship their King as a god, but that did not make him a god. He and his many chariots and horses were fleshly strength. Such fleshly strength is helpless in the face of the spiritual power possessed by the God of all. When Jehovah decides to bring His powerful arm down upon human wisdom and power, the result is predictable.

By leaning on the strength of Egypt, Israel was destined to fall. Both Egypt and Israel would fall together. He who helped would be Egypt. He who was helped would be Israel. Without God's support, both were helpless.

Isa 31:4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on

his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

If Israel was willing to place their confidence and trust in Jehovah, they would find Him standing over them just as a ferocious lion stood over its prey. God would stand over Jerusalem and defend His people against the shouts of any and all who desired to take it from Him. The shepherds of Assyria, as well as the fearful advisors among Israel who were depending on Egypt, would see Jerusalem defended.

Isa 31:5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

A second vivid example is used to strengthen the point. A mother bird, particularly an eagle, would defend her young. God would do the same if they would but depend upon Him. Some attempt to connect the word "passover" here with the word which refers to the annual feast of the Passover. This is doubtful. The words are the same, but the Lord was not passing over any punishment upon His people in the present circumstances.

Isa 31:6 Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

Isaiah's plea was for Israel to turn back to the True God whose providential arm they had so carelessly rejected. He was ready to help if they were ready to call upon Him in obedient faith.

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**Isa 31:7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.**

The phrase “in that day” usually refers to the end time and the final judgment, or it may have reference to the Christian age. In this case it has a more immediate application. Israel would some day realize the awesome power of Jehovah. Then they would turn to Him instead of the idolatrous nations such as Egypt.

Israel did learn a lesson while in later captivity, that idols were impotent. They were nothing more than man made objects of wood and stone. The nation turned from all worship of idols upon their return from Babylonian captivity.

**Isa 31:8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.**

When the time arrived for Assyria to face defeat, that defeat would not come as a result of men, metal swords, horses or chariots. But they would flee from the sword of God’s punishment. When that happened, the strong young men of Assyria would retreat in fear of the power of the Lord.

**Isa 31:9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.**

Assyria would find themselves running back to their own land. Their leaders would panic and desert their

own flag. This would come about as a result of the fire of God's wrath which they would face as they attempted to overcome the city of Jerusalem.

That is exactly what happened when the power of God destroyed 185,000 of the Assyrian soldiers in a single night. It was the arm of the Lord which did this; not the multitude of an Egyptian army.

This was the beginning of the end for the Assyrian empire. It was to be conquered by the Medo-Persians and its power would be dissolved.

## *Chapter 32*

There are three divisions making up this thirty-second chapter. It first tells of a righteous King and the changes which will take place under His rule. It then warns the women of Judah that their attention to luxury and ease will no longer continue in that day. Then the chapter presents a society which will enjoy the blessings of life under the future leader.

**Isa 32:1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.**

Three names come to mind as one attempts to identify this King who will rule in righteousness. Hezekiah is praised in the scriptures as a king far better than others of his day. Josiah was also recognized for righteous character. But neither of these rulers fits the entirety of the picture described in the following verses. That picture is only fulfilled in the Kingdom of God, under the rule of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

The princes who were to rule in judgment could be the apostles, whom Jesus told they might rule with Him. It could also tell of the royal priesthood to which every true Christian belongs.

**Isa 32:2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.**

Under the rule of this Righteous King, the citizens will become concerned about the storms of life which beat upon others. They will provide a hiding place from those storms. They will also offer refreshment to those who

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find themselves threatened by poverty. They will act as a shadow for men in times when the souls are suffering from the heat of toil in their labors. Jesus Christ provides all of these blessings through those who serve Him and their fellowmen.

Isa 32:3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

The citizens of the righteous kingdom will see that which they did not see before. Their ears will hear things which had not been heeded before.

Isa 32:4 The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.

The rash are those who act before they understand the consequences of their actions. These persons will be persuaded to ponder the right paths and take them rather than impulsively choosing evil ways. Those who have either deliberately or carelessly confused others by their speech will love the truth and teach it plainly.

Isa 32:5 The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.

Evil men and women will not be considered as righteous. In spite of what men claim to be, they will be seen through the eyes of Christian values.

Isa 32:6 For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise

hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

Ungodly persons will be seen as having spoken as enemies of the Lord. The evil thoughts which are born in their hearts will be so clearly recognized that they will be known for what they truly are.

Such persons think evil, speak evil, and do evil. In doing so they fight against God. They take advantage of the poor and needy.

Isa 32:7 The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

Lies and hypocritical actions are the manner of life of the ungodly. Even when a needy person approaches them for assistance which is justified, they turn away from those pleas.

Isa 32:8 But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.

It is quite the contrary with those who love God. They are liberal in the true sense of the word. They are ready to share that which they control with those who are less fortunate. This is the heart of the Christian way. Selfishness is shunned. Generosity is practiced.

It is unfortunate that the word “liberal” has come to mean one who handles the Word of God with careless abandon. Such persons are not liberal in the sight of God. They are deceiving themselves.

Isa 32:9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

The women who do not take their responsibilities seriously can do great damage to the society in which they live. Good women teach children. They encourage their husbands to work diligently. They do not sit on their couches while their duties go undone. They do not spend their time prancing around in luxurious clothing and constantly gossiping. Judah had too many women who were found in the latter class.

Isa 32:10 Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

These women needed to open their eyes to what was going to happen in the future. The troubles which lay ahead were monstrous. The harvest would fail. That upon which they depended for their life of luxury would be cut off.

There is some difference of opinion as to the meaning of this verse in the original Hebrew. It is believed by most that it is saying this time of trouble is to come in just a little more than a year. The precise time is not the important topic here. It is the certainty of punishment for their neglect of the Way of the Lord. It could happen then. It can happen today.

Isa 32:11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.

While they were snoring, they should have been trembling with fear in contemplation of what was ahead.

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The luxurious clothing and precious jewels would be taken from them. In their place would be found the roughness of sack cloth. There was need for them to make preparations by repenting of their selfishness.

**Isa 32:12 They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.**

I do not agree with those who explain the first part of this verse as beating upon the breasts in their grief. The passage does not use the word “upon.” It uses the word “for.” These women would find themselves so deprived some day that they would not be able to feed their own suckling babes.

The bounteous harvests which allowed their lazy habits would disappear. Both the vineyards and the field crops would become non-productive.

**Isa 32:13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:**

Fields which were producing fine crops would be turned into briar patches. When that happened the people of Judah would search in vain for the parties in which they forgot the God who provided them with that which they took for granted.

**Isa 32:14 Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;**

Both the countryside and the city would be left in desolation. If the reader will think carefully about the

condition of the land of Judah while the Jews were in captivity, he will be able to appreciate just what Isaiah was predicting. Until the Medes allowed them to return to the land, it sat in just such condition as is described above.

**Isa 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.**

This sadness would not last forever. When the people had been punished to the extent God knew was necessary, they would experience a sharp change. The reader should be careful about these last few verses of the chapter. They apparently are spiritual in nature. The Spirit was poured out from on high at the time of the Pentecost in Jerusalem, after the death of the Saviour. The land which would see the blessings of verses fifteen through twenty is the Kingdom of God. The blessings pictured are not limited to the fleshly Jews. They are available to those who reside in the New Jerusalem and feed upon the spiritual blessings offered in God's kingdom.

**Isa 32:16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.**

When God's people were to be filled with the Spirit of God right judgments would be rendered throughout the land. This would take place after the period in which the thorns and briars ruled. The rich would not take advantage of the poor. Productivity would prevail because men would cooperate in love.

**Isa 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.**

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When men learn righteousness and practice it the outcome will be peace with God and also with one's fellowmen. Fear of persecution will be eradicated. That is why Christ is known as the "Prince of Peace.

Isa 32:18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

During the travels in the wilderness Israel dwelt in temporary tabernacles. When the promised land was theirs they were able to build permanent dwellings. They rested there in peace, as long as they followed God's will.

In the present day Kingdom of Christ there is reason for peace and quietness of soul. We dwell in tabernacles of the flesh, but we can have assurance that the fleshly tabernacle will be replaced with a new spiritual body which will never decay.

In addition, as long as either Jew or Gentile remains at peace with the Lord, the troubles of this present world will be far less disturbing.

Isa 32:19 When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

When hailstorms strike the forest of wickedness, it will come to ruination. Meanwhile the city of God will be secure in the hope of heaven. He will spread His protective covering of salvation over it as a blanket.

Isa 32:20 Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

Everywhere that the citizens of the Kingdom of God sow the seeds of peace, kindness and obedience to His will, their work will be rewarded one hundred fold. In the midst of earthly trials the Christian reaps that which he has sown. If this does not seem to be the case at the time, it most certainly will be after the final judgment.

Chapter 33

Isaiah predicts that the Assyrian armies will find themselves defeated by the power of the Lord. At the time of the prophecy, they had surrounded the walls of Jerusalem and threatened to enter and take that city. Isaiah speaks for Jehovah as he pronounces woe upon that powerful enemy of God.

Isa 33:1 Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

The Assyrians had moved rapidly through the territory east of Judah, and had taken spoils from those defeated people. They had been able to send their warriors out of Assyria because of the fact that they were too powerful to be invaded and spoiled by other nearby nations.

They had accepted tribute from Hezekiah as the latter attempted to buy off the enemy with large amounts of money and other valuables. Instead of refraining from taking the city of Jerusalem, they kept the bribe and continued their assault with the full intent to force an unconditional surrender.

Isaiah was accurate in the predictions which were made. After the conflict was over the Israelites took spoils which were left after the 185,000 Assyrians were killed by an overnight visit of an angel of the Lord. Then when Sennacherib returned home, he was murdered by his own sons.

Isa 33:2 O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

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Now Isaiah turns from a statement to the Assyrians and offers a prayer to God. He pleads for God's grace to rest upon His people. They had not been all they should have been in loyalty to God, but they had patiently waited for His arm to fall upon the enemy. If Israel was to survive, it would have to be through the power of the Almighty. They were not capable of meeting the Assyrian forces by themselves. It would require the arm of the Lord to save them. This was true in the past. It was true at the time. It would be true in the future.

**Isa 33:3 At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.**

God had responded to the prayer. When the Assyrians observed the terrifying power which had been poured out upon them, they beat a rapid retreat. It seems a bit odd that the plural is used here, speaking of nations rather than of that one nation. This may have been because the Assyrians had incorporated into their ranks men from the nations which they had already conquered.

**Isa 33:4 And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.**

The prediction was that God would permit Israel to fall upon the spoils which the retreating army had left behind them and would gather it up like a horde of the caterpillar stage of the locusts. These pests were known for passing through a land and leaving the vegetation leafless and dead..

**Isa 33:5 The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.**

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Isa 33:6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.

No human force is able to match that of the Lord. He is the Ruler of both the heavens and earth. Judgment is the declaration of right and wrong. Righteousness is the proper response to such judgment. God had declared the sins of His people and they were to recognize the truth of His accusations and make an attempt to live accordingly.

As long as that determination continued, the wisdom and knowledge which was gained would bring stability in the face of various foes. Such respect for God's expectations is more valuable than gold and silver.

Isa 33:7 Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

As long as the people of Israel tried to live according to their own will and direct their own paths, terrible things had happened. Peace could not be enjoyed. There was much mourning as a result of their disobedience.

Isa 33:8 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

The troubles could be seen as one looked at the highways where people would ordinarily have moved from place to place. These highways were deserted because of fear. The Assyrians had taken their money and then had moved through the land. No city had been safe with the exception of Jerusalem, and it had been surrounded. Hearts trembled with the knowledge that if things continued as they were proceeding Israel was facing doom.

Isa 33:9 The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

The places mentioned in this verse were the most productive in the land. Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan and Carmel were the pride of the nation in beauty and agricultural production. They had been left like a tree whose leaves had fallen during drought.

Isa 33:10 Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

Isa 33:11 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.

Isa 33:12 And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

The miseries which had come upon Israel were a result of their despising of the instructions of their Lord. He had decided the punishment was now sufficient. He would rise up to demonstrate what a contrast could occur when men depend upon Him.

Previously they had sown disrespect for God. They had reaped disrespect from Him. They had reached the point where they were like chaff driven about by the wind, like thorns burning in the fire. Would that change? Yes. It would.

Isa 33:13 Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.

Those far and near, both in geography and in time, would hear and read of what God can do to the sinner, and for the righteous.

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**Isa 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?**

There was good reason for the sinners and hypocrites among God's people to tremble with fear. The Assyrian fire had swept across the nation. They had wondered who, if anyone could survive the horror.

**Isa 33:15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**

There was, however, hope for the faithful remnant. There were some who had walked in righteousness. They had not entered into the oppression of the poor and weak. They had refused to take profit from bribery. They had abhorred the killing of the innocent and the enjoyment of sin.

**Isa 33:16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.**

The prayer of these righteous would be heard by the Most High. They would find a rock of safety. They would be assured of nourishment for soul and body. The river of life would not bypass them.

It does not take a genius to catch a glimpse of the coming Messiah in this picture. He brings all of these pleasant conditions to those who walk in godliness.

**Isa 33:17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.**

There is a land that is fairer than day. It is ruled by a King who is clothed in spiritual beauty. The patience of the believers bears them up until they reach that land and see that King. It is not as far off as we might think.

**Isa 33:18 Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?**

But what would God do to those who defy His instructions? It would be just the opposite of what He does for the upright. The hearts of such people will harbor great terror. The hypocritical scribe, such as those condemned by Christ, will face their sins. Those who constantly watch to see if they have the power to destroy the city of God will find that they do not have such power. The Assyrians were this kind.

**Isa 33:19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.**

Isaiah now focuses his attention upon the righteous once more. They may look forward to a time in which they shall not have to gaze at fierce soldiers who speak a different language than they.

Surely the reader can see in this scene a type of the Christian warfare. The time will come when the army of Satan will meet defeat. Those who speak in Satan's tongue will no longer mock the God of heaven and find amusement in taking advantage of His children.

**Isa 33:20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.**

God challenges the faithful to continue their loyalty. They are to look out across the earthly city of Jerusalem which contains the tabernacle, His dwelling place, upon Mount Zion. For them, it will become a city of peace and quietness. The enemies will find it impossible to uproot that tabernacle. He will protect it. Tabernacles are normally temporary. Jerusalem would continue in the spiritual sense.

**Isa 33:21 But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.**

This is far more than a simple invitation to take confidence in the earthly city of Jerusalem. It reaches all the way to heaven. In that heavenly Jerusalem above, God will provide rivers of protection in which no ships manned by galleys of oarsmen will be seen.

**Isa 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.**

The faithful of the Lord will not accept the fragile values invented by men. God will be their lawgiver. He will also be the Ruler of those who put their trust in Him. With Him as both Lawgiver and Monarch of the city, there need be no fear of defeat.

**Isa 33:23 Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.**

Nevertheless, at the time when Isaiah was making his prophecies, Israel was not well prepared to sail for the city above. Her sails were not well supported. She needed to purify her soul. When that took place, she could set out in faith. Until the purification was finished they might expect enemies to plunder them. When it did take place, there would be prosperity.

**Isa 33:24 And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.**

Here there is a look at both the present and the past. As the citizens of the earthly Jerusalem repent and obey the Lord, they will be healthy of soul. God will be with them. In the Christian age, with the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the penitent, no one should ever have sickness in the inner man. God has promised to heal those who truly wish to be healed.

## Chapter 34

Chapter thirty-four pronounces woes upon the wicked of the earth. Chapter thirty-five pronounces exaltation upon the faithful who follow God's. The contrast is almost breath-taking. The chapter before us is an ugly picture, but that is the nature of the hideous future which the disobedient are rushing toward. Even if it is most unpleasant to consider, we must look at it in order that we may avoid it.

**Isa 34:1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.**

The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He has shouted loudly and clearly in order that none should have an excuse in the time of reckoning. That is why it is so important that the Word of God be preached to all the world. If we care about the welfare of our fellow men and women, we must let all know the horror of God's wrath.

**Isa 34:2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.**

It is true that the Christian is to obey the powers that be in the nation which is his lot. We are to obey them that have the rule over us, whether it be the elders of the church, or the law enforcement officers of the nation. This holds true as long as those powers do not decide to lead those they rule into paths which oppose the will of the Ruler of heaven and earth.

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This verse makes it obvious that the painful destiny of those who lead others into sin, and those who follow such leadership, is so certain that no man should wish to share in it. God will destroy the wicked.

Isa 34:3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

Those of us who have stood at the edge of a large city garbage dump have gained some idea of the stench of rotten meat. Just such an odor arose from the remains of Sodom and from the Assyrian forces who fell before the anger of Jehovah. The blood ran like rivers down the sides of the mountains and across the plains upon which they perished.

Isa 34:4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

One can hardly read these words without making a comparison with the words which were written by the apostle Peter concerning the end of the world and the final judgment (See 2 Peter 3:10-11).

2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2 Pet 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Are such words literal, or are they but a means of telling men God's wrath is most unpleasant? I do not

personally care to find out. The godly will not be consigned to such a destiny.

It may be that this is a reference to the political world in which the wicked hold power. Their stars will fall. Their heavens will be rolled up and burned up.

Isa 34:5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

Idumea is the land of Edom, on the east side of the Jordan River. These people are the descendants of Esau. They have hated Israel through the centuries. They still despise their kinfolk who descended from Jacob.

Isa 34:6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

God intended to claim a sacrifice from the Edomites. It would be a result of His sword falling upon them. Sacrifices such as they had offered to Him were a farce. The blood of lambs and goats, and the fat from the kidneys of rams were only a prelude to the sacrifice which God would claim from the people of Edom.

Isa 34:7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

The blood of the bulls and goats was totally rejected by the Lord. All the sacrifices accomplished was to soak

the land with blood. The fat of the animals only made the dust of the ground fat. It did not appease the anger of the Lord.

Isa 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

There are days of the Lord while men live upon this present earth. Our sins do very often catch up with us. These present difficulties are but straws compared to the giant oaks of the last day.

But just what is the "controversy of Zion?" It is that battle which began in the Garden of Eden and has lasted for all the years between then and now. Zion is God's mountain. He does not appreciate it when others attempt to trespass with their fellow servants of Satan. There will always be a payback.

Isa 34:9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

Edom is not the most prized land in the world at the present time. There is a sharp difference between the fertility of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and that of the land east of the Jordan. Still, the picture here seems to suggest something far more horrible than the present barrenness of that territory. It looks suspiciously like hell itself.

Isa 34:10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

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God's attitude toward the opposition which the wicked hold up before His faithful through the years has never changed. He sends his curses upon them throughout time. He will continue those woes in the final lake of fire.

**Isa 34:11 But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.**

**Isa 34:12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.**

Those who try to exist in the nations which fight against God will find that they are allies of the flesh eating birds and beasts. There will be lives of emptiness and confusion. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.

When such a land is calling out for quality individuals to take places of leadership, that land will find that such persons cannot be located. Those they do install in places of power will be worthless.

**Isa 34:13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.**

One expects the palaces of the rulers of nations to be magnificent and beautiful. This is far from the truth in a land ruled by the selfish and greedy. Everything points downward in decay and corruption. Nettles, thorns, dragons and owls are not the finest of pets.

**Isa 34:14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the**

**satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.**

**Isa 34:15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.**

The Lord can see the end from the beginning. He describes the conditions which prevail when men live in the shadows cast by the Prince of Darkness. They shall stumble and fall. They shall be consumed by the very conditions they have sought out.

**Isa 34:16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.**

The book of the Lord is His Holy Word, which has been revealed to men in the Old Testament at the time in which Isaiah lived, and in the pages of the New Testament until the end of time. The truths which have been placed before man will stand eternally. The prophecies and promises will find their fulfilment. God hath spoken. That word will stand.

**Isa 34:17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.**

The servants of Satan will live with the woes for which they have labored. God has revealed the horrors which lie ahead for them. The Edom of Isaiah's day found the predictions true. Those who despise the God of heaven will find the same to be true when the final gavel falls.

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Chapter 35

The contrast between the woes which were to fall upon the wicked, and the blessings to be enjoyed by the righteous raise the importance of Isaiah chapter thirty-five to a mountain peak of hope for the faithful. Chapter thirty-four spoke of the woes. Chapter thirty-five focuses upon the blessings which await those who choose the Way of Holiness.

Isa 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

God makes use of the barren desert wilderness to picture the spiritual desolation of souls who have no hope in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The desert which rejoices and blossoms as the rose is the Kingdom of God in the time of the Christian age. We are not talking in this chapter about literal deserts and rose gardens. We are interested in souls which were once separated from the enriching flow of the River of life which arrived with Christ, but who later spring forth in the beauty of holiness through Him.

Isa 35:2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

The spiritual garden made up of the redeemed will be far more beautiful than the desolate desert made up of those who walk the way of Satan and his angels. In the



faithful we may see the honor, the glory and the power of the Creator.

Isa 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

This third verse can be taken in two different senses. First, it may be a means of urging those who are weak spiritually to feed upon the Word of God in order that the weaknesses which have made them unproductive in the service of Jehovah may become strong and vigorous in moving toward heaven.

Secondly, the verse can be seen as a charge for those who are spiritually strong to reach out to those who are weaker than themselves. God's way is for the strong to do all in their power to share that strength with those who need it.

Isa 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

This fourth verse seems to be more closely related to the second thought. The strong are to call for the weak to reach up to take the hand of the Lord and depend upon Him to aid in overcoming the obstacles and having confidence in His promises. He has promised to save those who place their trust in Him. He will keep that promise.

Isa 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Are these eyes of the blind spiritual eyes, or are they fleshly eyes? Of course it is true that when Jesus walked



upon the earth, he caused those who were literally blind to gain their sight. Through his miraculous powers He caused the deaf to hear the voices around them and the sounds of nature.

But, there is much more here. Those miracles which Jesus performed were but shadows of the wonders which were to occur when men began to see spiritual truths which they had not seen before, and began to comprehend the importance of hearing and obeying the commandments of the Father in heaven.

Isa 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

The hart is a male deer. One has only to recall the energetic bouncing and leaping of a deer to get some feeling for what is being presented. The spiritually lame who do not walk uprightly and confidently are seen as being filled with energy in the service of God.

After having placed their lives in the hand of the Messiah, those who have had little to sing about in the past will find their hearts filled with joy as they sing the praises of the redeeming love of both the Father and the Son. Souls which were but a barren spiritual wilderness can then be refreshed by the water of life.

Isa 35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

What a tremendous joy should arise in the heart of one who has been passing through the desert of sin and then

has been introduced to the fountain free which pours out showers of blessings to those who will come to it. It is as if the serpents of the desert sand were to come upon the lush vegetation of the Plain of Sharon.

We cannot pass on without praising the Lord for the fertile soil and the abundant crops which are found in so many areas of the world today. In some lands the tables in the grocery stores are piled high with meat, vegetables and fruit. God is telling us in this present chapter that through the Messiah spiritual blessings even more wonderful can be enjoyed.

Isa 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

There is a Way which leads to that blessed Kingdom, as well as through it. Jesus explained that He is that Way. There are not many ways as some would have us believe. There is but ONE. That is the one which leads one in the footsteps of the Son of God. As Jesus was without sin, this Way which He walked is one of holiness. Only the redeemed will be found walking on that Way.

The last part of this verse is fascinating. There are two truths which may be gained from it, depending upon how one translates the original Hebrew phrasing.

The first of these two is that the basic teachings of the Bible concerning how one is to be pleasing to God are easy to understand. Even those of less than average mental ability can realize what God requires of them. We are not saying that the entirety of Biblical teaching is of such simple nature. It is as though God placed spiritual food at every level, for all men. But there are very few



who could not understand the statement that the first commandment is to love the Lord thy God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength.

Another quite different thought is probably the intent of the verse. The Bible uses the word “fool” to describe the one who will not learn, not the one who cannot learn. If the wording of the present verse is taken in that sense, we understand it to mean that the fools who believe there is no God, or who see no value in listening to His truths, will not be found walking on that highway of holiness. They make a horrible mistake in choosing the way of sin rather than the holy highway.

Isa 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

That highway to heaven will be a safe one. It is not that the redeemed will never be attacked by ferocious beasts such as lions. The Christian martyrs were thrown into dens of lions and were eaten alive. However, even while the lions were gnawing their bones, the souls of those who did not renounce their God were safe in His hands. They will be with Him in the land of fadeless day.

The spiritual beasts who go about to devour, as Satan did in the Garden of Eden, will not be found walking the highway of Holiness. They may kill the body. They cannot destroy the hope of the soul.

Isa 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Surely those who went into captivity in Babylon would have had a song in their heart as they were allowed by the Persian government to return to the area of Mount Zion in Jerusalem. There must have been tremendous joy. Sorrow and tears would have been left behind as they headed once more for the promised land.

The ransomed of the Lord, as mentioned here, are those who come to spiritual Zion, the church of Jesus Christ. Note that the songs these redeemed ones sing are those of eternal joy. They know that regardless of the tears which may come their way while living out these three score and ten years on the face of the earth, they have the assurance of a home where God wipes the tears from every eye.

Chapter 36

We shall now see a confrontation between the powerful Assyrian army, led by Sennacherib, and the small nation of Judah, led by Jehovah, but using King Hezekiah as His spokesman. In spite of what the world might expect, any contest between the Lord and any nation upon the face of the earth is “No Contest.” How strange it is that men do not learn this basic lesson. But they have not!

This chapter and the one following it will bring an end to the threat of the power of Assyria. Then the spotlight will turn to Babylon and its challenge to the plans and purposes of God.

Isa 36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defended cities of Judah, and took them.

The fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah was 701 B.C. Hezekiah had been one of the better kings of God’s people. He had begun a reformation which turned the people from the worship at high places throughout the land to the altar at Jerusalem where God had indicated He desired His people to come before Him.

Hezekiah must have wondered why God was allowing Assyria to move into the land capturing city after city and taking the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Sennacherib had at this time taken many of the cities of the southern kingdom of Judah, and was knocking at the door of the gate of Jerusalem.

Isa 36:2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah

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**with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.**

Sennacherib was involved in a contest with the Egyptians in the area of Lachish. This did not seem to cause him any great concern. He decided to send representatives to Judah demanding that they open the gates of the city and allow his forces to enter. There were three of these leaders. All three are mentioned in the parallel history which is given in the book of Second Kings. Rabshakeh is the only one mentioned in this chapter.

Rabshakeh and the other two were not by themselves. A large army was sent to back up their demands. They apparently felt that in view of their recent successes at other cities in Canaan, all that would be necessary would be to make a show of their power and all would be a matter of mopping up from there on. They were in for a surprise. This was due to their misunderstanding of the power of Jehovah.

Rabshakeh and his companions stood near enough to the city walls of Jerusalem that their voices could be heard by those who were sentries on the walls. They confidently presented their terms of surrender.

Actually this was not the first time they had made such demands. In the past they had forced Hezekiah to pay enormous tribute to the Assyrian King Sennacherib for his promise to refrain from attacking them. Hezekiah had paid this tribute in days gone by. Now he had changed his mind. He had supported Egypt in opposition to Assyria. This was one of the reasons for the Assyrian pressure upon them.

**Isa 36:3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiyah's son, which was over the house, and**

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Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.

Hezekiah did not come out personally to meet Rabshakeh and his two companions. He sent three of his own representatives. They were Eliakim, Shebna and Joah. If Sennacherib felt he could deal through representatives, Hezekiah would match his actions.

Isa 36:4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

Rabshakeh did not mince words. He intended to intimidate the defenders of Jerusalem. He announced that he had a message from the GREAT King. The king of Assyria. What did Hezekiah think he was doing? Did he not know that he was vastly overpowered? He was placing his confidence in that which could not stand.

Isa 36:5 I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

Rabahakeh claimed that Hezekiah was using empty words when he said he would not surrender the city of Jerusalem. Where would he get all this strength which he would need to fight against the army which Rabshakeh had readied for battle? He was a fool if he truly thought he could refuse the conditions of surrender.

Isa 36:6 Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it

will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

If Hezekiah thought he could gain the help of Egypt, he was deceived. Egypt had proven lacking in both power and in dependability. If Judah wanted to lean upon the arm of the Pharaoh, they would find that they were worse off with Egypt's help than they were without it.

We do not know just why Rabshakeh felt that he could call Egypt a bruised rod. It may be that in the previous encounters between Assyria and Egypt Assyria had inflicted damage upon the Egyptians. We have no specific information to that effect.

Isa 36:7 But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?

Now if Hezekiah thought he could place his trust in Jehovah, Rabshakeh reminded him that he had removed the worship from the high places of the land. Certainly this would provoke Hezekiah's God and He would deny military support to the defense of Jerusalem.

Isa 36:8 Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

There was a third possible source of power which Hezekiah might feel he could depend upon. That would be the army of Judah. To make his point very clear, Rabshakeh challenged Hezekiah to produce riders for two

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thousand horses. He declared that his own king would provide those horses if Hezekiah could find two thousand riders to set upon them.

**Isa 36:9 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?**

Rabshakeh claimed that there were not enough men in the army of Judah to match the strength of one minor division of Sennacherib's army. What Rabshakeh did not know was that God does not need horses and chariots, from Egypt or anywhere else. This would become exceedingly clear later on.

**Isa 36:10 And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.**

Furthermore, Rabshakeh claimed, the Assyrians had not come to attack Jerusalem without the aid of the Lord, God of the Jews. He stated that God had commanded him to not only attack the land, but to utterly destroy it.

This was untrue. God had allowed the Assyrians to punish His people for their idolatry and their corrupted morals. But, He had not indicated that the seed of Abraham should be annihilated from the face of the earth.

**Isa 36:11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.**

The bold tactics of Rabshakeh had succeeded in throwing fear into the hearts of Hezekiah's men. They asked Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian language rather than in the Hebrew. They would rather the guards on the wall of the city did not know the course of the conversation.

It is impressive that Rabshakeh could speak both the Syrian and the Hebrew languages. It may be that those who had been taken captive from the northern kingdom had made this knowledge possible.

**Isa 36:12 But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?**

Rabshakeh was unimpressed. He let Hezekiah's spokesmen know in no uncertain terms that he had no secrets to hide from those on the wall. The threats were for everyone in the city. They could surrender, or they would be forced to eat and drink their own excrements. His language was not the type of wording that we even care to duplicate in these comments. The scriptures declare that the type of threat made by Rabshakeh was later carried out when Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians.

**Isa 36:13 Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.**

**Isa 36:14 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.**

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Instead of lowering his voice, or speaking in Syrian, Rabshakeh cried out loud enough that all could hear. He contended that Hezekiah was only deceiving the people if he claimed to be capable of delivering the Jews from the power of the Assyrian king.

Isa 36:15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Rabshakeh's claim was based upon what he thought were three weaknesses.

1. Their military forces were far too small to match those of Assyria.
2. Egypt was both weak and undependable.
3. The Lord would be angry because they had removed His worship from the high places.

To the mind of the people of Judah and Jerusalem, the arguments of Rabshakeh were very likely formidable. We can almost see them trembling with fear.

Isa 36:16 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;

Rabshakeh had a solution for those of Judah. What needed to be done was for Hezekiah and his people to offer tribute to the Assyrians. Then the people of the land would be allowed to eat from their own crops and drink the water of their own land. The demanded tribute would insure that this would be done.

Isa 36:17 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

There was a slight hitch in the plan. The people would not be taken captive by the Assyrians until they finished their conquests in the general area. Then they would be taken to Mesopotamia where they would live in a land much like that in Canaan.

If Hezekiah and his people agreed to these demands, they would have been insulting Jehovah, who had allowed them to settle in the promised land. He had allowed them to enter and take that land. He was very capable of defending it against any power on earth. All that was needed was for God's people to obey Him, honor Him and trust Him. Then all would be well.

Isa 36:18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, the LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

Rabshakeh reminded the people that the gods of the other nations and cities had not been capable of warding off the attacks of the Assyrian army. They must not believe that the God of the Jews would be able to do that. According to Rabshakeh, it would be a waste of effort to fight. All that would result in would be an embarrassing defeat, followed by almost unbelievable misery.,

Isa 36:19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

It was pointed out that the cities of the Samaritans



had folded before the military force of the Assyrian army. Where were those gods when they were called upon?

Isa 36:20 Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

Rabshakeh closed his blustery words with a question which was difficult to answer. Why did those of Judah think their God could do that which no others had done? Were they really going to accept the advice of Hezekiah and depend upon his Lord?

Isa 36:21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

Hezekiah's men refused to answer Rabshakeh. They had been commanded by the king not to reply to him.

This is sometimes the best response to one who wishes to fight. Continuing to debate the issue can lead to rising tempers. This then is followed by irrational action. There was nothing that could be accomplished by fueling the fire. It was better to place all in the hand of the Almighty. He had proven able to keep His promises in the past. Repentance and prayer were the only hope.

Isa 36:22 Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

Eliakim, Shebna and Joah returned to Hezekiah in despair. As was the custom in that day among the Jews, they had torn their clothing to display their dismay. They informed the king of the threats of the Assyrians.

Chapter 37

The crisis was growing more critical by the hour. Rabshakeh's blustering blasphemy was having its effect upon Hezekiah. The king had been quite confident up to this time that the Lord would intervene in some manner to protect the city of Jerusalem from the threatened destruction promised by Sennacherib's spokesman. Rabshakeh kept on reminding Hezekiah that the Assyrian forces had met no serious opposition from those whom they had met and conquered up to that time. Surely Hezekiah did not believe he could fare any better.

Isa 37:1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

Kings are expected to remain dignified in order that their subjects will maintain confidence in their leadership abilities. The tearing of his clothing and covering himself with coarse sackcloth was an indication of just how serious Hezekiah was beginning to evaluate the situation. He then went into the temple to pray for divine help.

Isa 37:2 And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

Eliakim had been the chief spokesman for Hezekiah. He, Shebna and several of the respected experienced elders of the priests went to Isaiah to plead for his help as an intercessor.

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**Isa 37:3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.**

The words of these men who went to see Isaiah were filled with deep concern. The nation was facing problems which were beyond their ability to solve. It was as if a woman had begun her labor pains in the delivery of a child, and then was unable to give birth.

**Isa 37:4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.**

The plea of the messengers to Isaiah was for him to pray for the nation. It might be that the blasphemous pride of Rabshakeh and Sennacherib would have angered Jehovah to the point that He would take action against the Assyrians.

Large numbers of the Israelites had been taken captive already. Those in the city of Jerusalem were but a remnant of that which had been in the land when the Assyrian invasion began. Isaiah was asked to pray earnestly for those who were left.

**Isa 37:5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.**

**Isa 37:6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard,**

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wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

The reply which Isaiah gave to the servants of Hezekiah who came to him was one which should have inspired a degree of confidence and hope for the future. Isaiah told the messengers to advised Hezekiah not to be afraid of the threats of Sennacherib. These enemies of God's people had made a serious mistake when they ridiculed the power of Jehovah.

Isa 37:7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

The Lord promised that He would send great discomfort upon the Assyrian king. We shall read more about this rumor in the next few verses. It would have to do with the loss of a very large portion of his prized soldiers. He would then cease his efforts to dominate the world and would return to his own land, only to be killed by those who would have been expected to support him.

Isa 37:8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

After having made his threats to Hezekiah, Rabshakeh heard that Sennacherib had left the area of Lachish where he had been doing combat, and had moved to Libnah. There was a reason for this change of location.

Isa 37:9 And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with

thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

The word had also reached the ears of Rabshakeh and Sennacherib that Tirhakah, the king of Ethiopia had come out against the Assyrians. Ethiopia and Egypt were sometimes spoken of as if they were the same power. Other times it seems they were only powerful allies. It was a matter of concern when the Assyrian leaders found themselves facing both Egypt and Ethiopia. This could mean battles on two fronts. That was not a pleasant thought.

Isa 37:10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

The Assyrians are ready to rehash the same arguments they presented to Hezekiah previously. According to them, Hezekiah was placing false confidence in the Lord. Why would not Jerusalem come tumbling down before the onslaught of the massive force of the Assyrian army?

Isa 37:11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

Isa 37:12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?

Assyria did have an impressive record. They intended to dominate the land all the way from northeast of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the land of Ethiopia and

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Egypt. They had a sizable list of the locations which they had swallowed up as they swept across the continent.

**Isa 37:13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?**

Some of these places mentioned are well known to historians. Others are not identifiable. But we can be sure that Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem would have known exactly where they were.

**Isa 37:14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.**

When Hezekiah received the letter, he did exactly what a dedicated servant of the Lord would have done; especially when conditions looked absolutely hopeless as far as the citizens of Jerusalem being able to defend themselves. If God did not intervene, they faced defeat.

**Isa 37:15 And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,**

**Isa 37:16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.**

Isaiah's prayer here is worthy of careful investigation. He does not spend time in praying that which the people expect him to pray. He pours out praise to God and then asks for help in this serious time of need. Our Lord is

appreciative of the honor which we offer him. He will respond to sincere needs of loyal worshippers.

The cherubim were placed at each end of the ark of the covenant. From that throne God received the requests and offerings of His faithful. Isaiah begins by letting Jehovah know that he is confident of the power of the One who created both heaven and earth. There is no other like HIM.

**Isa 37:17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.**

God is not a man. He does not have ears, eyes and other organs such as men have. Still, this is the best that we humans can do to convey our needs to Him. We want Him to be aware of that which is taking place within our lives. He is constantly aware of all that has been, is at present, or will occur in the future. That does not mean He can be ignored. Isaiah recognizes that truth. He pleads with God to react to the boastful statements from the lips of the king of the Assyrians.

**Isa 37:18 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,**

Nation after nations had truly fallen before the power of the Assyrians as they attempted to rule the known world. Sennacherib was quite truthful in his bragging about the weak resistance which been offered to his forces. None had been able to stand before his march. Nor could Judah have done so without the help of the Lord. Isaiah freely admitted it.

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Isa 37:19 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

The thought of that time was that each nation had its own god or gods which answered their prayers. If they had victory in battles, it was because their gods had made it possible. If they lost the battle, it was because they had offended their gods, or the gods were weaker than those of the enemy.

The Assyrians had taken the idols which their foes had made with their own hands, and had burned them or broken them into small pieces. This was supposedly proof that they had defeated them.

Of course this would be quite impossible with the True God who is not made with hands. He is Spirit.

Isa 37:20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

Isaiah affirms that the God to whom he prays will hear that prayer and let all the earth know the futility of placing confidence in those which are no gods. There is but one True and Living God. Sennacherib, as well as men of all time, need to know that. This was an occasion in which Jehovah could, and would, demonstrate His unique power and right to govern in the affairs of men.

Isa 37:21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

We are not told the precise manner in which the Lord replied to the prayer of Isaiah. That He did do so is clear from Isaiah's words to Hezekiah after God had responded. 'THUS SAITH THE LORD.'

Isa 37:22 This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

What did God have to say about this pride filled king of Assyria who claimed that no god could protect his subjects from the horses and chariots which the Assyrians were able to bring into the battlefield?

God had declared that the people He claimed were not about to be raped by the Assyrian. They had said, "No." They had no reason to fear for their purity if they maintained their loyalty to Him. If they would be His people, He would be their God. The one who was mocking Judah, was in line to be mocked himself.

Isa 37:23 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

It was not just any idol of wood or stone which Sennacherib had blasphemed. It was the One who ruled all creation from the heavens. It was a disastrous action which the proud king had taken when he looked in mockery toward the God which Israel worshiped.

Isa 37:24 By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of

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**my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.**

Jehovah made it clear to Sennacherib that the numbers of his chariots would have nothing to do with his ability to overrun the land of promise. Sennacherib seemed to think he was able to do anything and everything which came into his mind in deflowering the land. He expected to cut down the beautiful forests of Lebanon and Carmel. He had boasted that none could prevent the destruction.

**Isa 37:25 I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.**

The Assyrian was bragging about how he had dug wells when water was needed for his troops, and that he had been able to cut off the water supplies of those whom he wished to conquer.

He failed to realize that God had allowed him to do these things. There were reasons why the king had been able to take the northern kingdom. The people of God had fallen into idolatry. They were being punished by the Assyrian forces because God saw the need.

**Isa 37:26 Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defended cities into ruinous heaps.**

Sennacherib should have realized that it was Jehovah who had brought the nation of Israel into being long years before this time. Now that same God had made it possible for the Assyrian to turn many of Israel's defended cities into dumps. He need not think he could have accomplished those victories if God had desired to prevent it.

**Isa 37:27 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.**

That was the reason Sennacherib had not met disaster in his conquest of the cities which had already been defeated. The people of those cities had denied God the praise and the honor which He deserved. Thus they had become as weak as vegetation which was shriveled by the heat of a blazing sun.

**Isa 37:28 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.**

God, speaking through Isaiah made it clear as crystal that He knew far more about Sennacherib than the king would ever realize. He knew where he was at all times. He knew when the king moved from one place to another. He knew just how brazen the king was when he attempted to fight against the Creator. Sennacherib would find that his own confidence was misplaced!

**Isa 37:29 Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips,**

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and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

A farmer often tames a furious bull by placing a ring in the animal's nose and leading him around by his nose. The rider of a horse determines which direction the horse is to move by placing a bridle on the animal which has a bit in his mouth. Just as men can control mean bulls and powerful horses, God promises to control the leader of the Assyrians. He will be turned around in his tracks and sent back to the land from which he came.

Isa 37:30 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

The words of the Lord now turn to Hezekiah and his people. The Assyrians will be driven off and those of Judah will be able to return to the cultivation of their land. The first year it will be necessary to eat whatever grows spontaneously, since there had been no planting and cultivating. The second year there would be some controlled productivity. The third year would see the land being cultivated as it had been before the Assyrians arrived.

Isa 37:31 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

Not only would the crops of the fields return to normal growth; the people themselves would be permitted to move out into the land and settle there. They would

increase in numbers. They would not be plagued by the present enemies.

Isa 37:32 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

The remnant is a very important group in the plan of God. Some die while serving Him. Some are persuaded to deny Him and turn to idols. But, there are some who remain faithful through life and death. They are the remnant. They have been there in every age. They will be rewarded for their dedication.

Isa 37:33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.

How successful was the Assyrian army to be in their effort to capture the city of God? The answer to that question was that they would not be able to enter the gates of the city. They would not be allowed to come close enough to shoot at the guards on the city wall. They would not be able to build mounds of dirt which might allow them to climb over the walls. They would not mock God and succeed.

Isa 37:34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

The enemy had come from the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates. He would go back to that same land. The city was safe for the present. All the world would

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come to know that the power of men is empty and weak when set up against that of the One who rules from the heaven of heavens.

**Isa 37:35 For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.**

God is not selfish. He loves those who love and serve Him with all their heart. He will protect them from the forces of evil which seek to destroy them. God had promised that through the seed of David a blessing would come upon the earth. God's integrity was in question. Would He keep His promise, protect His honor, and bless those who obeyed Him? He declared that He would do so. How would this be done?

**Isa 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.**

It would not be done through the use of horses and chariots. It would be done through the power of angels. Take note that the verse does not talk in terms of an army of angels. It speaks of "the" angel of the Lord. In a single night one angel of the Lord took the lives of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. We do not know how it was accomplished. When those who had been sleeping through the night awoke the next morning, the dead lay on every side. There had not even been enough resistance to wake those who were sleeping.

**Isa 37:37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.**

Sennacherib decided that discretion is the better part of valor. He packed his bags and headed for the land from which he had come. The ring had been placed in his nose. The bit had been placed in his mouth. God had turned him around when the divine purposes were concluded.

**Isa 37:38 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.**

It is difficult to determine how much time passed between the king's retreat and return from the attack upon Jerusalem until he was smitten by two of his sons, and replaced on the throne by a third. Essarhaddon replaced him on the throne. Jerusalem was safe for the time being.

It is a shame that God's people did not learn their lesson once and for all. They did not! In the time of the Babylonians, they had fallen into idolatry and had to be punished by suffering captivity in that land for seventy years.

## *Chapter 38*

God is greater than time, space or matter. Chapter thirty-eight of Isaiah offers us a demonstration of God's power over time. Hezekiah, king of Judah was allowed fifteen more years of life as a result of his previous wise use of the time he had been given and his concerns over being taken from the throne in the noonday of his life.

**Isa 38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.**

Hezekiah had taken the throne of the kingdom at a very young age. He was only twenty-five year of age at the time. The phrase "in those days" refers to the invasion of Judah by the Assyrian army under the leadership of Sennacherib. This invasion occurred about 701 B.C. There is considerable difference of opinion among students of the Bible as to the order of events. I will not enter into that controversy. It is sufficient to state that this was before Hezekiah had reached old age.

Isaiah came to the king and informed him that God had warned him to make arrangements for his death. He was rapidly approaching the end. This was shocking news to Hezekiah. He felt that he had served well thus far. In addition, he had no male children who could carry on the dynasty of David. God had promised David that there would not fail to be one of his descendants on the throne of His people forever.

**Isa 38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,**

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What was the reason Hezekiah turned his face to the wall as he prayed? It may well be that he felt the need for immediate help and wished to shut out that which would interfere with his concentration. Sometimes prayer is most effective when one is alone with God.

Isa 38:3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Your present commentator does not agree with Adam Clarke on this verse. Clarke is usually very wise in his comments, but this time he accuses Hezekiah of being proud of his own efforts. It is more likely that the king was trying to be honest and knew that he had not defied God as he ruled the people. He was grief stricken that his life was to come to an end so soon. Had he done something which had brought on the wrath of Jehovah? To weep sore is to sob and pour tears from the eyes.

Isa 38:4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

God did not directly answer the prayer of Hezekiah. He sent His response through Isaiah. God has more than one way of answering prayer. He may say, "Yes." He may say "No." He may say, "Wait for a while." In the days of Hezekiah He did sometimes answer the person directly. Most of the time His messages were given through a prophet.

Isa 38:5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard

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**thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.**

The Lord began his reply with a reference to Hezekiah's relationship to David. This would have been comforting to him because that was a part of his concern. He had no male heir to succeed him.

The king was informed that God had heard his earnest prayer. We do well to take note of this. God does know our lives. Our joys and sorrows are no secret to Him. He hears our prayers and responds according to His infinite wisdom. If there is no evident response, it is because He knew that was the best answer. He decided to give Hezekiah an immediate reply.

He was going to add fifteen years to the life of the king. He would have the opportunity to lead the people through the prime years of his life. He would have time to produce a son who could succeed him.

Sometimes it would be better for our own future feelings if God said no to our dearest wishes. Hezekiah did have a son named Manasseh. He is recognized as the most wicked of all the kings of Israel and Judah.

**Isa 38:6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.**

But not only would God add fifteen years of life. He would see that the Assyrians would leave the land. God would defend the city from these invaders.

It would be delightful if we could report that God's defense of the city of Jerusalem from the onslaught of the Assyrians brought security forever. It did not. The Babylonians later captured the city and took the citizens into captivity far from the promised land.

**Isa 38:7 And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;**

2 Kings 20:8-11 tells us that Hezekiah asked for this sign. It seems strange that Hezekiah would ask for assurance of that which God had already promised. However, let us not be too harsh. Would we have done any better?

*2 Kings 20:8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?*

*2 Kings 20:9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?*

*2 Kings 20:10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.*

*2 Kings 20:11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.*

**Isa 38:8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.**

God did give the sign. He would cause the shadow on the sundial to move ten degrees backward. This would provide Hezekiah with the confidence that Isaiah was not speaking from his own heart, but that the prophecy came from the Lord. Only divine power could cause a reversal of the shadow on the sundial.

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Critics of the Bible like to speak of magic being involved here. There were magicians at the time, but this was not a magic trick. The sign was real, and the promised fifteen years of added life were real. The reason the sundial was used for the sign was that the sundial spoke of the passage of time. There was a direct connection.

The student of the scriptures is not to confuse the ten degrees of change of the shadow on the sundial with the fifteen years of added life. The ten degrees would have been only a small portion of one day, not fifteen years.

Isa 38:9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

We have now Hezekiah's reaction at various stages of this miraculous event. He had learned much. We ought to do the same.

Isa 38:10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.

He first speaks of his sadness when Isaiah made the announcement that he was about to die. He wanted desperately to live to old age. He felt that he had something to offer if he was allowed to live.

We grieve when a child dies before reaching maturity. We grieve when men or women die in the prime of their lives. Such sorrow is not always sinful. It does, however, offer us a spiritual lesson. We must to our very best to be ready when that day comes. Let us walk the pathway of righteousness, regardless of the point we have reached in age.

Isa 38:11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

Did Isaiah expect to see the Lord with his own eyes if he were allowed to live to old age? Perhaps he meant that He would no longer see the evidences of the existence of God which are around all men of every time and place. But not only would he have been deprived of the sight of these evidences, he would also be separated from those humans with whom he associated while in the flesh.

Isa 38:12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

There seemed to be nothing he could do to escape the predicted death. The years which he would ordinarily have lived were gone. It was as if a weaver had partially finished a piece of cloth and then left it half completed. It appeared that both the daylight and the dark hours of what life he had remaining were to be filled with increasing sickness.

Isa 38:13 I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

Has the reader ever wondered about the manner of death which he or she might experience? Isaiah felt that his own death was as cruel as if a lion had captured him and played with him as a cat plays with a mouse.

Isa 38:14 Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

The king had often heard birds making mournful sounds for various reasons. We have all heard the sound of the mourning dove. Hezekiah apparently move from complaining like a chattering bird, and groaning with sorrow over the coming disaster.

Isa 38:15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

We come to a drastic change in attitude. Hezekiah has been healed of his sickness. He has found the promise of the Lord to be genuine. As a result of his gratitude he promises to be cautious in living according to the will of God.

Isa 38:16 O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

What a change had taken place. Because of God's concern for him he had been provided with a rejuvenation of his spirit. That which had been despair had been replaced by hope for the future. It was by the breath of God that man first lived in Eden. It was through the spirit of the Lord that the life of the king had been extended.

Isa 38:17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from

the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

Hezekiah had lived a relatively pure life. But when the announcement came that he was to die, he felt that this must be related to some sin which had been committed. Now God had apparently put those sins behind him and the pit of the grave had been delayed.

Isa 38:18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

There was still much to be done. Hezekiah realized that there was no means of praising the Lord from within the grave. The dead could not increase in the knowledge of God's truth. Oh how much he appreciated the opportunity to live, to learn and to praise the Lord.

Isa 38:19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

He made a solemn promise to God that he would praise him while breath was in his body. He would praise Him in the future, even as he was praising Him that day.

This verse tells us of the fear Hezekiah had felt that he would have no successor on the throne. Now with his health restored he would have the chance to train up one to take his place.

Isa 38:20 The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

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His praise would not cease in those fifteen added years. He would sing of the greatness of the Lord. His songs would be accompanied with the music of stringed instruments such as the harp.

We must remember though that the use of musical instruments in worship is not once mentioned in the New Testament. There we are commanded to sing and make melody in our hearts.

**Isa 38:21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.**

Isaiah had instructed Hezekiah to place a lump of figs as a plaster upon the boil which was responsible for his ill health. He had obeyed the command. He had recovered. This reminds us that prayer is to be accompanied by the use of our own efforts. One prays for God's help. Then he does all he knows to do on his own and with the medical knowledge which is available.

We do not know just what Hezekiah's physical problem was. Whatever it was, there was at least one boil involved. This brings up the possibility of cancer, but we must admit that we do not have specific information.

**Isa 38:22 Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?**

Hezekiah wished for some proof that he would actually recover from the sickness unto death. He asked the Lord for a sign which would give him added confidence.

Since it seems strange that Hezekiah is asking for a sign here when the joy of recovery had been expressed in the previous verses. The commentators are nearly unanimous in their belief that these last two verses of

the present chapter have somehow been displaced from their original location.

The reader should place the account of the events here side by side with parallel accounts in 2 Kings 20 and 2 Chronicles 32.

## *Chapter 39*

Hezekiah made a very serious mistake which is reported in this chapter. The Assyrians had seen fit to leave Jerusalem and go back to their own land when they lost nearly two hundred thousand of their men at the gates of that city. Hezekiah had reason to feel confident as a result of that success. He had also recovered from his close encounter with death.

But while the Assyrians had become less of a threat there was another which was replacing it. The Babylonians were growing stronger and stronger. Hezekiah failed to realize the danger in which this was placing those over whom he ruled.

**Isa 39:1 At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.**

Merodachbaladan was the king of this rapidly growing national power. He sent a congratulatory letter to Hezekiah along with a present. This was supposedly an innocent gesture of respect. It was not what it seemed to be. The Babylonian ruler was interested in gaining the support of Judah, along with a number of other nations as he was preparing to challenge the power of Assyria.

**Isa 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.**

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Hezekiah fell for the bait. He was puffed up because the Babylonian had felt the need to make friends with his own nation. He made the mistake of showing the visitors who brought the letter and the present that he too had something of which he could be proud. He allowed the visitors to see the national treasury, and also the weaponry which was available to him. It was almost as if he was inviting them to send troops and take possession of the land and its assets.

The Lord has informed his followers that pride goes before a fall. Hezekiah had not learned that lesson yet.

Isa 39:3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.

Isaiah suspected foul play. He came to the king and asked him the area from which the visitors had come, and also asked about what they had said.

Hezekiah replied with a very strong note of pride. He informed Isaiah that they were representatives of the king of Babylon, and that they had come a long ways to pay him honor. He had not the slightest suspicion that they would someday return with many troops and conquer the land.

Isa 39:4 Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

Isaiah then asked Hezekiah what they had seen while they were visiting. He was told that Hezekiah had

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shown the men everything in his treasure house. He was particularly proud that he was able to impress them with his riches and power. The king of Babylon was important, but Hezekiah was also important!

**Isa 39:5 Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:**

Isaiah's fears were realized. He knew from the word of God that Hezekiah had made a fatal error. One does not show off his riches to a greedy visitor. The Lord had a message for the king.

**Isa 39:6 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.**

With the experience Hezekiah had gained concerning the wisdom of God in earlier days, he should have been shocked beyond measure by that which Isaiah revealed to him next.

The time was coming when all of those riches he had shown the men from Babylon would be taken and carried off to the land of Babylon. That which had been laid up for generations would be stored in Babylon rather than in Jerusalem.

**Isa 39:7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.**

In addition, there was other news that Hezekiah was to hear. That son which he desired to replace him on the throne had been presented to him as a result of those

fifteen years of added life. Now the prophet revealed to him that his descendants would be captured and made eunuchs in service of the Babylonian royalty. Eunuchs were slaves. This was not exactly what Hezekiah had in mind for his sons.

**Isa 39:8 Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.**

Hezekiah had mixed emotions over the words of the prophet. It seemed that while he was still alive there would be peace. That was reason for comfort. At the same time he knew that God meant what had been said through the lips of the prophet Isaiah. The land would later be overrun by the very nation to whom he had boasted of his riches.

His fears were to come to reality. Both the riches of the land and the people of the land were taken by the Babylonians, under whom they served in bondage for many years. They would later return to the land, but the lessons which were to be learned concerning idolatry were not easy ones.



## Chapter 40

Before us we have one of the most magnificent chapters in the entire Word of God. It has been this writer's privilege to teach physical science at the high school and university level for some thirty-six years. During that time I have also been preaching from the pulpit. The appreciation which I have for the Word of the Lord, as found in both nature and scripture is enormous. I could spend many, many pages in discussion of this chapter alone. But, Isaiah says it better than I can. Let us examine the Word of God as Isaiah presented it to Israel.

Before we begin the actual study of the chapter, there is a need to discuss the authorship of this portion of the book from chapter forty through chapter sixty-six. These chapters are often called "Deutero-Isaiah" and are attributed by many Bible critics to a different author than the first thirty-nine.

I do not intend to go into an extended list of arguments for a single author and a unified sixty-six chapter book. All that is really needed is to note that the New Testament inspired writers credited Isaiah with the entirety of the book. If one denies the authorship of these last chapters of Isaiah to the same prophet as gave us the first thirty-nine, that person must consider Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul and Peter to be either dishonest or deluded. See the following:

*Matt 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

*Mark 1:2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

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Luke 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

John 1:23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

1 Pet 1:24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

1 Pet 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Rom 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

When such inspired writers agree in quoting the latter chapters of the book of Isaiah, it is wise for us to accept their testimony.

Isa 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Isa 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

The point is made also by the critics that the latter portion of the book was written after the return from Babylonian exile. Much of the argument hinges upon the content of these first two verses. It is claimed that this comfort is to be afforded to those who came back from Babylon to much different conditions than existed when they were taken away, and that they were in need of the tone of these verses. Three things are included

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that appear to speak after the fact of the captivity. God says,

1. Her warfare is accomplished.
2. Her iniquity is pardoned.
3. She has received double for her sins.

All of these are in the past tense. But, what we must remember is that God is able to see the end from the beginning. He is comforting those who are about to go into captivity by assuring them that according to His Word the three conditions are as good as completed. The war between God's people and their enemies will be won. The sins which his people have committed will be pardoned. The punishment will be more than sufficient to cancel the sins which they had committed.

**Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

It is more than just the return from Babylon which is under consideration. That is certainly the most immediate effect. But verse three refers to the invitation which John the baptist presented that men should prepare the way for the coming of one who would be divine. A highway was needed for a visit from God.

**Isa 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:**

Men's hearts are full of rough terrain which must be overcome for God's truth to penetrate them. The pride which lifts up men to the point where they refuse to hear must be cut down. The wilderness of confusion and doubt

must be cleared. Obstacles and stumbling blocks which Satan would place in the way must be removed. Each of these were certain to be accomplished. Fleshly Israel would be allowed to return from Babylonian captivity; but the visit of Jesus Christ to earth would release spiritual captives from the bondage of sin.

**Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

God's glory was revealed through the actions and teaching of the Son. Jesus provided the light which is necessary to escape from the darkness. Through Him the glory of God is manifested. Both Jew and Gentile, even to the most remote isles of the earth would see it. There would be no room for a plea of ignorance.

**Isa 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:**

A voice was then heard. The prophet was told to make an outcry. His response to the command was, "What shall I cry?" He did not have to wonder long. There must be no room for doubt in the hearts of men that God would keep His promises of release and pardon. Humanity is weak and frail. Promises are not always kept. Sometimes they are not sincere. Other times they are sincere, but unexpected hindrances arise which prevent keeping them. It is not so with God. The arm of flesh may fail. The arm of God never fails.

**Isa 40:7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.**

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Isa 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Men are more like the flowers of the field. They bloom in beauty one day. A few days later the heat of the sun and the lack of water results in that which was so beautiful turning shriveled and brown. Yes, the flowers fade. Men are here today and gone tomorrow. God's promises are quite different. They are dependable because they are presented by One who is all wise, all powerful and completely trustworthy.

Isa 40:9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

The promise is that Zion which is the elevation upon which Jerusalem is built. Jerusalem is known as the city of God. It was to become the focal point for good tidings to all the earth. God would come in the form of Jesus Christ. It must be cried out to the cities of Judah that fear has been defeated. These good tidings must then move out unto all the world.

Isa 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

What will happen when the way of the Lord has been prepared and He comes to put down sin, reward His followers, and work the works of Him that sent Him? No ungodly force will be able to overcome His strong arm. He will accomplish his goals.

Isa 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

One can hardly mistake the subject of this verse. Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd. He feeds His flock in tender love. He lifts up the weak and carries them along as the older and more mature follow in his footsteps. He is capable and more than willing to care for His own.

Isa 40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

John the apostle tells us that the Word was in the beginning. He was with God and He was God. All the waters upon the face of the earth could be held in the hollow of His hand. A span is the distance across the outstretched hand. God has the capacity to measure the entire cosmos with a span of His hand. All the soil on the earth is no more to Him than a grain of dust on a measuring balance.

Isa 40:13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

As the Spirit moved upon the face of the deep it was not necessary that any greater than He give him directions or provide advice. If any were to give counsel, it would be He.

Isa 40:14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

The reader is challenged to bring forth that one who is capable of teaching the Godhead. There is none. God has all knowledge, wisdom and understanding. His judgments are infallible.

Isa 40:15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

The most powerful empires which ever existed, or ever will exist are no more than a drop of water in a bucket when compared to Him, or perhaps one drop in the midst of a heavy downpour of rain. Even the continents of the world are insignificant in comparison with His strength.

Isa 40:16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

The forests of Lebanon were known for their luxurious evergreens, but if all the trees on that mountain range were used as fuel for a burnt offering, and all the animals in creation were placed upon that fire, it would still not be adequate as a sacrifice to His glory.

Isa 40:17 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

All the nations of earth might combine their powers and would still be dwarfed by His infinite power and wisdom.

Isa 40:18 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The idols which men make and worship are folly. There is nothing a man, or any combination of men can make that is worthy to be worshipped alongside the One who made all things.

Isa 40:19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

How ridiculous it is that a clever artist will carve out an image made with men's hands, turn that image over to a goldsmith who places a layer of gold over it's surface, fashions silver chains to decorate it, and then bow down to worship it. The workmen had to depend upon God for the materials which they molded into that image; and then they worship it!?

Isa 40:20 He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.

Since there are some who do not have the wealth to buy precious metals for the manufacture of an image, they go out into the forest and get wood from a tree they think will not rot. It is given to an artist to carve out into a figure which can neither see, hear nor even move. These were the objects which both Israel and the surrounding

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nations had been praising as being equal or greater than Jehovah.

**Isa 40:21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?**

It was not because the people had not been told that God exists, and that He is the one who brought all things into being. Those in the remotest portions of the earth should have heard the truth about the incomparable greatness of the Lord of all.

**Isa 40:22 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:**

This verse has been used by many to claim that God knew the earth was a globe millennia before man discovered the fact. Certainly God knew from the beginning just what the shape of the earth was to be. It may be that this verse reveals that knowledge, but the main point of the verse is that from God's vantage point He can observe the entire heavens and earth. Men are mere specks in comparison to the entire creation. God not only sees earth. He also dwells throughout all of both space and time.

**Isa 40:23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.**

The word "princes" here has to do with the rulers of nations. Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolph Hitler,

Nebuchadnezzar and Sennacherib have run the course of their lives and are now only memories. God lives forever.

The judges of the earth are those who make decisions which affect large numbers of persons. They have the power to sentence men to punishment, or to declare them innocent of crimes of which they have been accused. Even with such power they are but nothings in comparison to the Creator.

**Isa 40:24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.**

The most powerful of individuals are here for a brief time. They are like plants which have never taken deep root and which are turned into tumbleweeds when God decides to uproot them.

**Isa 40:25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.**

Who or what can be compared to God? Certainly not idols made with men's hands. We might also add that wealth, fame and pleasure fall short of offering what the Lord holds forth.

**Isa 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.**

Yes, lift up your eyes and see if you can find any that match the scope of God's rule. The light from the nearest star has traveled for four years before reaching earth. If you wish to calculate the distance to that star all that is necessary is to find the number of seconds in four years. Then multiply that number by 186,000 miles. The result of that multiplication will be the distance to the nearest star. How far do you suppose it is to the farthest one?

God created every one of them. He knows both their number and their nature. Man will be continuing to find the secrets of the universe as long as he exists. God has known them for ever and ever.

Let us add one more thought. It may be the the infinitely small is just as important as the infinitely large. How small are the smallest building blocks of matter and energy? God knows. He made them.

**Isa 40:27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?**

What kind of reasoning is it that concludes one can hide his life from the all seeing eye of the Lord? Neither Israel of old, nor any person alive until the end of time can successfully evade His view. There is no hiding place from Him.

**Isa 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.**

Does the Lord become tired, as men do? Never! He is the Giver of life and strength. There is no end to either

His power or His understanding. He has all power and perfect understanding.

**Isa 40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.**

The tiny babe grows in weight and strength until it reaches the bloom of maturity. It is God who makes that possible. When one becomes tired from exerting himself for long periods of time, God can restore him back through rest and food.

**Isa 40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:**

There are some in the pink of health who can run a marathon race of over twenty-six miles without stopping for more than a drink of water. When that race is finished, the runner will fall exhausted on whatever may be available. God is not like that.

**Isa 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**

What a strange contrast we have here between verses thirty and thirty-one. Fleshly man ultimately becomes tired and can go no farther. The spiritual man draws continuous strength from his God. Eagles seem to be able to circle around in the sky without tiring. The man or woman who draws spiritual energy from the Lord will work while it is day here upon this earth. Then some great day he will be raised from the grave to mount up and bask in the glory of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Chapter 41

In this chapter Jehovah proposes a contest between Himself as the only True God, and the idols which are not gods at all. As if it were a courtroom, each has the right to bring forward testimony to the claims which have been made. The result is that there is really “no contest.”

Isa 41:1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

Jehovah issues a call for all to be quiet and listen to the evidence He has to present. The islands are the far distant lands where idolatry is rampant. The people of the world are to gather up their strength and apply themselves to the situation. Then they are to make a judgment as to who has a right to be worshipped.

Isa 41:2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

God reminds them that He was the one who raised up the righteous man from the east and gave him power over the kings of the earth.

The question which then arises is “Who is this righteous man from the east?” Two answers have been given to that question. Some are thoroughly convinced that it was Abraham. Abraham had come from Ur of the Chaldees. This was east of Canaan. Abraham is known in the scriptures as the “Father of the faithful.” These

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two facts fit the description given in the present verse very well.

But there are others who contend that the righteous man from the east was Cyrus, the Persian king who issued the decree that Israel had permission to return from captivity to the promised land. Persia was also east of the land of Canaan. In addition, Cyrus was far more righteous than many of the monarchs of those early days. He was also recognized as a conqueror of such as the Babylonian rulers.

**Isa 41:3 He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.**

Even in those lands where Abraham and Cyrus had never placed a foot, opponents were awed by their successes and were cautious about entering into battle with them.

**Isa 41:4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.**

It is the present writer's opinion that Cyrus fits the picture better than does Abraham. Cyrus' decree was known more widely than Abraham at that time of which the prophet is speaking.

The power which allowed this influence over the nations was only possible through the Lord Himself. Neither Abraham nor Cyrus could have accomplished it on their own.

**Isa 41:5 The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.**

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Note the shadow of the Son of God in this picture. Everything which has been presented is true of the Saviour. He was from the east. He was perfectly righteous. His power has awed men from every nation under the sun. None has ever drawn more to follow them than Jesus the Christ.

Isa 41:6 They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.

Who were those who were encouraging their neighbors? Were they the nations who were put in awe by the influence of the man from the east? Or were they the Israelites who were in captivity? It is more likely that it is speaking of the nations who were involved in idolatry. The next verse would support that stand.

It is true, however, that the phrase “Be of good courage” is often applied to God’s servants in the Bible.

Isa 41:7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

This verse definitely deals with those who produced the man made idols. They had a strong interest in defending their actions. The carpenter selected wood and carved it into the desirable form. Then the goldsmith used his instruments to cover the wood with precious metal. The idol was then fastened in place with nails in order than it would not be moved from the place where it was fastened.

How ridiculous that the idol could not only not move;

it had to be carefully secured in order than someone might jostle it around. The true God has no such concerns. He is not made with hands. He is the one who made the hands.

Isa 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

The promise was first made to Abraham. It was repeated to Isaac and then to Jacob. As these two names are used here they are the same. Jacob is Israel, and the seed of Abraham. God has made a prediction, and He is keeping that promise. Idols do not make predictions and then bring them to pass.

Isa 41:9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Jacob and his descendants, Israel, had been chosen by the Lord in order that they might be His servants. They had not been chosen that they might later be discarded and thrown away. Jacob had been among the finest men on earth. Israel was a very special nation in the eyes of Jehovah. He was with them.

Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Remember now that if we are correct in our understanding of the time, this chapter was written even

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before Israel was taken into Babylonian captivity. The advice above was then very much needed. Strength and confidence would be vitally important. God's right hand is able to insure security. If He is with one, there is nothing to fear.

We might add that God speaks of it being the right hand of His righteousness which will uphold them. When righteousness is in combat with wickedness, righteousness will be the stronger of the two.

**Isa 41:11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.**

Through the ages there have been those who were enraged against Jehovah and His followers. Such rage is counterproductive. Those who pit their energies against God are placing themselves in a most hopeless position. They will be confused; then their confusion will turn into ignominious defeats.

**Isa 41:12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.**

Where is Assyria today? Where is Babylon today. It is useless to search for them. They have come to naught. About the most foolish thing men can enter into is a war with God. Among those who found out the truth of this statement are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome. The mightiest empires of all time are just a shadow of what they were in the days of their glory. Yet the Kingdom of God stands firmly on His Word.

**Isa 41:13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.**

We are reminded of a toddler child holding to the hand of his loving human father. He need not fear dogs, storms, other children who would bully him, or any other threat which might cast paralyzing fear into his heart if his father were not there. By themselves, the Israelites had much to fear. With the right hand of the Lord ready to defend them fear could be forgotten.

**Isa 41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**

Most certainly Israel, or Jacob was no more powerful than a worm before the strength of the mighty nations of the time. But those words, "I will help thee" coming from the mouth of the prophet of Jehovah made all the difference.

**Isa 41:15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.**

The mountains were powerful nations who felt that they stood above all other powers. When God uplifted the hand of Israel it would be as if a threshing tool had been dragged over them. The threshing instrument was a sled, or a cart with sharp spikes which separated the grain from the chaff on the threshing floor. Cyrus and his Persian forces were just such a threshing instrument which protected the Israelites and blew away the chaff with had held them captive.

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Isa 41:16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

When the Lord had finished with Assyria and Babylon, it would be as if the wind had blown upon them and carried them off into the distance. When that took place, Israel could know that idols were nothing, and that the Lord was everything.

Isa 41:17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Water was of course a most vital substance in the lives of those who lived in those eastern lands. As Israel returned from the captivity, they might well find themselves parched with thirst. God promised that He would not forsake them in such needs.

The promise is not less precious to Christians of the latter days. Christ provides the water of life. As long as there is faith in His blessings, the Christian need not fear. The Word of God is a spiritual fountain which is capable of refreshing the soul in the most serious spiritual droughts.

Isa 41:18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

The compass of this verse is impressive. It would not matter in what type of geography Israel found

themselves, water would be made available. It would be there in the mountain heights. It would be there in the valleys. It would be there in the places where water might be expected, and would be there in land which was arid and dry.

And so it is with the Christian. With the Lord as his helper, the Christian will find both the water and the bread of life available at all times. God will see that it is so.

Isa 41:19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

The trees mentioned here were those which not only produced shade from the sun, they also provided products needed in many of the conditions of life. At all times and in all places, God's servants have His promise that He will care for them.

Isa 41:20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

All of this was to be done for His people that they might know Jehovah was both powerful and loving. He would not abandon them to the enemies of righteousness.

Isa 41:21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

Now that the Lord had presented His side of the case, He invites those who believe in idols and place

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their confidence in these pieces of wood, stone and metal to show their reasons for placing faith in them. If they have any such reasons, let them make them known or abandon them. Jehovah is the God of Israel. Who can match His blessings?

**Isa 41:22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.**

If the idols are truly gods, in every sense of the word, they must be able to shew things which are to happen in the future. Those things must come to pass, or the idols are worse than useless. They are but a hindrance.

**Isa 41:23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.**

If the idols can declare what shall come to pass, whether it be good or whether it be evil, let them do so. Otherwise they must be rejected. In other words, the idols were to put their money where their mouth was. God was claiming that they could do no such thing.

**Isa 41:24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.**

As if speaking directly to the idols themselves, God declares their power to be nothing at all. Both the idols

and those who choose to worship them are abominable. They are worthy of cursings, and not praises.

**Isa 41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.**

Cyrus, God's servant, would arise from the east, but he would come into the land of Canaan from the north, having followed the fertile crescent rather than moving directly westward. The Persian would give aid to God's people by turning their Babylonian captors back. The most powerful of Israel's persecutors would be no more than mortar in the hands of the bricklayer, or clay in the hands of a potter.

**Isa 41:26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.**

The challenge of Jehovah failed to be matched. There were none among the idols who could claim to be a source of righteousness. There were none who could shew the proofs which God had shown. The Lord was able to see the end from the beginning. None other can do that.

**Isa 41:27 The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.**

When one looked for anyone who could offer Israel good news, none could be found. But God could do so. Not only could He do so. He would!

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Isa 41:28 For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

The followers of the Lord should be able to see that God had done what no idol could do. When counsel was sought from either the idols or the idolators, it was absent.

Isa 41:29 Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

Vanity is nothingness. Perhaps one day when their lesson had been completed, Israel would come to the conclusion that Jehovah is God. Then they might understand the statement that only He is worthy of worship in any age of mankind.

Chapter 42

The discussion of God's plan for enlightening the world through a faithful servant is continued. He describes the nature of the servant who would be pleasing to Him, and points out that thus far Israel had not displayed such a nature. Even though this is true, there is hope that Israel will embrace the will of God and accept the responsibilities and opportunities which had been presented to her. The new spiritual servant will reject idolatry and heathen religion. He will then be supported by the Divine hand and will apply himself successfully to the task of enlightening mankind and releasing men from the bondage of sin.

Isa 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Those who read the words of this prophecy are to open their eyes to give attention to the servant who pleases and delights the God of heaven. The Divine Spirit will be made available to him. That will enable him to bestow law and order to both Jew and Gentile.

Before we go farther, we must consider the identity of the servant of God. Some believe it to be Cyrus who released the captives from captivity in Babylon. Some believe it to be the nation of Israel. Yet others see it as Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Matthew gives us inspired information regarding this servant.

Matt 12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

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*Matt 12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known:*

*Matt 12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,*

*Matt 12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

*Matt 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*

*Matt 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

*Matt 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*

We do not wish to argue the point with the writer of the first book of the New Testament. We shall accept his words. It is very important, however, to realize that Christ makes Himself known through those who have united themselves with Him. It is not unreasonable to see the servant as the entire faithful body of Jesus Christ as seen in His church.

**Isa 42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.**

Jesus did not depend upon shouting at the top of his lungs to make his spiritual truth known. He was known for His meekness. He was not only the sacrificial Lamb of God; He was a lifetime example of loving concern for others. Physical or political force was not His method of converting mankind.

It is true that at one time He did show He had the capability of using force when He cleansed the temple of the moneychangers. That was a rare exception and not

His usual mode of operation. I would far rather hear the gentle mannered preacher who explains the truths of the Word of God from the pulpit than I would to hear the rantings and ravings of those who believe shaking the windows with the volume of their voice is to be equated with greatness.

**Isa 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.**

Jesus did not come with the philosophy that His goals were to be reached by overpowering those whose hearts were already nearly broken by intimidation from those who were stronger. He would not use His power to put out the last spark of those whose fire had almost gone out. He knew that the success of His mission was to lift up the fallen. The victory He sought was one which gave men new spiritual strength. His words were similar to those expressed long ago by Joshua, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve."

**Isa 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.**

God's servant would not lay down His spiritual weapons until justice was introduced throughout the earth. His law would become so desirable that those in the farthest reaches of the earth would reach out for it. There would be no thought whatsoever of either discouragement or failure.

**Isa 42:5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he**

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that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

It was not Isaiah who originated the truths we are reading. They came from the Creator of heaven, earth and everything in them. It is through Him that we live and move and have our being. He has the right to govern. Idols and powerful humans pale in the background when compared with His unlimited power. His servant will be unconquerable!

Isa 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

The servant of God was not called to win the world through horses and chariots. Nuclear and biological weapons were not His way. His servant was to win the victory through teaching and exemplifying righteousness. This was what God had promised in his encouragement to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had made a covenant with them that the nations of earth would be blessed through their influence. He had also made it clear that He would not confine His blessings to the fleshly descendants of these men, but would provide a light and a Way for those of every nation, to the very islands of the sea.

Isa 42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Jesus is known for His miracles of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Those miracles were the type of

the greater accomplishments which were to follow, as men accepted Him as the "Light of the world." It was He who would present the key to the gates of sin's prison house. Men would hear the truth, see the Way, and walk from the darkness into the light of the "Sun of Righteousness."

Isa 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Christ Himself spoke of the Father in heaven as LORD. He came to do the will of His Father. Although the three persons of the Godhead are ONE, both the Spirit and the Word do the will of the Father. His praise and glory will never be allowed to either men or gods which are no gods.

There are several avenues of false praise. Wood and metal are sometimes the objects praised. Political greats are some-times substituted for the Lord. Athletic heroes are worshipped. Wealth serves a similar goal. All of these make false claims. Only the Creator is worthy of such glory. He will not allow it to be given to any other without His response.

Isa 42:9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

The former things are those which God had prophesied in the ages before. They had come to pass just as had been predicted. For that reason, men should give heed to that which was about to be revealed. There were new things to be presented. God was ready to declare them before they happened. Since He had been dependable in the past, it would be foolish to ignore what He now had to say.

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**Isa 42:10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.**

A new song was about to be sung as praise to God. Songs express emotions. When men observe the wonderful things which God's servant is to accomplish, they will become so impressed with the achievements that they will break out in a song of joy. This song would not be limited to Canaan. It would rise from every portion of the globe. The color of the skin would make no difference in the degree of happiness which would be felt.

**Isa 42:11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.**

From the wilderness to the villages, to the cities, let all who will share in the new song raise their voices in praise to Jehovah. Whether in valleys or mountains, the honor of the Lord must be sounded out.

**Isa 42:12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.**

The islands were to those of the time of Isaiah the farthest reaches of mankind. Our present day song, "Let them praises give Jehovah" is in complete harmony with the command given in this verse.

**Isa 42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war:**

**he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.**

Here are words of war. The Lord will let His power be known. When that is done, those who oppose Him will see His jealousy of the position He holds as Ruler and Governor of all creation. Though there will be opposition, He will succeed in overcoming every foe.

**Isa 42:14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.**

God had been longsuffering with both His outright foes, and with those who were supposed to be His friends. His patience had come to an end. He was like the woman who is laboring in childbirth. She is willing to endure the discomfort in order to hold the newborn babe in her arms. God suffered those who should have supported His cause to continue on beyond what might have been expected. When His patience is exhausted, He will replace that which gives pain with that which is new and pleasant.

**Isa 42:15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.**

Obstacles which stand in the way of those who wish to serve Him will be removed. The mountains of men's pride will be sheared off. The swamps of sin will be bridged to make way for the servant of God, whether it be Christ, or those who have united themselves with Him in the contest between sin and righteousness.

**Isa 42:16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.**

The good news from heavenly places will bring a path into view which had been there for ages. That path will now be illuminated in order that those who truly wish to walk that straight and narrow way which leads to life may do just that.

**Isa 42:17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.**

While those who trust in the way of the Lord are being led home, those who trust in idols will find only shame and defeat in their path. One cannot praise false gods and find Jehovah beckoning him to continue in that path. They can only stumble along in the darkness until they ultimately perish of soul.

**Isa 42:18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.**

It is not just a matter of allowing the sound waves to strike one's eardrums. Hearing is directly connected with acting in harmony with what one perceives. The same is true of the eyes. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

**Isa 42:19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?**

The Lord now turns His attention to Israel, who was intended to be His servant in the accomplishing of those things listed in the early verses of the chapter. Israel had proven herself to be both blind and deaf. She had ears to hear, but would not listen. She had eyes to see but would not open them to be His servant.

**Isa 42:20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.**

No people on earth had been exposed to more evidence that the Lord has a plan for the salvation of men. How could they have spat in His face and cried out, "Crucify Him?" But they did!

**Isa 42:21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.**

God will be pleased with the righteousness of His servant which is to magnify the law and make it honorable. Christ kept the law while He lived under it. He proved it to be just. If men had accepted His message they could have shared in the pleasure of Jehovah in the righteousness which Jesus displayed.

**Isa 42:22 But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.**

The Jews would not accept the Son of God as the Messiah. As a result of their resistance, they would find themselves captivated and oppressed. They would become a prey to the greed and pride of anyone searching

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for spoil. And since they would turn away from God's servant, there would be none other to restore them to the abundant life.

Isa 42:23 Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

Israel had some important questions to answer. Were there any among them who would listen to the predictions which the Lord was making? Who would be responsible for their misery if they put a distance between themselves and the One with whom they were supposed to be in a covenant relationship? It would have to fall upon the shoulders of those who were deaf and blind to the will of the Lord.

Isa 42:24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

Was it the power of the idols of those nations who took Israel into captivity which allowed this to happen? Not by any means! It was their own sins which stood in their way. They would not allow themselves to be His true servant. The only recourse was to abandon their stubbornness and obey His will. When they had learned that lesson the conditions could be improved, but not until!

Isa 42:25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

The "him" of this verse is Israel who had caused God to pour out His anger upon them for their rebellion. The

battle had gone against Israel. He had been burned in the fire of the wrath of Jehovah. The pain had not yet caused a reversal of the wayward servant's blindness and deafness.

Chapter 43

It is well to remember that the words of this chapter were written before the fact. It was going to be necessary for God to discipline His servant in Babylonian captivity for seventy years. It would be a difficult time, but He would not forsake them. They deserved extinction. Because of His grace they would have the opportunity to survive and experience a new day. They must be patient and endure the discomfort.

Isa 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

The contrast between the tone of the previous chapter and the one we now examine is sharp. In chapter forty-two God had criticized Israel for failing to live up to their opportunities. They had fallen into the worship of idols. Their moral lives were also seriously flawed. For such attitudes and behavior they would be punished.

Now He offers them words of comfort and encouragement. Throughout their stay in Babylon, and their return home, He promises to be with them. He created the nation. He had carefully shaped it and redeemed it when it fell into the hands of Egypt and Assyria. He had maintained a personal interest in it such that He called it by name, even as one might call a friend by that person's name. Israel belonged to God.

Isa 43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through

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**the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.**

There would be times when the nation would pass through stormy floods. They need not fear that they would be swept away. There would be fires of persecution. They need not fear that they would be burned up. They would pass through the Jordan on their return. Some would literally be thrown into burning furnaces. In such cases there would be divine protection. But, even more important, God would be with them in spiritual trials. He would not allow the nation to be put out.

**Isa 43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.**

This verse and the next present some problems. Normally one pays a ransom to the one who has a kidnapped person in his possession. According to this verse, God did not pay Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba a ransom to free Israel. He considered these three nations to be the ransom which He paid for the release.

It is usually explained by saying that when the invaders passed by Israel to focus their attention on conquering the African continent, God considered the deaths of the men of the three nations mentioned to be the ransom. Thus Israel was so precious to Him that He would allow Egypt, Ethiopia and Sheba to be harmed in order that Israel not be destroyed.

**Isa 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.**

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This verse seems to explain the previous one. Israel was to have a glorious future. It was precious in that redemption for mankind would come through the Messiah, who would come from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's seed. Such honor had insured the love of God for His peculiar nation. It was worth sacrificing the lives of men in order that Israel's future be preserved.

Isa 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

It would not matter how far Israel had been scattered among the nations of the earth; God would call for them to hear Him and return to the land of promise. From the four quarters of the earth His people were to heed His invitation and answer the call.

Isa 43:6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

The first and obvious meaning of this verse is that those who had been taken into captivity and scattered far and wide were to be given opportunity to return to their homeland. But, far more important is the overriding meaning that God will call sons and daughters from the captivity of sin. The Redeemer would not limit His invitation to fleshly Israel. It would be extended to those of every land.

Isa 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Those of former days who had been called Israel had been created to give glory to Jehovah. It was to be no different in the latter days. Those who wear the God given name "Christian" were brought into being through the power of the Lord. They have been made and formed by Him.

Isa 43:8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

God's servant, Israel had proven to be both blind and deaf to the commandments of God. When the time came that they would truly see and hear, He would welcome them with open arms. What a comfort these words would have been when His people were in Babylon and wondering how long the confinement would continue.

Isa 43:9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

The Lord is ready to call the court together again. All the nations are to be challenged to show the kind of proofs Jehovah had shown in His relationships with His people. If any had witnesses who could truly testify that their false gods had accomplished similar feats, they were told to come forward and present their testimony. Israel should know first hand that there were no such witnesses.

Isa 43:10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

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But God does have witnesses. He had proven Himself over and over again to His chosen people. They had excellent reasons for realizing Jehovah is the true God, and there is none other. There never has been. There never will be. He is the Great I AM.

**Isa 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.**

During those times when men find they cannot direct their own footsteps, and have found their way into situations from which they are unable to extricate themselves, the Lord God is the only answer. Of course we realize that Jesus Christ is one of the Godhead. Our Saviour is the same as the One declared here.

**Isa 43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.**

The evidence is inescapable. God has spoken through His written Word. He has demonstrated His power through both creation and through providence that He is God. No substitute can be found. As a result of these evidences, His people of both yesterday and today are obligated to ring out the word to all the world.

**Isa 43:13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?**

In the beginning was God. It was He who spoke and said, "Let there be light." There are none who can take that which He protects. Neither are there any who need

fear any enemy when they are backed by His infinite power.

**Isa 43:14 Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.**

Because of His concern for Israel, He will redeem them from their captors at the appropriate time. He will send to Babylon and strip that empire of its power. Those who are sent to bring them down to defeat will leave them weeping in the very ships they sailed so proudly on the Euphrates River. Their cry will not be one of victory. It will be one of anguish in defeat.

**Isa 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.**

Four titles are here given for God. He is:

- |             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Lord     | He is the source of truth.        |
| 2. Holy One | He is absolutely sinless.         |
| 3. Creator  | He brought all things into being. |
| 4. King     | He has all authority.             |

These qualities should bring forth two responses from men.

1. They should fear to oppose Him.
2. They should love and obey Him.

**Isa 43:16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;**

A way was made for Israel to cross the Red Sea. One does not ordinarily walk into the depths of the

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sea. Egypt tried to follow and the path was closed upon them.

Isa 43:17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

The Lord told His people not to depend upon chariots and horses. His claim in this verse is that armies who depend upon forces such as these are certain to meet defeat if they oppose His people. They will fall and be unable to rise again. Their flame shall be snuffed out like a blown out candle.

Isa 43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

God does not mean His people are to forget the things which He has done in the past. He makes it very clear that gratitude is important. What He does mean is that in comparison to what He has done in the past, He is going to do a far greater thing in the future.

Isa 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

The new thing which God will do is to prepare a way through the wilderness and the rivers for His loved ones. For Israel of old, that meant a passage from Babylon back to Canaan. For we who live in these last days, He will present the Redeemer who will show a Way through the difficulties of live in an unbelieving world.

That Redeemer was to open springs of living water in the desert of sin.

Isa 43:20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

When these blessings are poured out from the hand of the Lord, those who would destroy them will be so impressed by this aid that they will be persuaded to give praise to HIM. His chosen people will escape persecution and will be respected by those who observe the care of the Father in heaven.

Isa 43:21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

His people will make His glory known in more than one way. Just by noting God's care for them, His name will be magnified. In addition, the songs, the preaching of His Word, and the actions of His people will shout out His praise.

Isa 43:22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

That which was described in this chapter up to this point sounds wonderful. We must not forget that it was spoken of the future to those who were still to go into Babylonian captivity. They would use these words to help them through the horrors of the bondage in that land.

God now returns to a discussion of the reasons for the troubles which are ahead. Such would not have ever come about had they delighted in serving Him. They had

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become tired of Him and had turned to the wooden and metal gods of the nations about them. While they were in Babylon they would have the opportunity to see the difference between impotent idols and the One True and Living Creator.

**Isa 43:23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.**

The Lord had carefully spelled out just what offerings and sacrifices He expected Israel to give Him. They had ignored His wishes. Since they had failed to give Him the offerings and sacrifices he had asked, He was going to allow them to live for a number of years in a land where they would not be able to offer these sacrifices. By the time they returned to Canaan, they would perhaps give Him the praise, honor and glory which was due Him.

**Isa 43:24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.**

They had failed to bring the finest of their blessings to Him. They had kept their money in their pockets. What they had offered Him was a chance to give them blessings in spite of their sinful lives. He had become tired of seeing sin rather than sacrifice.

**Isa 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.**

God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. When those who have sinned are sorry for those sins and are willing to make a sincere effort to avoid them in the future, God will not hold them to account. He will treat that person as if the sin had never been committed. He calls upon men to forgive others as they themselves have been forgiven. He takes the initiative and expects us to follow His example. This verse indicates that He feels it is to his advantage, as well as ours, to take that pathway.

We should then be grateful for His grace and His mercy. He was not going to punish Israel by simply casting them away as useless. He was disciplining them that they might turn to Him in the future. This has been His method from the beginning. By His stripes we are healed. By the stripes Jesus Christ suffered, we are healed. By the stripes God lays upon us, we are also healed if we will but pay heed.

**Isa 43:26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.**

The plea of the Lord to Israel of old, and spiritual Israel today is that we may be as concerned with our sins as He is. If that is true, we may find justification for those sins. Is it not foolish to give our affections to Satan and the gods of this world when the True God is so concerned about our spiritual health?

**Isa 43:27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.**

Who is the “first father” who sinned. It could refer to Adam. It could refer to Abraham. It could refer to

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Jacob, or even the earthly father of man. All men have sinned. The teachers who influenced any man or woman to disobey the Heavenly Father have a mark that needs to be erased. Leaders among men have a tremendous responsibility. They must lead with God, not against Him. The responsibility of the followers is almost as awesome. The followers who walk in the footsteps of sinful leaders will suffer a similar fate with those who misled them.

Isa 43:28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

It was only because of the need for correction that the important men of the Holy places and the unwise persons who followed their influence that God was ready to send Israel into Babylon that they might learn to respect Him. It would take many years to accomplish that goal. In the meantime they must be aware of the fact that He had not cast them away. He looked forward to a new thing which would bring about joy for both Himself and His people.

Chapter 44

This is one of the more elegant chapters in the Old Testament. It is beautifully written and contains exceptionally meaningful thoughts. Some of what is covered here has been dealt with before this, but this chapter is even more forceful and clear. Idolatry is senseless. It consists almost wholly of wishes and dreams. It does not protect or bless. Only the Lord has proven capability of producing prophecies and then bringing those prophecies to pass.

Isa 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

At this time Jacob and Israel refer to the same group of people whom the Lord has chosen for special responsibility in the preparation of the world for the coming of the Messiah.

Isa 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Israel obviously did not arrive on earth through chance alone. God had planned for her before she ever came into existence. She was suffering at the time because she had failed to perform her expected role in God's plan, but God had not fully cast her off. There was no reason for her to fear extinction. God would help her as one whom He had especially chosen and cultured.

Isa 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour

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**my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:**

No matter how thirsty His people became, He would see that water was to be made available to quench their thirst. No matter how unproductive the ground might seem to be, God would pour out His Spirit upon the newborn and would see that these offspring were blessed and spiritually healthy.

**Isa 44:4 And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.**

Willows are well known for their ability to thrive in wet soil. The Lord would see that Israel grew strong and healthy in the water which He would give them as it was needed.

**Isa 44:5 One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.**

The progress would be such that he who first enjoyed the blessings would be proud to call himself by the name of Jacob. Another person might see the advantage of uniting with God's chosen people and would claim the name Israel. Jacob and Israel were two names for the same chosen people. We must not lose the key point here in that one by one those who saw the blessings of God's people would wish to live under the rule of the Lord and share in those blessings.

**Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the**

**first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**

There are three persons who make up the trinity of the godhead. Jehovah is the king of Israel. His Redeemer is the Lord of hosts. It is somewhat confusing to separate any one of the three divine persons and say that one of them is the Redeemer and the others are not. Each has a critical part to play in the Redemption of fallen men.

**Isa 44:7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.**

Yet again the Lord reminds all who will listen that He was the one who predicted the appointment of the chosen people. It was He who had set them in order. Knowing that no other power could claim the same power, the Lord challenged anyone who could match His results in loving concern for those whom He had chosen.

**Isa 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.**

The Lord had made a solemn promise that He would bless and protect Israel. In return, He expected them to be witnesses to His glory. They had not lived up to their charge. Some of them had adopted the idols of the people around them. They must be made to understand how useless it is to fasten our affections on either fancied gods who had any power whatsoever to bless men, Such manmade idols were without power. Men were deluding

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themselves if they believed stone and wooden idols were beneficial at all except for decorations or firewood.

Isa 44:9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

It is wasted time for men to put their efforts into producing idols. These objects may well be objects of pride for the artist if they are carefully crafted. But that is all they are. They are of no spiritual advantage. And what kind of witnesses to the idols have as to their efficiency? They cannot see. They cannot understand truth. Those who make them should be embarrassed. God's witnesses are men who can see, understand and move about on their own. None can claim such qualities for the graven images. These idols do not know the meaning of either pride or shame.

Isa 44:10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?

Isa 44:11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

Jehovah calls for all of those associated together in the making of molten and graven images to stand up together and face their shame. The entire group will share in the humility of producing something which is actually a "nothing."

Isa 44:12 The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and

worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

The amount of work which is expended in the making of a molten image is great. The blacksmith places the metal in the hot coals of the fire and uses the strength of his arms to give shape to it. The only effect which is meaningful is that the blacksmith becomes tired and hungry. He will faint if a supply of water is not made available to him.

Isa 44:13 The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

A similar situation exists with the carpenter who uses wood rather than metal to fashion his so called gods. He takes great pains to make the proper measurements in order that the finished product bears a strong resemblance to a man. Then he makes the decision to place it within a house.

The True God is a Spirit and not a man. And He does not live in houses made with hands in the sense that these wooden and graven idols do.

Isa 44:14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

The woodsman goes out among the cedars, cypress and oak. He takes special care of these various trees. He

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even plants a tree which he can give favored status and watches for the rain which God supplies to nourish it.

**Isa 44:15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.**

It is true that the tree can provide physical comfort for the one who has cared for it. He cuts it down, uses it to warm himself, and to cook his food. But this is hardly the work of the True and Living God. However, the person than takes a portion of the same tree and carves out what he claims to be a god. He bows down before it and pays worship to it.

**Isa 44:16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:**

**Isa 44:17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.**

The man burns part of the wood in the fire and it becomes ashes. He uses part of the wood to roast his food. He sits by the fire and congratulates himself on what the tree has done for him. He takes the remainder of the wood and carves it into a wooden image of a man. He prays to it and asks for it to deliver him from dangers.

He is only deluding himself. The wood can cook his food. It can warm his body. It can even cause him to admire the beauty of the craftsmanship after it has

been made into a graven image. But how far this is from it being capable of blessing him spiritually, bringing a curse upon his enemies, or watching over his welfare at every turn of the road.

**Isa 44:18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.**

The reason the makers and worshippers of idols have not known or understood what was before them was that they shut their eyes to truth. They hardened their hearts to such a condition that any real understanding of Jehovah was unable to penetrate the covering of pride which surrounded those hearts.

**Isa 44:19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?**

God deplores the degree of ignorance which would take a piece of wood, burn part of it in the fire, use part of it to make his bread and roast the flesh for his evening meal, and follow these acts by carving an abomination before which he would fall down and beg for it's spiritual help.

**Isa 44:20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?**

Such a person is so thoroughly confused that he has forsaken the God who could truly save him from sin. He

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does not even understand that the idol he has placed at his right hand is no more than a deceptive lie. It is claimed to be a god. It is only a piece of wood.

Isa 44:21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

What is it that the Lord wishes for Jacob or Israel to remember? It is the truths which He has just placed before them. There is but one God. He is Jehovah and there is no other. As long as Israel recognizes the Lord as Creator and Master, all will be well. The nation was formed to be God's servant. As long as that is not forgotten, the nation need not fear. God will not forget them. He will bless and keep them.

Isa 44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

We have been informed in the New Testament that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. Only the blood of the Son of God is capable of taking away the guilt. At the time of this writing Christ had not yet offered Himself for the sins of the world. The point here is that they have been hidden until the time when the Lamb of God would be placed upon the cross. Then those sins would be washed away.

Isa 44:23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and

every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

There was abundant reason for singing. The songs should reach from the highest heavens to the deepest parts of the earth and sea. Even the non-human and for that matter, even the mountains and the rivers would have reason for joining in the praise. There is but one God and He glorifies Himself through His servant Israel.

Isa 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

Idols were not involved in the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Lord God is the One source of all things. He needed no help other than the Son and the Word.

Isa 44:25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

Our present day weathermen can come up with a fairly dependable prediction as to the type of weather one might have during the next day or so. Weather science has made some strides in recent years. Yet when compared with God's knowledge of the weather patterns, those of the scientists are but a beginning. This is particularly true with respect to the soothsayers, magicians and astrologers who live on lies.

We may add the foolishness of the wise men to

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the vanity of graven and molten idols when we try to understand the disgust of the Lord when men turn away from Him.

**Isa 44:26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:**

Jehovah was predicting that the truths being preached by His prophets would be dependable. Jerusalem would be rebuilt. The cities which had been ravaged by the Assyrians would be reconstructed. God would see to it that the damage was repaired.

**Isa 44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:**

Some see the drying up of the rivers to be related to the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea and through the Jordan River on dry land. That explanation does not fit the present situation as well as it does to apply the prophecy to the upcoming victory of Cyrus as he decreed that the Israelites could return to the city of Jerusalem and build it back.

**Isa 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.**

The Lord spoke of Cyrus as being His shepherd. Cyrus is said to have actually read such passages as this one and decided he would be wise to cooperate with the desires

of the God of the Hebrews. He went so far as to give aid to the Jews in their return and in the reconstruction procedures.

Some have been most amazed that this prophecy was placed before man some one hundred fifty years before it took place.



## Chapter 45

Although God will punish Israel by sending them into Babylonian captivity until He has given them time to repent of their idolatrous practices and immoral conduct, He will not forsake them. He will send a redeemer. The name of this redeemer will be Cyrus. The results of Cyrus' decisions will be such that many nations will come to respect the one True God of the universe.

But, as in the case of one event after another during Israel's history, there is a richer and fuller meaning. Cyrus is but a type of the Son of God who will be sent to release men from their spiritual prisons. On a far grander level than that of Cyrus, Christ will cause people of all nations of the world to bow before the Creator and Keeper of all things.

**Isa 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;**

The word "anointed" is used in the Bible to speak of one who has been especially appointed to a high level task, and has been given the authority and power to see that the task is completed. Cyrus the Mede fits that description. The Lord would use this man to bring the remnant of Israel back from Babylon when the time was right. In doing so, Cyrus would find God's right hand supporting him. Powerful kings would find their strength departed. Among these kings were the Babylonians. The famous gates protecting the city of Babylon would be no hindrance to Cyrus' march.

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Cyrus was able to divert the channel of the river which flowed through the city of Babylon. This left the gates of the city useless as the warriors passed under the gates instead of passing through them.

Isa 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

We can hardly read this verse without thinking of the work of John the baptist as he prepared the way for the Christ. God would remove the obstacles which might have hindered Cyrus in his release of the Israelites. John the baptist did the same for the Saviour. Both prepared the way for the release of God's chosen.

Isa 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

The treasures of darkness are thought to be vast amounts of treasure which the conquered kings had hidden in secret storehouses. These storehouses would be emptied of such precious contents. When the observers saw this surprising turn of events, they would come to recognize God's servant for what he was, and they would give glory to Jehovah.

Isa 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

As mentioned before, Jacob and Israel refer to the same group of people. It was for the sake of Israel that God called upon Cyrus by name, more than one hundred years before he ruled. When this became reality, we read of these truths thousands of years later. Can one refuse to accept Jehovah's claim that HE is GOD?

Isa 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

One wonders how many times God has found it needful to repeat this fact. He warned Israel over and over again that idolatry was a deadly sin. It was going to be necessary to plunge them into the middle of the Babylonian idolatrous society to teach them these were more than mere words. After their release, they would come to know that it was Jehovah who had strengthened them to survive the rigors of captivity and be returned to the land of Canaan.

Isa 45:6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

All of these wonders would give men all over the world evidence that there is but one God, and that the One God is Jehovah. From the east to the west, throughout the globe there would be no excuse for setting up false gods, whether they be made of gold, silver, wood, stone, or fame, power and pleasure.

Isa 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-5)

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Among the things which were created were darkness and light. However, when all was finished He stated that everything He had created was "very good." (Gen. 1:31)

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Gen 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Gen 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Gen 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

It would appear from the above that Satan, the father of liars, was not evil at the time he was created, that is if he was a created being. If this is true, Satan must have become evil sometime after he was created. Perhaps, in this sense it could be said that God created evil, in that He created the conditions under which evil could come into being.

Let us take note, however, that there are several senses in which the Bible uses the word "evil." Sometimes it is moral depravity. The "evil one" is that one who despises God's instructions for righteousness. At other times it speaks of disaster or calamity. Thus when it is said that God creates evil, it is not speaking of God bringing evil thoughts into the hearts of men. It is a reference to such events as the flood, the plagues upon Egypt, and correctional experiences which the Lord uses to turn men from sinful to godly behavior. It is in this latter sense that this seventh verse speaks of God creating evil. All things work together for good to those that are called according His purposes. In comparison, many very unpleasant things are poured out upon those who rebel against the will of God. The phrase with which we are concerned could have been translated as "I bring prosperity and I create calamity." The actual Hebrew word which is translated as "evil" is "ra." It can have either a passive or active meaning. It can be discomfort which one causes to another, or it can be discomfort one suffers because of another.

Now we come to the real difficulty presented in the background of the present verse. If God is ever present, all knowing, all powerful and all good, He would have had the power to create such a set of conditions that evil could not have arisen, or would have been extinguished as soon as it arose.

This is usually answered by stating that God desired to create men and angels in His own image, which would include the power of choice; that He did not wish to create robots who could not make choices. But there is a very real problem here in that the character of God, as given above is such that He does not have the power to choose evil. If men and angels were to be created in His image the same would be true of them and they could not sin because they also would be inherently good.

Why then would God decide to create spiritual beings which could sin. If He cannot sin, and He could see that the beings He was bringing into being would sin, would it not be better to refrain from creating them?

Then we run into the matter about the Potter and the clay (See Jer. 18:1-10 and Rom. 9:19-23).

Jer 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Jer 18:2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Jer 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

Jer 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Jer 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Jer 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Jer 18:7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

Jer 18:8 If that nation, against whom I have

pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Jer 18:9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

Jer 18:10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Rom 9:22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Rom 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

God seems to be saying that the things that are revealed belong to men, but the things which have not been explained to men belong only to God, and that He has the right to reveal or conceal.

We have the information that there was a rebellion in the heavenly places, with some of the angelic principalities and powers setting themselves up in opposition to the Lord. Satan appears to have been a leading force in this confrontation with respect to the world in which we live.

2 Pet 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Judges 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Isa 45:8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

Those who would oppose God and His servants will be defeated. There is a call for the heavens to pour out showers of righteousness, and for the earth to receive these righteous showers as a means of transforming men from sin to salvation. With God and man working together, evil can be defeated and righteousness may reign.

Isa 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

But woe be unto he who determines to set up either a physical or a moral contest with the One who brought

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him to life! The clay does not instruct the potter as to how it will be formed. The potter knows the end to be gained. The clay does not ask WHY. The clay cannot point out deficiencies in the work of the potter.

**Isa 45:10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?**

A child does not question his or her father as to what characteristics the child should show after birth. A mother is not to be asked by her babe why she did not bring forth a child quite different from the one which appeared.

**Isa 45:11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.**

As One who is perfectly Holy, and the Maker of Israel, God proclaims that He is ready to demonstrate His nature by His works. His sons are those who have committed themselves to His cause.

**Isa 45:12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.**

God is a Spirit and we can hardly take this verse literally when He says he has stretched out the heavenly host through His hands. But the point of the verse is that both man and his surroundings are the result of the creative power of the Almighty God.

**Isa 45:13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.**

This is Cyrus of whom God is speaking now. Cyrus was recognized as a better person than the various rulers of kingdoms and empires before him. God decided to make use of him to release the Israelites from Babylon and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. He would not only do those things. He would do them without a profit motive.

That prediction was fulfilled. Cyrus even provided the financial aid to move those Israelites who wished to return to their city back home.

**Isa 45:14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.**

As a result of the recognition that God has been supporting the efforts of Cyrus in bringing Israel back to the homeland, those of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sabeans will submit to Cyrus. They will declare that God is with Cyrus and there is no God but Jehovah.

**Isa 45:15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.**

Jehovah is not a visible God. He is not made of stone, wood or metal. But, that does not mean He is only a

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figment of men's imagination. In New Testament days, Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. To the extent that men can understand divinity, God revealed himself through His Son.

Isa 45:16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.

Those who place their confidence in idols are headed for confusion. Both those who manufacture the idols, and those who bow down before them, will lose their way.

Isa 45:17 But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

While those who worship idols are traveling in circles, Israel will find the truth which will free them from such confusion. There may even be moments of satisfaction for those who idolize the idols, but when the world comes to an end, only those who have worshipped Jehovah will rejoice in victory.

Isa 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

The Lord did not intend for men to live in hopeless confusion. He intended for life to be meaningful both in time and on into eternity. A globe which writhes in ignorance and sin is that farthest thing from that which God had in mind when He created our planet. In the end,

His orderliness will prevail over the chaos brought about by human adoration of that which is empty and vain.

Isa 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Nothing is more true than the fact that God has not spoken in secret where men could not know His will. He declared His plans through Abraham,, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets such as Isaiah. That which He spoke was capable of leading men to spiritual prosperity.

Isa 45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

Those who have recognized the power of the True God are called upon to separate themselves from those who depend upon the foolishness of false gods who have no power to make men free.

Isa 45:21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

God had declared His will in various times and places. He calls here for those who have opened their ears and eyes to His blessings to let their convictions be known. There is no God made of wood or stone. Those who have chosen



to follow Jehovah will rejoice over their choice. Those who have rejected His truths will regret it in the last day.

Isa 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Isa 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

In the day of final judgment every mouth will declare the power and wisdom of the eternal God. All knees will bow before His glory. Those who have served faithfully will bow in joy. Those who have served Satan shall bow in shame.

Isa 45:24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Those who have united themselves with the Lord will proudly declare that their choice has led to purity of thought, word and deed. They will have found the strength to march forward with Him.

Those who have been too filled with lust and pride will bow both the knee and the head. But, it may be too late!!

Isa 45:25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

This life is but a testing ground. Men are given the opportunity to prove themselves before their Maker. If they are willing to live just and righteous lives, God will

welcome them into mansions of glory. If they choose evil companions in this world, they will be thrown into their company everlastingly.

Chapter 46

We have now a prediction of the demise of Babylon as it is replaced by the Persians under the command of Cyrus. Cyrus was far from aware that he was acting out the will of Jehovah. Nevertheless, he was going to be doing just that. God's plan for man will ultimately come to pass. Those such as Cyrus have not the slightest idea that they are major players in the great drama of the ages. But they are just that.

Isa 46:1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

Baal and Nebo were the false gods from which Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar had received their names. With the transition of power from the Babylonians to the Persians there was little change in the adoration of the people for these two imaginary deities. The Persians were taking the images which were cherished by the Babylonians and carrying them off to their own territory.

The two false gods were said to be stooping down because they were having to be carried about by oxen and donkeys.

Isa 46:2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Rather than being capable of preventing their worshippers from being carried off, they were themselves being carried on the backs of the beasts of burden. This

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was not a very dignified life style for gods! How ridiculous that the supposed gods of men found it necessary to be taken into captivity by men.

**Isa 46:3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:**

The Lord now gives His own reaction to this ridiculous situation. Jehovah had supported the descendants of Jacob for several centuries. This had been true from the time of the birth of the nation until the time of the Babylonian and Persian powers.

**Isa 46:4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.**

From the time of birth of the nation of Israel until she had reached her present age, God had lifted the nation up and provided divine protection for her. That was not to cease with the change of power from the Babylonians to the Medo-Persians. The nation had grown aged, but Jehovah promised that he would continue to support and deliver her from passing into oblivion.

**Isa 46:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?**

It was completely irrational for the nations of the world to place false gods on an equal or superior footing to that of Jehovah. He is the True Monarch of the entire world. Others are but pretenders.



**Isa 46:6 They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.**

Gold and silver have been the cherished metals and a source of admiration for people of the most ancient of times. Their lustre and attractive color command attention. Nations such as the Babylonians and the Persians, and might we add the nations of the present day world, have either worshipped objects made of these metals, or have accumulated treasuries where they could be stored.

They take the non-living gold and silver, shape it into their own image, and then bow down and worship before it. Wealth and power among men have risen to such places of admiration that entire lifetimes of men are centered around accumulating either or both of these temporal supposed powers.

**Isa 46:7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.**

Men tromp around carrying their false gods when, if they were truly gods with a capitol G, they would be carrying the lives of those who worship them in error. It is hardly less than amazing that men would invest their lives in the service of a hunk of gold or silver. The false god must be carried around because he is incapable of moving under his own power. When his worshippers cry out for him to help them, he cannot hear, or answer their pleas.

**Isa 46:8 Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.**

Israel had every reason to remember their dependence upon Jehovah. It was He who had given the law on Mount Sinai. It was He who had led them through the wilderness and across the Jordan. It was He who had provided the manna upon which they existed during the wilderness wandering. Truly Jehovah was correct in labeling them as transgressors. They should have shown their admiration for Him by staying aloof from the idols of the Babylonians. They had failed to do that. Many of them were fastening their affections upon the imaginary gods of the land of Canaan.

**Isa 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,**

There was a desperate need for Israel to remember those blessings which Jehovah had poured out upon them when it looked as though the odds of survival were practically nothing at all. This should have been all the proof they needed of God's power and authority. No false gods of wood, metal or stone could ever begin to approach the dependability of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:**

Time after time Jehovah had both warned as to what would happen if certain actions were to take place. Those

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predictions had proven accurate. He had also promised His protection and blessings if they accepted His promises and worked diligently toward receiving His favors. It should have been quite clear to Israel that Jehovah was both able and willing to show either His pleasure or displeasure, depending upon the willingness of Israel to love and obey Him.

Isa 46:11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

The Lord was prepared at this point in time to bring a ravenously hungry bird down upon their head. That bird was Cyrus. Persia lay to the east of Jerusalem. The Persians would succeed in passing around and through the desert region between their own land and that of the Israelites. Because of Israel's willingness to adopt the worship of the Babylonians and Persians, they would suffer severely. Cyrus would succeed in demonstrating Israel's folly in bowing down before Baal and Nebo.

Isa 46:12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:

Isa 46:13 I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

The Lord was preparing to show Israel the immense danger which lay in neglecting His service. His people had made errors of the most serious kind in embracing idolatry. Still, He would continue His providential actions in bringing salvation and glory to the earth through those who remained faithful. The majority had proven

to be unfaithful, but there was a remnant who had not forsaken Him. He would work through that remnant to bring salvation to Zion.

Jesus Christ would arrive several centuries after these promises were made by the Lord. The Son of God would become the perfect example of the type of life that was expected of God's offspring.

Chapter 47

God had used Babylon as a means of correction for wayward Israel. As we enter this chapter we find that the punishment of His people is sufficient for the moment. It is time for luxury loving and proud Babylon to answer to the Lord for their corrupt ways, as well as for their unmerciful treatment of Israel. They had gone beyond the limits of reason in their treatment of the captives. Now they shall be called upon to test their magic and astrology against the power of Jehovah. The Lord will bring Babylon down from her haughty attitude to the condition of a peasant slave girl. None will be able to prevent her humiliation.

Isa 47:1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

God is calling for an almost unbelievable thing. Mighty and glorious Babylon is commanded to come down from her royal throne and sit on the ground. She is called a virgin because she is so tender and delicate. In addition, she has not been possessed by an invader.

There is no throne where she is to find her end. Thrones are for royalty. She will still sit, but it shall be in disgrace rather than in honor.

Isa 47:2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

The lowest of slaves were assigned to grind meal through the use of millstones. These stones were very

large. There were two of them, one upper and one lower. The grain was placed on the lower stone and then the upper stone was turned round and round, crushing the kernels into powder. This was not the kind of work queens were noted for!

The uncovering of the locks was the removal of the veil which implied modesty. The clothing upon the legs would hinder the free movement in turning the millstones. It could be necessary to pass over streams as one moved to and from the location of the mill. The clothing would be lifted up to prevent it from becoming soaked with water. The long flowing train of the queen would not be the best possible attire for such crossings. Dignity was to become a thing of the past.

Isa 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Nakedness is more than an uncovering of the body. In this case it is also the uncovering of the shameful soul of the famed city. God would take little pity upon her. She was a product of human endeavor. Jehovah is God. Babylon would discover how foolish it is for man to compete with God. The outcome is inevitable.

Isa 47:4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

Since the words of this verse are about the Lord instead of by the Lord, we may assume they are the words of Isaiah. Still, they are in complete harmony with the tone of the rest of the chapter. Babylon has set herself up in opposition to Jehovah. He is the Holy One of Israel. He will rescue His people from the clutches of Babylonian

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captivity. No army is powerful enough to prevent his purposes from being brought about.

**Isa 47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.**

Babylon had been a loud voice in the realm of human affairs. She was now to be quieted. She had been mistress of the world. Now she would lose her lofty position. The time was to come when it would be difficult to find the remains of the once famed city.

**Isa 47:6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.**

The reason the Lord had allowed Babylon to dominate Israel was that He had become intensely angry with His chosen people. They had turned from Him to idol worship. If that was what they desired, He would accommodate them. Thus, He permitted Babylon to take them into captivity that they might learn who was truly God.

Babylon had treated them without mercy. They had learned their lesson so well that when they came out of that land, they never again fastened their affections upon idols. There were no doubt individual cases of idol worship, but the nation as a whole detested them.

Babylon had served the purpose of Jehovah very well in teaching Israel the vanity of the idolatrous way of life. While doing so, however, she had gone beyond reason. The yoke she had placed on Israel had earned her a yoke of her own.

**Isa 47:7 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.**

The use of the word “lady” here has little to do with the moral purity of Babylon. She was not a lady in that sense. She was a lady in that she was envied by others who lived with less of the pleasures of life. She should have looked forward to the consequences of the type of life she had chosen where Jehovah was looked upon with disgust.

**Isa 47:8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:**

Babylon thought she was absolutely immune to the disasters which come about from ignoring the divine truths set up by the True Master of the universe. She had a number of accusations to meet.

1. She had given herself over to pleasure.
2. She lived in a careless manner.
3. She respected none other than herself.
4. She thought she would never suffer for sin.

**Isa 47:9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.**

The Lord disagreed. With unexpected suddenness, Babylon would be deprived of her most prized style of

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life. She would find herself like a mother who had seen her children taken from her, or her husband killed.

The Babylonians were known for their addiction to magic, witchcraft, sorcery and other forms of spiritual disease. She was to find that these attractions would fail her in the end. She had placed her trust in that which had no power to protect her from the wrath of the True God.

Isa 47:10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.

Is this not the attitude of the vast majority of those who live in pleasure? Their life is centered upon that pleasure. They see nothing higher than themselves. Jehovah is invisible as far as they are concerned. Since they cannot see Him with the eye of the flesh, they are convinced they are hidden from His eye.

Such persons live in the pride of human experience. If it feels good, do it. I got away with it when mom and dad were not looking. Why should the same not be true throughout life? The tragic side of this is that God differs a bit from mom and dad. There is nothing hidden from His sight. "I will repay, saith the Lord."

Isa 47:11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

In one sense, evil had already come upon them. They were saturated with it in thought, word and action. In

another sense, God would bring such catastrophes upon them that they would find no way of escape. These horrors would come so suddenly that they would have no way to successfully evade them.

Oh how true these words were! When Cyrus came upon the city, a drunken party was in progress. Before Babylon realized what had hit them, they were defeated. How many persons in these latter days will have to face the same sudden realization that God is real, and that they have chosen the way of death rather than the way of life.

Isa 47:12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

Isaiah presents a challenge from the Lord. She will have the opportunity to match her enchantments and sorceries with the power of the Ruler of the universe. Then it shall become clear whether their lives have been used wisely or foolishly.

Isa 47:13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

Does the present reader realize the similarity between what had occurred in the minds of the Babylonians and that which dominates the minds of the godless today? Babylon was making an attempt to explore the secrets of the universe in order that they might find a full and

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successful life? Nature itself must hold the answer to the puzzles of sin, disease and death.

As one who combined a career in university science teaching with preaching the Word of Jehovah, your present writer has seen altogether too much of this distorted view of success. King Solomon tried every avenue available. He then concluded that:

*And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl. 12:12-14).*

**Isa 47:14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.**

The pleasures of the eye, the pleasures of the flesh, and the pride of men, shall all be seen for what they truly are when the Son of man returns to judge both the righteous and the dead. They are here today and gone tomorrow. The power of the flame in that day will consume the wicked. It shall not be a place before which one may warm the feet or sit in comfort. It shall put one in company with liars, murderers and thieves forever.

**Isa 47:15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.**

When the time of crisis arrived Babylon would find that her evil companions would desert her and there would be none to save her in her hideous plight.

We can hardly close this chapter without presenting an extended quotation from the book of Revelation. Earthly Babylon was but a type of spiritual Babylon. Let us view the end of Babylon through the picture given us in Revelation 18:1-10.

*Rev 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

*Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

*Rev 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

*Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

*Rev 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

*Rev 18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.*

*Rev 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*

*Rev 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be*

*utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

*Rev 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,*

*Rev 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

**COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE!!**

## Chapter 48

The reader will remember that this material is written before the fact. The captivity in Babylon has not yet even begun. Yet God speaks to His people ahead of the time to give His explanation of the reasons why the captivity is to occur. He has prophesied in the past and the predictions were carried out. The same will be true of what He is presenting to them through the pen of His prophet Isaiah.

After the captivity there will be new things. We believe these new things pertain to the Christian dispensation. They will have to be introduced to these new things little by little. When the people of the time in which they come to pass see that what the Lord had predicted far ahead, they should come to recognize the eternal wisdom of the Creator.

**Isa 48:1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.**

Jacob was known by two names. He was first called Jacob. At that time we recall his questionable conduct in obtaining the inheritance from Esau. Later on he showed a far more spiritual nature and became known as Israel, which means "Prince of God."

The people to whom God was now speaking were of both natures. Among them there were those dedicated to Jehovah. They would follow Him to the death. But, there were others who pretended to be true to God, but who were not practicing more than lip service. Jesus had to deal with many of this type during his days among men.

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Isa 48:2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.

There was a serious need for the Lord to let the people know that He was very conscious of their hypocrisy. They would be tested and tried. Large numbers of them would fail the test of faith. These persons who claimed they belonged to the city of God and yet did not listen to His teaching would find they had committed an extremely serious mistake.

Isa 48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

The “former things” were those which had happened from the time of Abraham down to the days of Isaiah. God had been warning men throughout the ages that there were thoughts, words and actions which were right in His sight, and that there were others which were wrong. He had punished Adam and Eve. He had rewarded Abraham.

These evidences of God’s hand in the affairs of men are sometimes slow, as in the case of the mysteries of nature. Other times they are sudden. In these latter evidences there can be no debate about whether the false gods of the unfaithful had brought the matters into existence. They were such things as the forty day flood of Noah, and the sudden death of Nadab and Abihu.

Isa 48:4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

At times we may have difficulty in understanding the figures of speech which the Bible uses. This is not one of those times. Israel had been stiff necked and hard headed. They failed to heed the truths which were presented to them. They had been given far more time than should have been needed to grasp the importance of obedience to God's instructions. How could they act with such foolishness? Look around you my friend. The name of God is little more than a curse word to the many who spurn it today.

Israel had to be taught the hard way. Modern men and women who walk in the same path will find themselves trembling before the throne of God in the judgment.

Isa 48:5 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

There are some things which men may predict. I can often tell my wife that we are about to have a storm if I look into the sky and see dense clouds with lightning flashing from one to another. Soon the wind begins to blow and the raindrops fall. I can do this because I have short sighted ability to draw conclusions. God can see from before the beginning until after the end of time. His is the only mind capable of predicting all events which ever have, or ever will take place.

God had anticipated that the people would give their man made idols credit for bringing about both blessings and cursings. He had made His predictions as a means to teaching them that He had the foresight to lead them in the right way and point out to them the dangers of the wrong ways.

Isa 48:6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

The Israelites had the advantage of God's teaching from many years past. Why did they not give proper respect to what He was telling them in the present? There were some "new things" which God was even then putting before them. These new things were related to the coming Redeemer. It was sad that these truths were not being comprehended by His chosen people. They had every reason to reach out for the truth. They had failed to do so.

Isa 48:7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

These truths had not been revealed in past centuries because the people were not yet ready for them. God knew that if He shared such knowledge with them before they were ready, they would claim they knew them all the time. He was revealing His plans as they were ready to receive them.

After teaching school for some thirty-six years I can easily see the divine wisdom at work here. One does not teach calculus before teaching children how to count. One does not teach the writing of scholarly papers before teaching the ABC's. God knew both when and how to present the information His people needed to know.

Isa 48:8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou

knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Humanity had proved repeatedly that they were not good listeners. They had closed their ears to God's instructions over and over and over again. They have allowed sin to dominate them from birth to death. If Israel had received justice rather than mercy, they would have been eradicated from the earth.

Isa 48:9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

It was not because of their own righteousness that they were still in existence. They deserved to be cast away from God's presence. The reason this had not happened was that God's plan for man extended into the Christian age, when His name would be preached to sinful men by His own Son. God's name would be glorified, and there were those who would be saved through the mercy and grace offered in Jesus the Christ.

Isa 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

The experiences Israel was going through were a refinement process. A furnace is used in separating precious metals from their ore. God had chosen to refine Israel in the furnace of affliction which would serve to purify them in the Babylonian captivity.

Actually, the refining process had been going on all of



the time since Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden; but in the future it was to be intensified during those years in Babylon.

Isa 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

The Lord our God is a jealous God. He does not appreciate the respect which He is due being offered to dumb idols which are no gods. His jealousy is not a sin. It exists for the benefit of those who should be loving Him and keeping His commandments. A father or mother teaches their children not to run out into the road without looking both ways. This is done for the benefit of the child. The respect which is shown for the parent's authority protects the life of the youngster. God's glorious name must be held high for the benefit of those whom He loves, and who should love Him.

Isa 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

It is not to the worthless idols that Israel and Jacob ought to be giving their attention. There is every reason that they should be attending to the instructions of the One Who has always existed, and always will exist. Before the world began, God was. After the world ends, God is. He is the I AM. To ignore Him is to invite destruction.

Here again we have the two names, Jacob and Israel. Are they identical? Perhaps not. As mentioned before, the name Jacob reminds us of what Jacob should have been but was not. The name Israel causes our minds to reflect

upon the chosen nation. One thing is certain. Those being addressed were in need of paying heed to the truths God was about to discuss.

Isa 48:13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

The earth sits upon nothing. It hangs in space. What then does God mean when He speaks of laying the foundation of the earth? It seems likely that He is saying it was by His creative power that the gravitational forces came into being. It was that same creative power which measured the vast expanse of space, which was, relatively speaking, no more than the distance between God's thumb and His little finger. When God called space, time and matter into being, they took their assigned characteristics and functions and responded to the Word of the Lord.

Isa 48:14 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.

Who is it that the Lord had loved? Was it not Jacob, or Israel? His people are now called to reflect upon the comparative wisdom and power of the Chaldeans. Which of their idols able to forecast events centuries before those events took place? The answer is clear. None!

Isa 48:15 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

Many years ago, one of my favorite Bible teachers

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wrote a book entitled, "God Hath Spoken." When God speaks, things happen. He had given a charge to Israel and had blessed him with a place in the promised land of Canaan. As long as Israel remained true to the Lord as their Provider, they prospered. It was only when they forgot that relationship that they found the way difficult.

**Isa 48:16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.**

We might today say, "Lend me your ear." Jehovah reminded His people that He had made His commandments and promises clear from the beginning. He had not held back any truth which was vital to their welfare. A critical truth is about to be revealed. Isaiah wishes to make it certain that those to whom he speaks understand that the prophet is not the source of the teachings which he presents. That source is the Creator of all things.

May we point out that there is a reference here to the entire Godhead. Christ was there in the beginning, as the Word. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep. The I AM, or Heavenly Father was the third of the three persons of the Divine Trio. Isaiah was a representative of all three. As such he was to be heard.

**Isa 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.**

God is Teacher, Leader and Redeemer. If a man will hear His teachings, follow His example and return to

the pathway of right when summoned back from sin, that man will find life profitable. Israel was to go into Babylonian captivity because they had not sought out that profitable way.

**Isa 48:18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:**

We have a beautiful song in our hymn books. "When Peace Like a River attendeth my soul, when sorrows like sea billows roll." There is no need for chaos to turn our lives to a living hell on earth. Even if disaster strikes, we may have every confidence that God will ultimately reward our faith with blessings beyond our greatest imaginations. Our righteousness can be as deep as the ocean. Let the waves which pass over us be those of spiritual power.

**Isa 48:19 Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.**

Things could have been far different for Israel if they had heard and obeyed the commandments of Jehovah. There was no need for God's people to find chastisement in Babylon. It is not the case that they were cut off as a people while in Babylon. That would come later when fleshly Israel gave way to spiritual Israel as the body of Christ. At that point Israel cut themselves off by rejecting the Son of God. It was their initiative which separated them from God. They took the first step away. He did not.

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Isa 48:20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Such statements as the one made in this verse cause some Bible students to contend that these words were written during the Babylonian captivity. The people are told to leave Babylon, as though they were already in that land. However, we pointed out in the beginning of our discussion that Isaiah lived and prophesied well before the time of the captivity. Isaiah is thought to have lived from about 780 to 690 B.C. The Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, took the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. If so, Isaiah could not have written his words during the captivity.

Isa 48:21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Just as had been true when God provided for His people during the wandering in the wilderness as they moved from Egypt to Canaan, He saw fit to make water available to them on the return from Babylon to Canaan. We have only a short statement here to that effect. However, if we believe in the account during the leadership of Moses, we should have no difficulty with a more general statement here. God cares for His own.

Isa 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

When either a nation or an individual sets himself up in opposition to the Lord, that person has declared a war which is impossible to win.

Chapter 49

The student of the Bible must be very careful to watch for the development of the prophecy concerning the Messiah, and also the relationship between this Messiah as the Christ, the entire nation of Israel, and the spiritual remnant. The connections are somewhat the same as that between the Christ and His church in the present day.

The Holy Scriptures are a Divine masterpiece. Allow the the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to lead you from the fall of man in Genesis to the victory in Christ as pictured in Revelation. God desires a family which has had it's faith tested. If you prove to be a part of that faithful family, there is a new heaven and earth waiting. You were not created to live and die in this world. You were created to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. This relationship was not to be within the boundaries of time. It was to intended to be eternal—for ever and ever.

Isa 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

To the reader in the time of Isaiah the isles would have been those far away lands across the Mediterranean Sea. The present day reader is privileged to know the isles extend throughout the entire earthen globe. The words of Isaiah have reached around that globe. People from every continent have heard of the Saviour who was given the task of providing a Way for the children of men to escape from sin and follow in the light of the footsteps of the Christ. Before He was ever born, Mary had

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received the promise that she would give birth to this Redeemer.

**Isa 49:2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;**

The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. The Word was in the beginning. He was with God and He was God. Satan is doomed to defeat. The Lord answered Him by saying, "It is written." As the Son of God came into this world, He began both to do and to "teach." The truths He spoke are intended to penetrate the hearts of men as arrows would sink into the targets at which they are aimed.

**Isa 49:3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.**

The Servant to whom God had spoken was Israel. However, we must be careful to remember the unity of Christ with God's faithful. Those of old who heard and obeyed the Word as it was presented to them were one with it. Those today who hear and obey the Word of God become one with that Word. Christ is in them, and they are in Christ. The church is the servant of the Father. The truth presented in this present verse is that whether it is Christ, whether it is the faithful remnant who returned from Babylon, or whether it is the faithful of these latter days, Israel is the servant of God. The servant will glorify Him. That dedication and love will be rewarded.

**Isa 49:4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:**

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yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

There are times when God's faithful are caused to wonder if their labor has been in vain. Even when Christ was on the cross He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." In such times of trial it must be remembered that God has made precious promises. He will be faithful to those promises. The work of God's servant is ever in view. He knows the work of His servant. He will judge with perfection. Unlike human judges, He will make no errors. Those who have served in faith will live with Him in glory when time has been swallowed up by eternity.

Isa 49:5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

The Christ was no ordinary babe. The Father allowed Him to be planted in the womb of a woman. This was in order that the nation of Israel could have the chance to be brought back to true servanthood.

Is it not interesting the number of times Israel and Jacob are mentioned in the same sentence? Perhaps we should remember that Jacob was the supplanter and Israel was the prince of God. When we are told that Israel had not yet been gathered, it may be that the text is referring to those who would someday hear and obey, and that Jacob is the wayward who need to come back as true servants.

The one who was named to be God's Servant even before His birth was to receive both strength and glory

from God. He was to use those assets to gather those who would receive the Word in truth and in spirit. Some from the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would respond.

Isa 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

The suffering Servant is not Isaiah. It is Jesus Christ and those who unite themselves with Him in bringing men to the Heavenly Father. It is true that He first came to the Jews, but that the Jews did not receive Him. He was, however, believed by a select few. On the day of Pentecost there were three thousand of the Jews who accepted His claim to be the Son of God. Through the centuries there has been a small number of the children of Abraham who heard and believed. That is an important fact. The soul of any man or woman is more precious than all of the gold and silver on earth. Yet there is another step to be taken.

The Saviour was not just a Servant to offer salvation to the Jews. He commanded that His disciples go and preach the gospel to every creature, both Jew and Gentile. Jesus was to be a Light unto every man who would turn his eyes in His direction.

I might add that every man who has united himself with the Saviour through obedience to the gospel is sharing in that task.

Isa 49:7 Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a

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**servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.**

The Father speaks to His Son. That Son is the Redeemer of those who will hear and heed His words. He is the one whom the vast majority of the Jews despised and crucified. The time would come when the kings and princes of earth would rise up in respect for Him. The respect would even go farther than rising before Him. They will worship Him. Jesus, the Lord is the Holy One of Israel. He is the only person who has been perfectly faithful. He is the chosen One who shall gather the family of God from among all the nations of earth.

**Isa 49:8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;**

There is a continuous line of communication between the Father and the Son. Christ would die for the sins of mankind, but the Father would not allow Him to remain in the grave. The Christ would provide a means of binding men to God. He would bring purpose for those who would accept His offer of salvation. He would cause men to inherit the Kingdom of God. That which had been devastated by sin would become fertile and productive.

**Isa 49:9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.**

The “prisoners” are those who have been taken captive by Satan, the prince of darkness. Christ, as the “Light of the world” would lead the way from the darkness of Satan’s prison house to the glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness. Those who will do so are commanded to let their faith be made manifest. Then they will feed in fine spiritual pastures.

**Isa 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.**

The “Bread of life” will satisfy the hunger of the faithful. They will be invited to drink of the spiritual water which quenches the thirst of the weary traveler who has been toiling in the heat of persecution. The Saviour will provide for every need.

**Isa 49:11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.**

Mountains are normally an obstacle to travel. There will be no mountains too high for either the Son of God nor those who walk by His side. The Highway of Holiness will be mapped out so clearly that not even a wayfaring man or woman might miss it if they desired to follow in it.

**Isa 49:12 Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.**

As the Word of the Lord is spread abroad, there will be those from great distances who will rejoice in the good news of the gospel and will desire to become a part of the



Kingdom of God. They shall come from every direction.

There is sharp difference with respect to the identity of the land of Sinim. It is possible that it refers to the far east, but this is not the only possibility.

**Isa 49:13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.**

There is reason for great joy in view of the good things which are to come. This was particularly true with respect to the Israelites who were to be made captive in Babylon. This situation would not last indefinitely. After having been chastised for their idolatrous infidelity toward the True God, they would look to Jehovah for comfort, and He would look with mercy upon them.

**Isa 49:14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.**

Israel would have despair in their hearts with the thought that they had been discarded forever by their Lord. The tears would flow as hope seemed lost.

**Isa 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.**

But the captivity in Babylon would not mean God had forgotten his people. He had held them dear to His heart for many centuries. He would no more forget them than a woman might ignore a child who was still being nourished at her breast.

**Isa 49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.**

Just as one might have messages tattooed on the palms of the hands to remind him of some critical matter, God as surely had the welfare of His people constantly in His mind. He would not forget.

**Isa 49:17 Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.**

The children of Israel might appear to be in hopelessness, but such was not to be the case. Those who had captivated them would have compassion upon them and allow them to leave the chains behind them.

**Isa 49:18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.**

The time would come in which rather than being oppressed by others, Israel would be supported by some of those who had abused them. The difficult times would be replaced by a greater day in which prosperity would dress them in fine clothing such as brides wear in preparation for their wedding.

**Isa 49:19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.**

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The land of Israel's destruction would be the land of Babylon. It was to be too crowded for occupation by its own citizens and also those of the Hebrews. Therefore the Jews would be allowed to return to Canaan.

Isa 49:20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

The children which Israel would have in place of those they had lost as they were taken captive would also realize the need to leave the land of Babylon. This would have been impossible at the time they were taken captive. That situation would change and they would be given permission to return.

Isa 49:21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

The general attitude of Israel would be that their children had been taken from them. They were captives, moved about at the whim of their captors. How could they look forward to growth in numbers? Was there any real future for God's people, or must they be forever castaways?

Isa 49:22 Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

The Lord stated that much brighter times were ahead. The Jews would be a means of informing the gentile nations of the love God has for men. The Gentiles would then return the favor by looking with favor upon the Jews who had brought them the message of spiritual riches.

Isa 49:23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Nursing fathers and mothers are those who care for the welfare of their children. The gentiles would come to know the value of the Kingdom of God and would honor God's faithful for the blessings which had been made available through the faithful remnant of the Jews. The wait for the change might be difficult, but when the time arrived that Jew and gentile came together in Christ, shame would turn to joy. It would be more than worth it to have waited for the pleasure of the Lord's will.

Isa 49:24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

Was it really possible that the captive Israelites would be released from bondage? Could that which looked so impossible actually be brought about? The answer was "Yes."

Isa 49:25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

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It might look like an impossible task to take Israel from the grasp of the Babylonians. The prey of the mighty is usually clung to very tightly. That would not prevent the Lord from bringing about the release. God would take the side of Israel. The remnant which desired to return to their homeland would be given the freedom to do that. That which looked impossible would prove to be just the opposite.

**Isa 49:26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.**

The words of this verse are not literal. The Babylonians would not be eating their own bodies, or drinking their own blood. What would be happening was that those who had turned against the people of the Lord would turn against one another. Israel would be freed to return to Canaan and the world would have reason to know that Jehovah is the God of both the Jew and the Gentile.

## Chapter 50

We are now reaching the more readily recognized Messianic portions of the book of Isaiah. The reader is reminded that men can see a short distance into the future. We can notice that which will take place if a child runs out into the path of a speeding car. However, God's mind reaches infinitely farther than ours. He can predict the end from the beginning.

It would be well for each and all to recognize that the remarks made in this fiftieth chapter demonstrate that long range view which is within the power of the God of this universe. Thus He gave specific facts about the activities of the Saviour many years before these things came to reality.

**Isa 50:1 Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.**

This question about a bill of divorcement is being asked of the land of Judah. The Israelites were seen as the mother of Israel. Jehovah is the Father. A separation has taken place. Is the separation the fault of Jehovah, or is it the fault of Israel? Can those of Israel point to some deficiency in the Lord's treatment of them which justifies a divorce? Or is it the people who have broken the bond?

The Lord was not the one who had placed distance between Himself and His people. It was they who had sold themselves by following the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites. The lack of faithfulness of the nation

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had brought about the difficulties which faced those who should have heard His voice rather than that of the rocks and pieces of wood which had been carved out and treated as if they were equal to or greater in power than the Lord.

Isa 50:2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

It is now Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who is calling for an answer to some critical questions. When He came into the world there should have been multitudes who recognized His authority and answered His call to service of Jehovah. There was excellent reason why His call should have been heard. The winds and the waves obeyed His will. Rivers changed their course. Fish lay rotting in the sunlight. Men died of thirst. They should have understood that such conditions were the result of the Divine hand. They would fail to give God the glory.

Isa 50:3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

It was God who in the beginning said, "Let there be light." And there was light. Since Christ was a part of the Godhead in the beginning, He was a partner in such wonders. When the dark clouds turned the light of day into darkness, Christ was there as the WORD. Daylight and darkness have been proven to be under the control of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

Isa 50:4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

We now narrow down our view to Christ as the Messiah and the WORD. He was born into this world in order that He could teach lost men the way home. Day after day our Lord spoke in terms which men could understand if they would but listen to the truths presented. He knew that which men needed to know. He was able to speak for God, and He was able to speak as God.

Isa 50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

Jesus Christ was God; yet he consented to become obedient to the Father. He was willing to suffer affliction in order that men might see the need for obedience. He did not refuse to finish His assigned task even though it meant that He would be scorned and ridiculed. He neither rebelled, nor turned back when he took our afflictions upon his back.

Isa 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Imagine the distance which Christ was to cover when He left His place in heaven to lead men through the misery and evil which had come upon them through disobedience. They used the lash to tear open the flesh on his back. They pulled of the hair of his beard by the roots. They spit in His face to bring Him to ridicule.

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I will not extend the horror of this treatment further. I have taken part in the butchering of hogs when I was a teenager on the farm. Even those hogs did not suffer as did the Son of God. How could He stand to know He had the power to destroy those who were serving the purposes of Satan?

**Isa 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.**

The answer to the above question is that He was convinced there would be an end to the suffering, and that after that end came, there was glory awaiting. He and those who later followed Him through the tests of faith would find the Father in heaven at their side. The shame would lead to rewards greater than we are able to presently conceive of.

**Isa 50:8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.**

It is critical that Christ suffered so greatly. There are none who can conquer Him. The righteous will have the opportunity to pass through the same fires of persecution which He felt. If the adversary is so foolhardy as to attack the righteous Saviour, and those who follow that Saviour, he will find that he has set himself up against the One who created mass, space, time and man. It will be an uneven fight, and God's side will win.

**Isa 50:9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.**

God and one man are a majority even when matched against Satan and all of his angels.

**Isa 50:10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.**

If any man or woman fears God and follows the example of His Servant Jesus Christ, that person will find the darkness turning to light. Fear will be replaced by hope. Heaven will come into view as the footsteps of the Servant illuminate the Way.

**Isa 50:11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.**

It will not be so with the one who centers his or her life on destruction, and who kindles the fires of lust and hatred on earth. Those who love the fire will find it as they are cast into the horror of hell fire.



## *Chapter 51*

The past predictive chapters continue here as they speak of what was to happen to both Israel and Babylonia as if they had already taken place. Since Isaiah lived well before the Babylonian captivity, he had to be talking about that which was still future, but viewing it as if it was already in the past.

Israel is to be released. Babylon is to be punished for the cruelty which she visited upon God's righteous of Israel.

**Isa 51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.**

Isaiah calls for the attention of those of Israel who truly care about living as God desires. Since they seek to do that which is right, there is a need for them to look back into the past to see what the Lord is able to do in the future. Not all of Israel fell into that category of seeking righteousness. Many chose to remain in Babylon when they could have returned to Canaan.

Those who did wish to leave Babylon needed to consider the manner in which God had formed the nation of Israel. He had used Abraham, who was dead as far as the ability to produce seed, and He had caused the womb of Sarah, whose womb had passed the age of child bearing. From those two Isaac had been born. This led to the creation of an entire nation.

**Isa 51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.**

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It was not the youth and vigor of Abraham and Sarah which allowed the procreation of children. It had been the power of Jehovah. If God could develop a nation from such humble beginnings, He could most certainly use the remnant of the faithful Israelites as a beginning point for a new creation.

Isa 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

The promised land might appear to be a desolate and waste area while Israel was in Babylon. It would not always be that way. The contrast between what it was during the captivity and what it was to be when the Prince of Peace brought joy and gladness to it's people would be a happy contrast.

We must keep in mind though that much of that which is predicted was dependent upon the power of the Messiah, or servant of God to bring about those changes.

Isa 51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

Isaiah now fades into the background and the words are those of the Creator. He calls for His nation of Israel to watch for a law which will come from Him. It will not be the product of human wisdom. It will be based upon divine insights. God would bring into existence a law which would bring light into a world of darkness.

Isa 51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people;

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**the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.**

The Saviour who was to bring that law into being had not been introduced in person to Israel as yet. It would be over seventy years before that would happen. Still, as Jehovah looked at it, the events of the life and teachings of Christ were near. Then the righteous principles of the Saviour would be sent forth unto all the world, resulting in those who trusted Him leaning upon His powerful arm. There would be help.

**Isa 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.**

The heavens and earth which were to wax old and vanish away like smoke were those of the Mosaic age. The New Creation under Jesus Christ would replace it. That new creation would never be abolished. Heaven and earth might pass, but the Word of the Lord would endure forever.

**Isa 51:7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.**

There was no reason for those who loved and sought righteousness to tremble and shudder at these changes. Let men do what they would; those who have God's law in their heart will live on in spirit.

**Isa 51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.**

Those who sought to revile the righteous of God would find themselves crumbling like a motheaten wool garment. The spirit of the righteous would live on into eternity.

**Isa 51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?**

There is an urgent call for the arm of the Lord to demonstrate it's might. It had done so in the times of escape from Egypt. It could do the same again. Both Rahab and the dragon appear to be references to supposed powers the Egyptians worshipped in the Nile River.

**Isa 51:10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?**

It was this same Jehovah who had caused the parting of the sea such that Israel might pass through on dry land. If He could make a way then, He could also make one leading out of Babylon.

**Isa 51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

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There should be no question whatsoever that the righteous seekers of God could be delivered from the sorrow and mourning, and flee away to happier days. The return to the promised land would change their sorrow to joy.

Isa 51:12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

If God served as their comforter, what could man do to destroy them. Men die. God lives forever. If God upholds, no mortal can utterly destroy. Men will die as the grass dies in the heat of the summer. God is not as the grass, nor are those who are true to Him.

Isa 51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

The man who forgets his Maker who created the physical heaven and earth is doomed. He needs to fear human oppressors. But, the one who leans upon the mighty arm of the Lord will still be there when the oppressors are gone.

Isa 51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

The Israelite who fails to trust in the power of the Lord will impatiently look for quick action. He is fearful that he may die of hunger.

Isa 51:15 But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.

The one who truly trusts in Jehovah will find Him to be absolutely dependable. The delivery from danger may not be as rapid as desired, but it will come when God judges the time to be right.

Isa 51:16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

The words which have been placed in the mouth are those of Jehovah who caused Isaiah to comfort the faithful remnant. In the new heaven and earth, Israel will again have strong reason to realize that Jehovah is still with them and will not forsake His own.

Isa 51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

The time was to come when those people who had enjoyed Jerusalem as their capital would realize that God's fury toward them for their flirtation with the idols had been pacified. They had drunk the bitter cup of His wrath to the very bottom. It had not been pleasant.

Isa 51:18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

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But how would they escape from the hideous situation in which they found themselves? There were no leaders among either the young men or the old who qualified to take Israel by the hand and lead her out of her difficulties.

**Isa 51:19 These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?**

Since none among Israel's men had proven able and willing to rescue her from these four horrors, who did they feel might bring them any comfort? From the point of view of human wisdom, all was hopeless. They could look around and see that clearly there were none among men who could provide for their needs.

**Isa 51:20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.**

Any human leadership which had been called upon to overcome the horrors mentioned in verse nineteen, had been found lacking. They found themselves looking as ridiculous as a powerful wild animal entrapped in a net. The problem was that they had not been on the side of the Lord. To say that they were full of the fury of the Lord does not mean they were making use of God's fury toward their oppressors. It means that they were feeling the effects of God's fury at their lack of cooperation with His purposes.

**Isa 51:21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:**

Their helplessness in the face of their troubles was not due to alcoholism. It was an even worse form of drunkenness. They had lost their powers of reason in the face of the temptations placed upon them by association with the Babylonian revelers. The wine they were drinking was the cup of God's wrath. They had been unfaithful to Him, and He had chastised them for it.

**Isa 51:22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:**

The righteous remnant among the captives would find that God had not forsaken them. They had drunk the bitter cup of God's fury to the extent that He was ready to relieve them that they might not have to continue the punishment for their unfaithfulness.

**Isa 51:23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.**

The cup of God's wrath would be taken from their hand and placed in the hand of those who had been afflicting them. They had been treated unmercifully. It was as if their bodies had been used as something which was to be trampled on by those who had administered the punishment of the Lord. This was to come to an end.



## *Chapter 52*

The prophetic past is still being used in chapter fifty-two. The release from Babylonian captivity is being discussed as if it was immediately at hand whereas it was to be a number of years after the time of Isaiah the prophet. The sequence of events, as discussed moves the reader closer and closer to the coming of the Messiah. In fact, the last few verses of the chapter at hand should probably be a part of the following chapter. The glory of the suffering servant is made increasingly evident.

**Isa 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.**

What a stark contrast is found between the command for Babylon to fall down into the dust. Babylon has been the queen of the world. But she will soon be brought down to disgrace. Zion, or Jerusalem has been humbled to the point of slavery in Babylon. Now she is told to awake and make herself beautiful. The lowly slave will become a reigning beauty.

This verse does not say that the Gentiles would find entrance into the society of the Jews closed to them. The statement that the uncircumcised would not come any more into Zion is figurative language in which the uncircumcised are those who are spiritually uncircumcised. When the Kingdom of Heaven was introduced, only the spiritually clean would find themselves comfortable among it's citizens.

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Isa 52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Prisoners were often bound together with neck bands. Israel was to put off the hateful restrictions which had been a part of her life for decades. She would be released from her captivity in Babylon and permitted to return to the land which had been provided to her by Jehovah Himself.

Isa 52:3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

No one had paid a fee to obtain Zion's services. They were taken without pay. Now she would be released from her bondage without having to pay.

This fits perfectly with what actually happened, as Cyrus even paid much of the expense for the Israelites to return to Canaan.

Isa 52:4 For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

A comparison is made between what happened when Israel went down into Egypt and later left that captivity. At that time Israel went down into Egypt of their own free will. No one was paid for their services while they were there. The Assyrians also caused them to serve that nation as bondservants.

Isa 52:5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought?

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**they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.**

Now we find them again taken captive by the Babylonians without remuneration for their services. They are placed under such horrible conditions that they howl in grief under the Babylonian lords. Added to that is the fact that the name of the Lord is blasphemed as though it meant nothing at all.

**Isa 52:6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.**

We have four instances of the Lord's personal name being glorified. "My", "I", "He" and "I." There would be no need to suffer the mockery of God. It would be made clear that "I have spoken." Israel may be made free.

**Isa 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!**

It is always wonderful to move from a state of shame to one of pride. That was what was predicted for Israel. As the messenger of the news of salvation arrived and began to publish the tidings of peace and victory over sin, Israel could cry out with great joy that Jehovah's name is great. It is He that guides the affairs of men.

**Isa 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they**

**shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.**

It was to be a time of extreme gladness when the message rang across the hills of Palestine that God had brought His people back to the homeland. God had seemingly turned His face away from His people when He allowed them to be taken into captivity. In this new day, He would once again smile upon them with the kind of blessings they had once known.

But we must look deeper. The joy will be greater than that caused by release from Babylon. It will be the result of release from the bondage of sin and spiritual death.

**Isa 52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem had been treated shamefully by the invaders. The temple had been demolished. The Jews had been removed. The fields had been made waste. Now this was to be reversed. Jerusalem would be exalted. That which had been treated shamefully would be once more respected. The people who dwelt in the new Jerusalem would find peace and happiness. They would be servants of God, not slaves of men.

**Isa 52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

It was not just the land of Palestine and the Jews who would note the vast changes. The power of Jehovah would be seen by those of all nations upon the earth.

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The Lord and His people would be impossible to ignore. His ability to bless those who committed themselves to His will would be observable to anyone who would open their spiritual eyes.

Isa 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

The Lord declares emancipation for His people. Those who wish to cast off the yoke of bondage may leave that which is unclean. The message has a two fold application. Israel was to leave the land of Babylon and leave that which was corrupt behind. They had been allowed to take the precious utensils of the temple services with them as they returned. They were to walk worthy of the privilege they had been allowed.

But again the message is for all time. Those who determine they wish to leave the bondage of sin and the service of Satan are to abhor that which is evil. They are to bear the truth to every nation. They are truly God's vessels themselves. Their bodies and minds are to be kept from lust, pride and sinful pleasures.

Isa 52:12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

Unlike the conditions when Israel left the land of Egypt in great haste, they are to leave Babylon in orderly fashion. God would lead them from the front and He would protect them in the rear. They would be protected on every side.

Isa 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

With this verse we are coming into the heart of the Messianic prophecy. Jesus Christ, the Son of God would lead the way in both word and deed. He would be raised up from the ignominy of the cross until he sat at the right hand of the Father in heaven. None who lived among men in the flesh have ever risen to the heights he has reached. He sits upon the throne of the universe.

Isa 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

From century to century men and women from around the globe have been amazed at the victory Jesus won. From the manger in Bethlehem, He moved to the highest of the high. From having been beaten and spat upon, he will be the intercessor for the righteous in judgment. That face and that body which bore the disgrace of the cross was to become gloriously radiant as ten thousand angels awaited His command.

Isa 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Kings, emperors and presidents have stood in awe of His greatness. There are occasions when the most prestigious of men and women find themselves quite overwhelmed in the presence of conditions they can only observe and place the knee to the ground.

One of the reasons for the respect which will be paid to the Son of God is that He has spoken wisdom which they had never heard from any other source, but which was clearly and vastly superior to their own.

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## Chapter 53

There is a vast difference between the mind of God and that of man. Man has the ability to peer back into the annals of time and read truths from the historical records of many yesterdays. Man can observe the conditions and events of the present and use his limited powers of logic to anticipate that which may follow in the near future. But what man cannot do is use the present and the past to logically arrive at certain knowledge of the major events which will occur from the present until eternity has swallowed up time.

God is able to do just that. He is the I AM. He WAS here TOMORROW. He WILL be here YESTERDAY. Past, present and future are but pages in the book of eternity for HIM. Thus He can demonstrate His divinity to man through prophecy. That is what we see in the writings of those great men of the past whom we know as prophets. Dear reader, the present paragraph presents truth which man can never completely comprehend. But it will be worth every effort to try.

Isaiah was but a mouthpiece for Jehovah as the Creator gave us a preview of the One through whom He would guide fallen men back to the heavenly city where sin and death will be no more. Approximately seven hundred years before our Saviour arrived among us in the flesh, Isaiah was privileged to give us enough details of the life of the Son of God to prove that God is calling weak and frail men to follow the divine footsteps of His beloved Son back to Him.

How foolish to ignore the evidence! How foolish to turn our eyes, ears, hearts and footsteps away from the green pasture offered through the prophets of the Lord such as the one who penned these words in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Hear ye Him. Believe the report!

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Isa 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

The report of which Isaiah speaks is the coming of the Son of God to offer redemption to sinful men. Some have believed that report. Many have turned to their own ways and despised it. It is the fool who has said in his heart, "There is no God." The arm of the Lord has been revealed in many ways through the history of mankind. But the greatest of these may well be the prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ. No man could have had access to the truth available to the One who is eternal. Only God could have presented the picture of Christ's life and then guided it to reality through His providential arm.

Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

"He" is God's only Beloved Son. As the Word, He was with God in the beginning. According to the apostle John, He WAS GOD. He did not have to come to this dry ground as a tender plant. He did so because of the Love of His Father, and that of His own.

A tender plant which arises out of dry ground has little chance of surviving. Yet this tender plant was able to take root in the spiritual drought which prevailed among men. He grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man. Even as Satan made every attempt to trample Him underfoot, He flourished.

Was Jesus Christ so handsome that His physical appearance would attract men and women to follow Him? This verse implies that He was not outstanding in His



outward appearance. If we had seen Him walking down the paths of Bethlehem or Jerusalem, we might well have been unimpressed.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

From the time when He overturned the tables of the money changers in the temple, until He was beaten, spat upon and nailed to the cross, He understood what it meant to be spurned. Strangely, the multitudes were sometimes enthralled by His life and teachings, and sometimes viewed Him as a chief of sinners, from whom they turned their faces and cried out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him."

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Just as Satan brought grief, sorrow and death to men, He succeeded in causing Christ to share in those horrors. It was not for His own sins that He suffered. In a sense, we crucified Him. One of the greatest heartaches which men can endure is that of wishing to be able to help others who are hurting, and being unable to offer that help. Jesus hurt for us. Are you not grateful that as the Great Physician, He had the spiritual medicine to heal our souls?

Men of His own day, as well as those of the present time, have misjudged his death as weakness on His part. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He did not suffer because God was punishing Him. He suffered because this was the Way which was chosen to demonstrate

the need for love of our neighbor. The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord God. The second is to love our fellow man. Jesus is our example.

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

How could one man take the medical prescription for another and cause the healing of the one to whom the prescription was given? The mockers among us point out that such flies in the face of reality. If we are speaking of physical bruises or diseases such may be true. But, we are not speaking of medical doctors and pharmacies. We are concerned with ailments caused by sinful transgressions. God has made it indisputably evident that the diseases of the soul can be healed by the love of God.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

There is none who is innocent. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have behaved like sheep who failed to heed the voice of the Shepherd of our souls. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own paths. There are monstrous dangers in trying to find our own pasture fields. All of us have exposed ourselves to those dangers. The Son of man has had to take the consequences of our foolishness upon His own back. The straying sheep was in danger of being killed by vicious wolves and serpents. When Jesus came from heaven to earth to lead His sheep to safety, He was the one who died from the sting of the serpent.

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**Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.**

The lamb is a strange animal. When most animals feel that death is approaching, they struggle with all their power. They cry out in rage and fear. Sheep are not so. They humbly accept their fate and give up their lives without retaliating.

Jesus could have called ten thousand angels to His side. One angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night. Who can dispute the fact that Christ voluntarily laid down His life. Like the dying lamb, Jesus offered Himself without retaliation. He then said, "It is finished." He had accomplished that for which he came.

**Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.**

When Jesus was taken from the prison and was denied a fair trial, His life was cut short. The question is now asked, "Since He lived but a portion of what would have been a normal lifetime, and since He had no children, how would his influence be carried on in the years to come? On the surface it would appear that such influence was cut off and His memory would be obliterated.

**Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.**

Do not overlook the importance of this verse. The wicked and the rich in physical goods were often the most vicious enemies of our Lord. When He died, He had been crucified between two wicked thieves. Then Joseph of Arimathaea offered his own tomb for the proper burial of the Saviour. Both the thieves and the rich man understood that Christ was not paying the debt for His own sins. He was neither violent nor deceitful.

**Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.**

The "LORD" here is the Father in heaven. His Son had come voluntarily to give His life. The Father had willed that this be done. It was God who permitted the grief which His Son suffered in making Himself an offering for sin.

Now we come to an answer to the question which was asked previously, "Who shall declare His generation?" Since His life was cut off prematurely, how could his influence continue? He had no children to carry on His lineage. See how plainly the scriptures make the answer. Jesus seed consists of all those who live because He died. His days were not only prolonged as a result of His resurrection from the grave. They are constantly being prolonged by those in whom He lives through the ages. He provided the seed of the Word. Every true Christian is made alive through His sacrificial death.

**Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.**

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Christ's suffering at the time of His death was not wasted. As He looks back upon that which took place, He may be content in the knowledge that through His sacrifice, millions upon millions of souls will be cleansed from their sins. They will be with Him in the heavenly city where there is no more death. Satan has no place there!

Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

It almost seems odd that we are told Jesus will receive a portion with the great. He stands infinitely higher in greatness than any human who ever existed. Still, there is a wonderful thought here. Because Jesus poured out His soul in His death, those who have been spiritually strong will share in the victory. The spoil is heaven. He offers to share it with those who allow Him to bear their sins and make intercession for them in that last day.

Chapter 54

Chapters fifty-three and fifty-four are very closely related. Chapter fifty-three tells of the separation of God and Israel, His wife. Chapter fifty-four tells of the joy of reconciliation and the impossibility of God's sending the nations again to bring such suffering to spiritual Israel.

Isa 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

A time of rejoicing is to come! Fleshly Israel had the opportunity to bear children as the wife of Jehovah. She had failed to do that. God's family was not increased as it should have been through fleshly Israel. The children of the desolate are those produced by Israel during the captivity period. The children of the married wife are those produced during the period before Israel became estranged from her Husband.

God actually made two seed promises. The first was with Abraham. The second was with Christ. The number of children produced through Christ and the church would be far greater than that produced through God as the husband and fleshly Israel as the wife.

Isa 54:2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

The tent is the place of residence of the family of God. Isaiah tells us that the family of God is to grow much

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larger than in the past. The nations of the entire earth will be the territory inhabited by His children. The size of the tent must be much increased and the tentpins must be firmly planted in order that they never be uprooted.

**Isa 54:3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.**

Fleshly Israel had suffered enormously. That suffering was to be replaced by great joy. The family of God would in the future include the nations of the Gentile world. His children would be found in the farthest regions of the globe. His name would be praised right and left by those of every race and tongue.

**Isa 54:4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.**

As the situation stood at the time Isaiah foresaw the captivity, Israel was to be fearful and confused. She would be reproached by the Husband of her youth. But that shame and confusion would come to an end. The various periods of captivity would still be remembered as actual events, but they would be forgotten in the sense that she would be able to hold her head high and find that her barren condition was replaced by a multitude of spiritual seed.

**Isa 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the**

**Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.**

There would be good reason for this productivity. The Husband of Israel is God. He is the Maker of the universe. He is the Redeemer of those who have been stained with sin, but who have learned their lesson and are ready to be reconciled. There may be many that are called gods. But, there is only One who is truly the God of all men who will honor and obey Him.

**Isa 54:6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.**

A woman who had sinned against her husband, and was penitent, would rejoice to hear her husband calling for her to return to him. God had forsaken Israel because of her idolatry and moral corruption. She would be separated from Him until it was apparent that she was ready to be a faithful spouse.

**Isa 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.**

**Isa 54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.**

She had not been forsaken for all eternity. The separation was to be just long enough to teach the lesson which her Husband knew was needed for her to realize her need for Him. It was true that He had been angry with her, but the anger would be replaced by mercy and kindness. Her Husband would once more claim her as





His own. She would bear children with Him. His promise was that never again would she face the same type of correctional measures as were to be the case in Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian captivity.

**Isa 54:9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.**

The Lord had made a promise to Noah that never again would the earth be flooded with water as it was in that great world wide flood. Just as He had kept His promise to Noah and his descendants, the promise to Israel that He would not again turn His face from her would be kept.

Most certainly God has been filled with wrath at the behavior of individuals within the church of Christ. This, however, is not the same as bringing the nations of earth together to punish her as a whole.

**Isa 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.**

Over the centuries the surface of the earth has seen great changes. Mountain ranges have come and gone. Valleys have been filled. Throughout all of this time and amidst all of these changes, God has continued to respect His covenant with the Bride of Jesus Christ. Faithful spiritual children have been produced through this union. The plan of God for a family in heaven has

not been forgotten. Those who have been true to their Husband will be told to enter in.

**Isa 54:11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.**

Fleshly Israel had been afflicted repeatedly. Especially was this to be true in the time of separation from Jehovah her husband in the time of her captivity in Babylon. With the coming of spiritual Israel and the union with Jesus Christ, this was to see a major change. She was to be adorned with great beauty.

We come now to material which cannot help but be compared with the description of the New Jerusalem as given in the book of Revelation. Precious gems of every color are used to picture that beauty. It is pointless to try to make an application of every color and every gem. The lesson is that she will be beautiful beyond the ability of words to tell.

**Isa 54:12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.**

I think it wise to insert a few verses from the description in Revelation to remind the reader of the strong comparison between the two accounts.

*Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

*Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a*

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great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

Rev 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Rev 21:13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

Rev 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Rev 21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Rev 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Rev 21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Rev 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Rev 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Rev 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Rev 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Isa 54:13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Many of the children of fleshly Israel were not taught of the Lord. They had spurned the Father's attentions and had bowed before the idols of the surrounding nations. The children of the new union between Christ and His church would necessarily be taught of God before they were born of water and the Spirit. This would result in spiritual peace between the Father and His children.

Isa 54:14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

The critic of the Bible may point to the terrible persecution of the early church by the Romans. Yes, those early Christians were tortured and mocked. That did not take away the peace which existed between her



and her Husband. They could meet the whip or the lions, knowing that were their very physical lives to be taken, they would be preparing for eternity within the gates of the beautiful city of God.

Isa 54:15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

Persecutors would combine their forces in an attempt to discourage God's children from their determination to walk in the footsteps of the Saviour. All such efforts would fail, in that the persecution would not be supported by Jehovah. As their Maker, Redeemer and Holy God, He would hold them in His loving arms and welcome them to enter in through the gates of that city of splendor.

Isa 54:16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

If the enemy wished to bring weapons to bear upon the bride of God's Son, they would find their efforts useless. God had created those who made the weapons. God had thus enabled the weapons to come into existence. He could just as easily cancel their power.

Isa 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Neither threats nor weapons of war would bring about the defeat of God's servants. Their Father is their

Maker. Their Husband is His Son. Any condemnation leveled against them will be disregarded. When the blood of God's own Son has wiped away the sin, no man can successfully find one guilty. His servants partake of the perfect purity of the Lord Himself.

Chapter 55

What a pleasant change it is to move into a brighter picture than has been presented in the last few chapter. Those who truly hunger and thirst after that spiritual feast which God has to offer will find that the table is full. The food and drink is both delicious and spiritually nutritious.

Isa 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

The call comes ringing out to all who will listen. Some do not recognize the needs which are theirs. But for those who do realize what a full life involves, the voice of the Lord is clear and inviting.

The water which quenches spiritual thirst cannot be bought with silver, gold or twenty dollar bills. It has already been made available through the Word of God. As a farm boy whose job it was to go down to the pasture and drive the cows up to the barn where they could be milked, I recall that when we passed the pond in the pasture, or the water tank in the barnyard, many of the cattle would insist on stopping for a drink. If only men and women who need refreshing could come to realize that the water of life is the answer, this world would be a finer place.

There is water for refreshment. There is milk for nourishment and there is wine for joy. We hasten to add that this is not approval on the part of God for the wine which makes one drunk. We are not to be drunken with wine. Nevertheless, God has given us the fruit of the vine to cheer our hearts.

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**Isa 55:2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.**

After having discussed that which can be drunk, the present verse speaks of the bread of life. There is bread made of wheat, rye and corn. But there is a kind of bread which fills the soul rather than the stomach. Thus we have both food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty. Too many are satisfied with spending their effort upon that which tears down the soul instead of building it up. Is the reader in need of gaining spiritual weight? God has the answer.

**Isa 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.**

Those who hear the call of the Lord have a sure promise. God made a promise to David that the time would come when a mighty King would come and sit upon the throne of Israel with an end to His reign. The apostle Paul quoted this very verse and declared that it was a prophecy of Jesus, the Son of God. (See Acts 13:34-39.)

*Acts 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.*

*Acts 13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

*Acts 13:36 For David, after he had served his own*

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generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

Acts 13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Isa 55:4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

This King who is to be of the line of David is Christ. He is both a commander and a leader. Commanders give directions. Leaders provide examples. Our Lord did both.

Isa 55:5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

The Christ would call spiritual Israel into being. David himself did not know the Kingdom of Christ. That will not prevent those who hunger and thirst after righteousness from coming to God's Kingdom in these latter days. They shall come from nations across the entire earth. The Christ died and was buried in a borrowed tomb. God raised Him to a throne of glory.

Isa 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Do not make the mistake of applying this verse to someone else. It has reference to every man of every age. Particularly it refers to those of us who live in the Christian dispensation. The Lord once dealt primarily with the Jews. It is not so any more. He issues a call to all who will bend an ear. That throne in heaven is not so far away that He cannot be heard by any who will listen.

It will not always be that way. Life comes to an end. Nations come to an end. The present heaven and earth will pass away. Then comes the judgment. Those who have stopped their ears to the call and have rejected the feast which God has prepared will find that since they would not come, they are to depart. He never knew them.

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Thoughts lead to actions. The person with wicked thoughts is commanded to cleanse his mind. The one who has allowed those thoughts to lead into actions which separate him from His Maker must retrace those steps and return to righteousness. He will find that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The choice is clear. Repent or perish.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

This is one of the most revealing verses in the entire Word of God. God is omniscient. He has complete knowledge of the past, the present and the future. Man is finite. He has limited experience. He has limited reasoning power. He cannot see the end from the beginning.

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It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. Those who insist on doing so will find that their lack of wisdom and experience will lead to spiritual destruction. The way of the Lord is perfect. It leads to life eternal.

**Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

How much higher are the heavens than the earth? Ponder this very carefully. The Bible speaks here in the plural. It is heavens, not heaven. The question implies that the heaven where God exists is meant. Paul said he was caught up into the “third’ heaven. The heavens mentioned here may go on forever. Distance is no hindrance. God’s thoughts and ways are that much higher than our own.

**Isa 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:**

Nature is wonderful. It is the handiwork of God, not man. God saw fit to establish what we call the water cycle. Rain and snow fall from the sky and bring about the growth of vegetation. That in turn provides seed for planting and bread for eating. God is the Giver of such natural blessings.

**Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**

It is the same with His Word. If men will absorb that Word, they will find that life is full and productive. Just as the grain of wheat produces the bread which man consumes, the Word of God is the seed which produces the wondrous yield of spiritual fruit which God desires, and which we must bring about.

**Isa 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.**

The life of the one who helps to plant the seed which God has provided will find joy and peace. Do mountains and hills actually sing? They do when the soldiers of Christ arise and march for the Master. There is joy to the world. The Lord has come.

**Isa 55:13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.**

Long ago in the garden of Eden, God caused a curse to come upon the ground. Thorns and thistles required labor by the sweat of the brow. The sower of God's seed will find that a new creation replaces the old. Fir trees are beautiful. Myrtle trees have no briars. For the lover of God, this world will be sweeter. The world to come will be everlasting peace and fellowship with the Father, the Son and those who love their neighbor as themselves.

## *Chapter 56*

This chapter spells out the attitude of the Lord toward inviting the gentiles into the fellowship of His people. Preparation is being made for the entrance of all persons of every status who love God and are willing to keep His commandments.

The chapter also deals with the greed of the leaders of Israel and their self indulgence to the point that they no longer warn the nation of the dangers which are heaping up on every side.

**Isa 56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.**

The command to keep judgment instructs all of the people to hear the will of the Lord and obey it with high respect. Justice has to do with attitudes and behavior toward fellowmen. Men are to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves.

It is our conviction that the salvation and righteousness which are ahead point to the time after the release from Babylonian captivity, with very special emphasis upon the dispensation of the Son of God. At the time of Isaiah's writing there is a great deal of time left before either the release from Babylonian captivity, or the release from sin under the Redeemer. Yet there is a real need for those who will do so to begin the preparation for both of those events.

**Isa 56:2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.**

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The word “blessed” can also be translated as “happy.” “The “man who doeth this” and “the son of man” refer to the same persons. Those who honor God’s commandments and avoid evil are promised a happy and fulfilled life.

The sabbath had been a part of the basic principles of God’s law throughout the Mosaic age. The recipients of Isaiah’s writing were living under that law. During the captivity it would be extremely difficult to keep the sabbath. But they were to do the best they could. After the release, until the coming of Christ there would again be opportunity and responsibility to keep the sabbath. All of this was to point to the greater sabbath, or rest, which would come with the Christian age and even after the final judgment.

It is not correct to say that this applies to the latter days when the law of Moses was nailed to the cross.

Isa 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

The “stranger” is one who was not of the nation of Israel. There were those who made a deliberate choice to join themselves to God’s people after the return from captivity. The foreigner who had made that choice was to be circumcised and allowed to be given full respect as a citizen of the nation. God had not utterly separated the gentiles, regardless of the attitude which the Jews manifested toward these strangers. This was especially true with the coming of the Christian age.

A dry tree is one which bears no fruit. The eunuchs, as spoken of in this place were men who had been castrated and could produce no children. There were times in which

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the eunuchs were not allowed full fellowship with the rest of Israel. That situation was to be halted. These men were also to be honored as of equal value in the sight of the Lord.

**Isa 56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;**

As in the case of the foreigner, the eunuchs were only admitted on the condition that they obey God's will and cherish His covenant.

We can see evidence that eunuchs were given such respect in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip baptized as recorded in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts.

**Isa 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.**

The bearing of sons and daughters was considered a precious privilege in the time of Isaiah, and still is among most people. But, the fact that the eunuch was incapable of producing children did not keep him from a place in the heart of God, if he walked in justice and righteousness. Sons and daughters may be cut off. The spiritual fruit which the eunuchs could bear was more lasting and influential than disobedient children would be.

**Isa 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every**

**one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and  
taketh hold of my covenant;**

As suggested before, the one who deliberately chooses to love God and keep His commandments in any age is welcome to become a part of God's people. Particularly in the Christian age, those of any nation are not only welcomed but are to be reached with the invitation of the gospel of Christ.

**Isa 56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.**

God's holy mountain before the time of Christ was Mount Zion, where the temple of God was located. The holy mountain in the latter days is the church of the Living God. In whatever age one exists God is willing to accept those who bring their offerings and sacrifices and offer them to Him. These sacrifices were at one time bulls and sheep. Today they are the blood of Christ and the living sacrifices which are offered in prayer and others service to Jehovah and His Son.

Everyone who will may come!

**Isa 56:8 The Lord GOD, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.**

The outcasts of Israel would include the scattered who had been released from captivity, as well as the eunuchs mentioned before. The "others" would be those

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who came from all parts of the earth to march for and with the Master.

Isa 56:9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

At this point we come to a related but very different thought. One of the reasons why those things mentioned in the former part of the chapter were being discussed is that Israel was nearing the day when they would be taken into captivity. Both the leaders and the people had neglected to hold the will of God high in their thoughts. Spiritual corruption had made serious inroads into every portion of the nation. God was about to teach the people the disastrous results of such neglect.

The beasts of the field and the forest were invited to feed upon God's disobedient people. Beasts are not always lions and tigers. The scriptures often refer to renegade people as beasts. All one has to do to verify this is to ready the last book of the Bible and see that Babylon is considered a beast.

Isa 56:10 His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Why will these beasts find it so inviting to feed upon Israel? It is because of the lack of alertness on their part to the reality of the danger. Those who should have been watching for invaders were not watching from the walls. They were like sleepy dogs who do not bark because they have been too busy filling themselves upon the blessings which should have been used for the service of the Lord who had provided them.

Isa 56:11 Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

A watchdog is expected to warn when danger is near. These dogs were supposed to be the shepherds of the people of God. They had completely abandoned their assignments. They were far more interested in personal gain than in sacrificial service.

This neglect on the part of those charged with the care of others had brought about such conditions that it would not be long before the wild beasts would begin their feasting. The shepherds failed to understand that they would be responsible for the destruction of the very system which had made their greed possible. They were never satisfied.

In one sense, every Christian should take heed. We are not all elders (shepherds) of God's flock. Yet we are all responsible for identifying dangers, and warning others of those dangers.

Isa 56:12 Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

These self centered sinners were even worse than those who say, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die." They only saw tomorrow as a time when they could become even more drunken. In place of growing spiritually, they were growing more and more wicked.

Chapter 57

Here we have a contrast between the spiritual condition of the righteous and the wicked. The application is particularly made to the mental condition, but the physical is not completely ignored. The wicked have no peace. The righteous are at peace with God, even though earthly trials may even lead to death.

Isa 57:1 The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

The last chapter gave us a picture of the attitude of the wicked, who live in fleshly pleasure and in a drunken stupor think that tomorrow will be even more giddy than today.

During their self serving orgies, they pay no attention to those of righteous character who may well be dying while they continue in their partying. They fail to understand that the departure of the righteous in death delivers them from the horrors which the people will face in the future. The trials of the coming captivity will be bypassed by those who have died in faith.

Isa 57:2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

We have heard much discussion of the state of the dead. Do they go directly into the presence of God and receive their eternal reward, or do they sleep in the grave until the judgment, and then enter into the glorious promises of heaven? We do not propose to use this verse as

support for an immediate entry into the heavenly gates. What we do know is that there is peace for the righteous at the time of death, either in the bed of the grave, or in the presence of the Lord.

Isa 57:3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

While the righteous may look forward to peace, the wicked have a quite different outlook, although they do not have the spiritual insight to foresee it.

The children of the sorceress, the adulterer and the whore are those who allow themselves to be trained by lovers of wickedness. Do not make the mistake of restricting these parents to the feminine gender just because whores and sorceresses are women. The warning applies to males just as it does to females. A generation which follows in the footsteps of spiritually unfaithful ancestors is doomed unless they turn from those paths.

Isa 57:4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood.

The wicked look with mockery at the righteous whom they suppose are missing out on the revelry with which they themselves are committing spiritual suicide. The wide opening of the mouth and sticking out the tongue shows their utter disrespect for the children of God. By acting in this way they are showing that they are descendants of the “father of liars.”

Isa 57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

The righteous are faithful to the Father in heaven. They will not be seduced by lust and pride. They will not deliberately increase their sexual passions while they worship their idols such as Molech. This disgusting conduct goes on everywhere. It may occur in a valley where they can be hidden in clefts of the rocks. It may be out in the open under the shade of a grove of trees.

Then, when children are born to these adulterous unions, there is so little parental love that the children are burned as sacrifices. The valley of Hinnom was particularly known for being a location where these awful sacrifices were made.

The only time that child sacrifice was approved of by the Heavenly Father was when His own Son was nailed to the cross to offer hope to men and women who were penitent of their sins.

Isa 57:6 Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

The Hebrew word which is translated as “smooth” here could also be rendered as “slippery.” That which is slippery cause one to slide. These who poured out drink offerings and meat offerings were backsliding from the commitment they should have been making to Jehovah. The objects of such worship may have been stones which were used to produce idols before which they would bow.

Isa 57:7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

Previously the valleys and the groves of trees had been mentioned as sites where the passions were enflamed. Now we find that the mountain peaks were also used in that way. The bed is the place where sexual union is usually practiced. The activities of the idol worshippers were union with false gods, and also union with prostitutes and whores.

Isa 57:8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.

Some commentators see this verse as saying that the commandments of the Lord had been taken from their place of prominence in the houses, and had been hidden that they might not be a reminder of God's displeasure at their spiritual adultery. But it is also quite possible that the verse is saying the people had filled their houses with porno-graphic materials which would multiply their immoral desires.

In the house, or out of the house, the debauchery went on. In the valleys, in the groves and on the mountaintops. Everywhere a bed could be set up God's people were embracing their false gods, and loving every minute of it.

God's attitude was that men should love the Lord their God, and Him only should they serve.

Isa 57:9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

What king is this that they went to with ointment and perfume that they could debase themselves far and near? We are not told. What we do know here is that some of the kings of Israel were just as wicked as those they were supposed to govern. When the king, the priests and the prophets debase themselves, the immorality will rot the fibre of any people, including God's family.

Isa 57:10 Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

At times the expenditure of energy and sacrifices drained the sinners. The way of the Serpent can be very burdensome. But even when such difficulties were faced, these foolish idolators managed to sum up the strength to go on with their sins. Instead of repenting of their base conduct, they dreamed that it might be better tomorrow. They closed their eyes to that which lay at the end of the journey!

Isa 57:11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

Jehovah now speaks directly to those who have offended Him. He sees it as a very strange thing that those whom He had blessed in the past, and with whom

He had been patient when they disobeyed Him would failed to love and obey Him. They had no reason for their rejection of Him. He had even blessed them when they had no right to such kindness. Their idols had not earned a right to such affection as they were showering upon them.

Isa 57:12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

The Lord was ready to expose their evil works. When this was done, it would be evident that any pretended righteousness was a sham. The works which they were doing were wicked. They had placed themselves in a position where their welfare was about to result in disaster.

Isa 57:13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

The company they had been keeping was not such as would respond when they called for help. When the Babylonians attacked, and they cried out to their false gods for assistance, they would be carried away into captivity like a feather in a tornado. Only emptiness would reply to their cry for aid.

There would be some who remained faithful. As time passed, these would be the ones who would inherit the land. This is a principle which has been true until the present. The righteous have not been forgotten. Amidst the sins of a self-centered world, those who have proven true to their Creator will be the ones who will receive the reward.

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Let the reader determine to be among them when the rewards are distributed. God's holy mountain was Mount Zion in the days of Isaiah. The holy mountain today is the spiritual kingdom built around the New Jerusalem.

**Isa 57:14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.**

A way was to be prepared for those who wished to find the highway of holiness. Jesus Christ is that way. Those who seek the pathway of truth which leads to the throne of the Lord need only to follow Jesus perfect example. Seek and ye shall find.

Those who were mocking the faithful were to get out of the way of those few who were true to their spiritual Husband. He was ready to welcome them with open arms. Even Satan and his angels would find their efforts to destroy the souls of the righteous to no avail. God would make a way which would lead home.

**Isa 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

Jehovah is the Highest of the high. There is none as high as He. His name, and His alone is Holy. He has existed forever. He exists today. He exists eternally. There is a haven for the the faithful which stands above time. That is where God is. And that is where the faithful will be with Him, if they continue that faith until the end.

But let the reader be informed that only those of a contrite heart and a humble spirit will be lifted up to be with Him. It does not come about by wooing the false gods such as Molech or Astarte. The affections must be fastened on those who know they need His love and who have allowed Him to create in them a heart set apart from sin.

**Isa 57:16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.**

God does not intend to be eternally patient with those who have no intention of demonstrating righteous conduct. If He were to apply His wrath to the souls of men in the manner that they deserve, all would meet together in hell. God does not desire that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He did not create the souls of men that they might find themselves in an eternal hell.

That fact will not, however, prevent Him from eliminating the incorrigible by denying them entrance through the gates of heaven.

**Isa 57:17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.**

It is because of the stubborn rebellion of the wicked that they are denied such entrance. The punishment which is administered to men during this earthly journey is God's way of offering correction. Woe unto the one who fails to respond to the divine chastisements. When they go on their wicked way as if He did not exist, there will be nothing left but His wrath.

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Isa 57:18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

If such sinners will hear and be healed, God will be delighted to lead them in the way that they should go. He will give such a one spiritual comfort. Blessed are they that mourn over their sins. God will hear.

Isa 57:19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

The fruit of the lips of those who mourn over their sinful conduct will be peace with their Maker. He will take such a sinsick soul and heal it. The geographical distance will be no obstacle. Those from every point on earth are within reach of God's ear. Some may be found in one land. Some in another. Some may be dark skinned, others light. Some may be Jews and some gentiles. When they show a penitent heart and an humble spirit, He will give them spiritual peace.

Isa 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

The proud sinner will find just the opposite. He or she may revel in sin for a few years on earth. But even then that person will find a conscience which never rests. The inner man will be as agitated as the rolling waves of a stormy sea. The memories of past sins will come to the surface of the mind. If this is not true in the earthly existence, it will be true in the eternal realm. The rich man wished with all his heart that he could return to

warn his brothers in order that they not share the fire of hell with him.

Isa 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

There can be no peace for those who fight God.

Chapter 58

With this chapter Isaiah begins to bear down heavily on hypocrisy in Israel. The people have begun to make a sham of fasts and sabbath days. God did not like it in the time of Isaiah. He did not like it in the time of Jesus criticism of the scribes and Pharisees. He does not like it now. This chapter states His attitude toward it in very clear fashion.

Isa 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

The Lord commanded Isaiah to voice a deep throated warning which could not be ignored. It was to answer some basic question which the people were asking about a lack of response from Him when they called upon Him. The warning was to be sounded out like a warning from the trumpet, or rams horn.

The people were to be told of the things which had offended the Lord and caused Him to ignore their requests. That which stood between Jehovah and the people of Israel was S-I-N.

Isa 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

In the present case it was not as much a matter of neglecting the services of God. In previous chapters the abandonment of Jehovah for false gods had been the topic. This time it is the hypocritical approach they took as they

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went through the ceremonies when they did assemble for worship.

They put on a fine face. They acted just like a nation which loved God and delighted in giving Him their attention. They sought out His instructions by coming together on the sabbath days. They fasted and sat in sackcloth and ashes to prove their dedication.

**Isa 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.**

Why then, if they had so carefully attended to fasting and mourning, did God not protect them from the dangers of invading foreigners and other problems which He could have solved for them? He seemed not even to know of their efforts to get His attention.

His answer was that when they fasted, those fasts turned into searches for pleasure on their part. They even went so far as to pressure those who served them to work like slaves.

**Isa 58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.**

There was nothing wrong with fasting if it was done for the right purpose, and in the right manner. But neither was the case. They were using the fast days as opportunities for contention and confrontation. It even went so far as to include physical contact. Loud and argumentative voices were reaching the ears of the Lord.

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He was not being worshipped. The people were the focus of attention.

We cannot help but wonder what the Lord thinks of the contention which goes on in what is called the Christian world today. Such does not ordinarily come to blows, but it certainly does not show the unity God expects.

Isa 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

The Lord asks an extremely penetrating question to which the answer should have been obvious. Did they truly expect Him to be pleased with their shallow faith as they neglected the weightier matters which needed their attention? Certainly He did not chose to observe such dishonesty.

The bending double and lying dressed in sackcloth on a bed of ashes was not the kind of fast which God chose to see, unless other matters were in order. He proceeded to explain what those other concerns were.

Isa 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

The fast should have been accompanied by a willingness to lift up the needy. It was one thing to put on a show. It was another thing to give up personal satisfactions in order that others might be relieved of very real needs. They needed to cease placing heavy

burdens upon those who served them. They needed to stop treading down the weak. The wickedness which they dealt to others was only an invitation to God to treat them as they treated others.

Isa 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

They were failing to feed the hungry. The outcasts were not cared for. Those who needed clothing to hide their nakedness and keep them warm were not clothed. When even their own parents or relatives were in need they acted as if the need was not there. If they expected God to answer their pleas for Him to help them, they must show that helping others was important to them. Until this concern for others was shown, they need not expect the Lord to care for their own needs.

Isa 58:8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

If they did change their way of looking at their fellowman, they would find that God would lift them up to the kind of full life which they were requesting of Him. They would find that the light of their own righteousness would go ahead of them and the glory of God would protect them from the rear.

Isa 58:9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here

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**I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;**

Then when they fasted and prayed in their sack cloth and ashes, God would answer their cry with the eagerness which they sought.

But the yoke they placed upon others must be removed. The gossiping and finger pointing must be discontinued. In short, they must care about others if they expected Jehovah to care about them.

**Isa 58:10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:**

To draw out the soul to the hungry and afflicted was to give up some of the abundance which they possessed in order that those who had need could be fed and clothed. Fasting was not for the purpose of putting on a demonstration of piety. It was to remind one that others had needs which should not be overlooked.

When such was done, the donor would find that spiritual midnight would be replaced by a glorious light of the noon day sun. (Perhaps the Sun of Righteousness?)

**Isa 58:11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.**

We are reminded of the words written by John the apostle in John 8:32.

*John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

*John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

God is willing and anxious to see men prosper. He will help if they will show that they truly believe in help. Their souls will be guided and fed. The bones are that upon which the body is built. They will be strong. The entire individual will become like a spring of fresh water, refreshing both self and others.

**Isa 58:12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.**

We have a hint here of what the faithful of every generation can do to glorify God. That which has become barren may thrive. Generation after generation may be stronger because of the repairs the righteous can bring about in the foundations of God's house.

**Isa 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:**

The blessings mentioned above can only be enjoyed if those who are pretending to be holy, actually become holy. Their feet must be turned directly around from



making the sabbath a mockery to honoring it as what God intended it to be. It was not intended to be a superficial theatrical performance. It was meant to serve God and fellow man.

We might add that some of the largest congregations of those who call themselves Christians at the present time pay far more attention to what pleases them than what pleases the God of heaven.

**Isa 58:14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

Those who were mistreating the sabbaths and fasts were certainly not delighting in the results of their activities. They were wondering why God was not answering. He told them why and then explained that if they changed their ways He would lift them up and feed them. He could and would feed them with the blessings which had been promised through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The wealth of the promised land would be theirs to enjoy.

## Chapter 59

God is still answering the plea of the people as to why He has not responded to their prayers by removing the threat of invaders and taking away their fear and confusion. He does have an answer. It is not pleasing to their ears, but is as clear as words can make it. When they are ready to turn to Him, He will protect and guide them. The covenant is a two way partnership. He will be their God if they will be His people.

**Isa 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:**

They need not draw the conclusion that God cannot help them. Nor are they to conclude that He is deaf and cannot hear. His arm is able and His ear is wide open. He knows their needs far better than they do. He created them with the power of choice. Nothing would please Him more than for them to choose righteousness.

**Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.**

There are some things God cannot by His very nature do. He cannot approve or encourage sin. When men use their power of choice to walk in the way of the devil, He cannot be a companion to liars and murderers. The gap which separates His people from Himself has been dug by their wicked behavior. There must be a change in their lives before He will change His attitude toward them.



**Isa 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.**

Hands, fingers, lips and tongue have all been placed at the disposal of Satan. They have lied. They have murdered. They show hatred for one another. They act as if the Lord does not exist. How could they expect Him to honor their prayers or guide them when they do not wish to hear Him or accept His guidance.

**Isa 59:4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.**

There is no one among them who cries out against the sin which they seem to love so much. Rather, they lie in their beds at night and conceive sins which can be given birth the next day. They have placed their confidence in greedy power. "Vanity of vanities saith the Lord. All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

**Isa 59:5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.**

It seems that the cockatrice was a very deadly poisonous serpent. When it brought forth, it's eggs poisoned anyone who dared to eat them. The spider wove a web in which other insects which were not careful would find themselves entangled. Just so, these sinful people have brought forth wickedness. They spin webs which catch the innocent that they may feast upon him.

**Isa 59:6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.**

They need not think they can use such webs to hide their sin. That will not happen. Their lives are open and bare to the eyes of the Lord. He is perfectly aware of the evil which they love.

**Isa 59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.**

They do not just happen upon evil. They search it out and run toward it. There is nothing constructive about them. Waste and destruction are multiplied by both their thoughts and their deeds.

If the reader can bear to read more of this distressing wickedness, he might turn to the book of Micah, who lived in the same time period. Micah's description completely agrees with what the Lord is saying through Isaiah.

**Isa 59:8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.**

They have separated themselves so completely from the God of love that they have blinded themselves to the path of peace. Anyone who walks in the crooked paths which they seek out will not know peace. That person will find himself surrounded by violence. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

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Isa 59:9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

The prophet Isaiah now speaks on behalf of the people. The words amount to a confession of the truth of that which God has accused them of.

He admits that they have abandoned proper judgment. They have not shown a desire for justice and judgment. As a result they have found themselves walking in darkness. They do not find the way because it is obscured by their sins. They look for a way out of their distress. They do not find it because they have chosen to ignore the light.

Isa 59:10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

Notice that their groping for the wall is “like the blind.” They do have eyes which could see it they would make use of them. In the midst of the light of God’s revelation, they find themselves as blind as if they lay buried in a coffin.

As I write these words, the land of Palestine is in absolute chaos. Suicide bombers are killing themselves as they attempt to kill those they hate. Every day’s newspaper tells of new atrocities. How different it might be if both Arabs and Jews had accepted the “Light of the world” when He came with the gospel of peace?

Isa 59:11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

The bear roars in anger. The mournful cooing of the dove speaks of sadness. God could provide a way to find both mental and physical satisfaction. Such remedies are far off because the people have loved the lie rather than the truth. The disciples of Christ are expected to seek the truth. When they find and follow truth, they will find freedom. Peace will then attend their souls.

Isa 59:12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

It is not that His people have stumbled and fallen by accident. They have committed one sin after another. They have piled them on top of each other. Such monstrous accumulations of spiritual rot are certainly not hidden from the all seeing eye of the Lord. They cry out so loudly that He could not possibly fail to see and hear them. Their testimony as to the spiritual condition of the people must be dealt with.

Isa 59:13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

Does the reader have a nauseous feeling in the pit of the stomach. I find it depressing to no end to read of such a lack of righteousness in any people. If it is difficult for we mortals to read of these conditions, what must it be like for the perfect God of love and truth? One can hardly wonder that He turned from them is disgust.

Isa 59:14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

On and on the record goes. The first impression of the loyal Christian is to deny the depth of the wickedness. Then, after a bit of meditation, he is reminded that the condemnation which fit Israel at that time is just as true in the present day world.

I read a cartoon this very morning which was supposed to be humorous. A politician was telling a prospective voter that the government was full of greed, corruption and dishonesty. The voter responded by asking him if he would fight these things if elected to office. His reply was, "No, I want to join them." That is hardly funny.

Isa 59:15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

Things had gotten so bad that the one who decided to separate himself from the hideous situation in Isaiah's day would find himself attacked by those who were profiting by their sinfulness.

God was so painfully aware of all the lack of love and justice among His people that He decided to take personal action. If no man was willing to stand up for truth, He would do what they would not.

Isa 59:16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Isaiah himself must have wondered, along with God, that no one among the people was both willing and capable of bridging the gap between the Lord and Israel. Isaiah was an outstandingly faithful spokesman of truth. Yet he had classed himself with others who had need of help.

This verse seems confusing at first. Whose arm brought salvation to whom? Whose righteousness sustained whom? We have "He", "Him", "His" and "Him." May we suggest that the Him whose arm brought salvation was God through Jesus Christ, and that the him to whom it was brought was mankind who needed an intercessor. The second pair of pronouns would then follow the first pair. It was the righteousness of God through Christ that sustained men who were willing to turn from sin and accept that salvation and righteousness.

Isa 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

Jesus Christ came to the aid of man when man was in great danger. He put on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation. Since vengeance does not belong unto men God put on that garment as well as the cloke of zeal. He offered Himself as the captain of man's salvation to oppose the awful darts of the Serpent and his angels. God actually gave His life that sinners might be redeemed from spiritual death.

As a part of the body of Christ today, each Christian is expected to put on similar clothing and participate in the great war which began in Eden and still continues.

Isa 59:18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense

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**to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense.**

Man was to be treated as he asked to be. If he loved fury he would receive it. Those who proved themselves to be enemies and adversaries would receive the proper payment for their rebellion. To the farthest reaches of the earth God's actions would command attention.

**Isa 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.**

The time would come when from the east to the west, the entire human population would come to understand that Satan was not about to be given free reign in the affairs of those whom God had created and whom He loved.

When Satan and those who had dedicated themselves to his army of evil attempted to overwhelm mankind like a flood, they would find themselves opposed by the Spirit of God who would lead the way as the soldiers of the Lord resisted that flood.

**Isa 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.**

There is but One Redeemer for mankind. A redeemer was known to be one who paid a ransom for a kinsman who was enslaved for debt. That is precisely what God did through His Son. Every man who wishes to be free of the enslavement by the devil will find the Son of God to have offered His own life as a ransom for many.

**Isa 59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.**

The Lord God now makes a promise. The Spirit which Christ demonstrated and the words which the Redeemer spoke through that Spirit were not to return unto Him void. They would move across the earth and ring down through time. The new creatures in Christ would pass on the truth spoken by the Saviour until the end of the ages.

## Chapter 60

The change from gloom to glory continues in chapter sixty with a description of multitudes coming to the New Zion. This new city is in great contrast with the old city of Jerusalem. The fleshly Jew was the primary citizen of the old city. The descendants of Abraham by faith, plus the gentiles from every quarter of the earth populate the new spiritual city.

It is necessary to force one's self to continue at times during the study of the book of Isaiah. Much of it depicts darkness. Sorrow and grief are found on every side. How different it is as we move into these latter chapters. The reader is urged to compare the description of the New city which comes down out of heaven in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation with the truths found in this one.

**Isa 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.**

Remember that this material was written by Isaiah in the years of the reign of Manasseh, the most wicked king of Israel. The nation was moving toward Babylonian captivity. There was a need for warning, and also a need for endurance throughout that captivity. God had provided both the warning and the reason for enduring as Isaiah pointed these out to Israel.

This verse is written in what we have referred to as the "prophetic past." That which is to come is described as if it had already come to pass. A great light due to the glory of God has begun to shine upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. That Light was to be the "Sun of Righteousness" which would come with healing in His wings. (Mal. 4:1)

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Mal 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The Sun of Righteousness was no less than the “Son of God.”

Isa 60:2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Most of the inhabitable portion of the earth had been filled by the time of the coming of Jesus Christ. But in the midst of such a mass of people, spiritual darkness covered the nations. Both Jew and Gentile had rejected the plan of God. The gentiles had been excluded by the law of Moses. The Jew had become proud and ritualistic.

In the midst of this darkness the God of heaven would shine forth. His glory would be demonstrated to all men. When this was done, the Way would be opened to all men who would open their eyes to the beauty of holiness.

Isa 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The Light of the World would attract many powerful leaders of the nations. The gentiles would see the need for moving from the darkness of sin to the spiritual clarity of the Word who became flesh. None would be excluded who truly wished to become a part of the new day.

Isa 60:4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they

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**come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.**

Isaiah's hearers and readers were to open their eyes and look around in every direction. When they did that they would enjoy a sight which was most astounding. People would be moving toward the new city from everywhere. Some of the citizens would come from very far away. Others would be as close by as the young child who rode on the hip of it's mother.

Who was it that the multitudes would gather around? It was to be the remnant of the Jews who had the privilege of hearing and believing in the first invitation to become a part of the church of Christ. It would be a proud day for the Jew, and would later become an even greater source of joy when he saw the gentiles entering into that glorious holy mountain of God.

**Isa 60:5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.**

What was it that the Jew would see? It was the light of Christ. They would then come together in praise of the divine glory. Their hearts would overflow with joy when they saw the vast numbers of Gentiles who were to be converted to His body.

We need to note that the text says these Gentiles would be converted to "thee." Are they converted to Christ, or are they converted to the Jews? The answer is that those Jews who were converted to Christ made up the new city. They had been baptized into the body of Christ and the Gentiles would be merging with them in that body.

**Isa 60:6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.**

The converts would come by land from nations which had been enemies of the Jews in days past. Those mentioned in this verse and the next were largely descendants of Abraham by Keturah rather than Sarah.

**Isa 60:7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.**

The most unlikely of the nations to combine their efforts with the Jews would do just that. And what is more, they would be accepted as they offer themselves as citizens in the new and glorious city of God.

**Isa 60:8 Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?**

The Jews of Isaiah's day were promised that the time would come when one could look into up into the sky, across the land, and out into the sea, and they would be able to see those coming who were attracted by the glory of God. Like homing pigeons, they would recognize the spiritual city as the place where they wished to settle.

**Isa 60:9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from**

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far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Tarshish was a city in the far off land of what we now call Spain. Men would come from places far across the sea and would bring wealth with them. Actually the wealth of a city is primarily the character of the citizens who make it up. These prospective citizens of the new Zion would offer all they have to the glory of God because He had first glorified them.

Isa 60:10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

God's people are living stones which make up the walls of His great city. The strangers are those outside the fold of the Jews. Gentile kings would offer their support to help glorify the New Zion. All this would take place because of respect for the Light of the Lord which spread abroad in every direction.

Isa 60:11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

The entrances to the city would ever be open to those who genuinely wished to come in. This may seem strange that the city would have walls which would provide safety to those inside, but would always have it's gates open. It is not as strange as it might seem. The nations who did not intend to help glorify the name of the Lord would

not wish to enter the gates. They would find nothing inside which they cherished. The walls of salvation would protect the insiders.

Isa 60:12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

Jesus said, “Unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” Nation after nation has found out the hard way that rejection of the blessings offered through the “Sun of Righteousness” leads to destruction. We have Greece, Rome Babylon, Russia, Germany and others as examples of this truth.

Nations which have accepted the offer of blessing from God for those who honor His Word have seen far greater peace and tranquility. This presents a clear warning that England and the United States of America are placing themselves in extreme danger by allowing spiritual rot to eat away at their hearts.

Isa 60:13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

Beauty of Lebanon would be made available to the holy city. The throne of God would rest within it and the spiritual beauty of it would cause men to offer the best they have. To polish it's glory.

Isa 60:14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee;

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**The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.**

Many of the descendants of those who had in the past reviled God's people, persecuting them intensely, would come bending the knee before them. They would recognize this city (or people) to be worthy of the respect due to the Lord of all. This would be the New Zion, the New Jerusalem, the city ruled by the True Ruler of the universe.

**Isa 60:15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.**

The Jews had been taken out of the old city of Jerusalem and deposited in Babylon. The city had been left desolate. But now those who accepted the Son of God as the Light of the world would become the foundation for the new city which would bring joy to them for some two thousand years or more.

**Isa 60:16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.**

This new and glorious city would begin with a small core of Jews, Jesus Christ and twelve apostles. It would begin to grow by receiving nourishment from the Gentiles who were glad to offer themselves and their possessions to bring about it's expansion. Powerful rulers of Gentile nations would add their riches to that of the Jews.

**Isa 60:17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.**

Gold is more valuable than brass. Silver is more valuable than iron. As the various powers offer their blessing to the city, it becomes greater and more precious.

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament repeatedly speaks of that which is better. There is a better covenant, a better priesthood, etc.

**Isa 60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.**

It is impossible to find a time in history since the Jews settled in Canaan that there has not been violence and destruction. The Arabs and the Jews have fought continually. The Assyrians and the Babylonians wrought violence and bloodshed. The city of which Isaiah spoke must be something other than earthly Jerusalem. It can only be the church of our Lord and Saviour. In the spiritual city of God the walls are built up of salvation. The gates are entered by praising divine glory.

**Isa 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.**

Since this is a spiritual city rather than one made up of material objects, it does not depend upon the sun or



the moon to provide the light which it needs. The Lord is a light which does not ever pass below the horizon in this wondrous realm.

**Isa 60:20 Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.**

The darkness would never again cover the land. The name Jerusalem means abode of peace. Violence and spiritual conflict will be removed. Joy will be the order of the day, and there shall be no night there.

**Isa 60:21 Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.**

How can it be that an entire city will be righteous, without a single person spotted with sin? It will be a result of the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb. God has planted a branch which is to grow into something far more impressive. As it grows it will spread His glory far and wide. The only way one can miss it is to close the heart and the eyes. That plan of action will plunge one first into darkness, and then into the fire of hell.

**Isa 60:22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.**

The increase of the city will be a thousand fold. One of these faithful citizens will reach out to several. These will contact others until that which began as a small core

of Christ and His apostles will have grown to millions.

These changes will take place when the Lord knows the time is right. He has been preparing for it from the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden. He will act when the proper preparation has been made.

## Chapter 61

The responsibilities of the Messiah are pointed out in the present chapter. He will prepare a people for wondrous blessings which are to come upon those who have spiritual needs and recognize that He will provide the answer to those needs. A covenant is to be made possible between God and man. By promoting that covenant, the glory of both God and His people are to be vastly improved.

**Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;**

There is no question in the minds of those who have confidence in the truth of the new testament scriptures that these first verses are the words of the Christ. He had grown up in the village of Nazareth and was accustomed to synagogue worship service. Luke records that one day He entered into the synagogue and was given the book of Isaiah to read from. He read the very words we have before us as this chapter begins. Then He closed the book and declared that these words applied to Him and that they were being fulfilled at that time.

*Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

*Luke 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,*

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Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Luke 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Luke 4:21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Jesus had been anointed by His Father to accomplish a number of things. Anointment had been brought about through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the time of his baptism.

The responsibilities are listed in clear fashion.

1. He was to preach good tidings to the meek.

This would be the news that the meek would inherit the earth. The proud had taken advantage of the meek and humble. The new Way would assure that this would be reversed under the Messiah.

2. He was to bind up the broken hearted.

Those whose lives had been broken to pieces were to find themselves made whole. The Great Physician would heal them.

3. He would proclaim liberty to captives and release them from their prison.

These were persons who had fallen into the condemnation of the devil. He had captured them in the

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web of lust, pride and lies. We are not talking about jails with steel bars. We are promised that liberty is available for those who place their lives in the hand of the Son of God.

**Isa 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;**

4. He was to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The year of the jubilee under the Mosaic age was a year in which those who had been held as bondservants were to be freed from their masters. Jesus would announce an even greater jubilee, when men and women were to be freed from Satan.

But not only was the Messiah to proclaim this release for those who would receive it. The other side of the picture was that He would announce the day of vengeance of God upon those who had abused others. This would be comforting to all of those who were saddened by the overbearance of Satan and his servants.

**Isa 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.**

Sometimes the mourning was due to death of loved ones, or other devastating happenings like disease. When such grief came it was common for the one who was grieving to have ashes placed upon the head. The Messiah was to exchange the ugliness of the ashes for the oil of joy. Oil was placed upon one when there was reason for much happiness.

These assisted persons would then become so strong in faith that they would be like trees planted by rivers of waters. They would be difficult to uproot. Their new beauty would reflect the glory of God in the change that took place.

**Isa 61:4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.**

When the Persians allowed the Israelites to return to Canaan, they actually helped them to build back large portions of that which had been laid in ruins during the captivity. However, this verse is far deeper than that. The entire earth has been wasted and laid in spiritual ruins by generations of those who saw no reason to honor the will of God.

Under the leadership of the coming Messiah, this would be reversed. The spiritual desolation which had swept over the entire world would be exposed to the constructive influence of the Word of God. Where the temple of old had been turned into shambles, the new spiritual temple of God (the church) would rise to the glory of it's builder and maker.

**Isa 61:5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.**

The strangers were of course the Gentiles who decided to become a part of the vineyard of the Lord. This verse does not say the Jews would no longer work in the vineyard of the Lord. It merely asserts that Gentiles would join in that work.



**Isa 61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.**

The Jews who believed would feast upon many blessings as a result of the entrance of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of the Lord. They would be known as God's Ministers. They would carry the name of Priest. Again, this would not exclude the Gentiles from both of these callings. Every true citizen of the Kingdom of God is expected to be a minister to the needs of others, both within the kingdom, and outside. Every true citizen of the Kingdom of God is expected to be priest in the sense that he or she offers themselves as a living sacrifice before the altar of the Lord.

**Isa 61:7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.**

The shame and confusion which had been heaped upon the Jews by their enemies, would now be removed and replaced by a double portion of continuing blessedness. As the Jew and the Gentile were to be joined together in the one body of the Christ, both would find joy which had not been known by either in the past.

**Isa 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.**

God is much displeased by the actions of those who take advantage of others. When men come before His

altar to offer gifts, He does not want those gifts to be that which has been forcefully taken from those who are weaker. He loves those who judge righteous judgment. He will guide them in the paths of truth. He will be their God as long as they will dedicate their lives to the building up of His house.

**Isa 61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.**

Seed is that which springs up in plants which bear fruit. Those early Jews who accepted the gospel call, such as the apostles and the martyrs who lost their lives at the hands of unbelievers, are in these later days reknowned for their labors. Those who have come to the Messiah through the writings of the apostles can proudly call off the names of those spiritual heroes. Those who convert others to Christianity are making spiritual Jews out of spiritual Gentiles. These whom we now call Christians are seed which the Lord has planted. Seed produces new plants which in turn spread the seed as the gospel marches on to the ends of the earth.

**Isa 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**

Men need not sit lay on sackcloth and pour ashes upon their head in grief over a sinful world. Everyone who will may put on the clothing befitting a bride or a bride-groom.

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A marriage with Christ is worthy of spiritual adornments which would put to shame the sparkling diamonds and tuxedos which proclaim the joy of a fleshly union.

Isa 61:11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Fertile ground produces luxurious plants. The garden of the Lord is fertile beyond comparison. Seed sown in that garden will grow in healthy fashion. The fruit of such planting will be righteousness and praise to He who takes great pleasure in the health and happiness of His vineyard.

Chapter 62

Previously we have seen the need for a messenger of salvation. We will now be given a glimpse of the changes which will take place when that Messiah appears. The attention of the entire world will be called to these offered blessings.

Isa 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

Zion was the elevation upon which Jerusalem was situated. Both Zion and Jerusalem were types of the new creation which Christ was to bring into being as a result of His ministry. God the Father had waited until the time was ripe for His action. That time was still several centuries ahead, but He wished to let His people know that He had not forgotten His promises. He would see that salvation was held forth to those who would receive it gladly.

The righteousness which would appear would shine forth like a lamp illuminating the spiritual darkness.

Isa 62:2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

This light would not be restricted to the fleshly descendants of Abraham. The Gentile world would see it. Even the kings of the earth would be compelled to give it their attention. The citizens of this glorious new city of God would be so different they would be called by a "New Name."

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That new name is “Christian.” There are also other names which were used for these Christians, such as disciples and saints, but the name Christian is obviously the one predicted in this verse. The disciples were first called “Christians” at Antioch. There was to be no racial distinction such as Jew and Gentile within the New City of God. All would be equal in Christ Jesus.

**Isa 62:3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.**

This crown of glory was not on the head of the Lord. It was in his hand. The glistening beauty of righteousness was to be the work of God’s hand. No man could bring it about. Certainly men were to be utilized in the transformation, but it was the power of God which gave it glory.

**Isa 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.**

The earthly city of Jerusalem had been forsaken several times in the course of history. As the Jews were disobedient, God allowed them to be removed from that city and enemies gained control of it. That was to change. The new spiritual city of God would never be forsaken. The word “Hephzibah” means delightful. The word “Beulah” means married. The Christian hymn which thanks God for Beulah Land is giving Him praise for this new creation brought about by our Lord. It is intended to give God pleasure and it is to be to Him as a bride.

**Isa 62:5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**

A young man looks forward to marrying a beautiful virgin wife. God looked forward to doing the same on a much grander basis. Man could best understand the feelings of God toward the church by comparing it to the tender love a bridegroom holds for his new bride.

There is a question which must be considered. If the bride is the new city, and the sons of the new city will marry her, this seems as if the sons of the bride are to marry their mother. This is not a valid view of the situation. The sons will be those who come after the marriage of the church with her Lord. The type breaks down as the Lord and His bride bear children who then wish to be joined to the body of Christ.

**Isa 62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,**

There would be a need for careful protection of this splendorous new city. God would see that watchmen were given responsibility for noting any danger of invaders. These elders of the church were to be constantly alert for doctrines and behavior which would destroy that which was so precious to both the Father and the Son.

**Isa 62:7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.**

These watchmen, as well as other citizens of the city were to cry out to others of the glory of the Ruler of this

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city. They were never to cease pleading with God to keep His promises. This does not mean God might forget what He had promised. It means that those who had received some of those blessings would be so grateful they would forever ask for whatever He might have in store.

This would result in all of mankind hearing of the offered salvation through the Messiah. When men ask the Lord for His loving grace, He will demonstrate it to both those who receive it, and also those who observe it in action. The city of God was to be praised from one end of the earth to the other.

Isa 62:8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:

God has sworn by His own name, supported by the power of His right hand, that His people will not have the result of their spiritual labors stolen from them. The corn mentioned here is far more than just kernels off an ear. It includes all of the spiritual food and drink which comes with entry into the new Jerusalem.

May we suggest that the latter part of the eighth chapter of Romans deals with this security of the children of God. Nothing is powerful enough to separate them from the protection of His right arm.

Isa 62:9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

Those who work in the vineyard of the Lord will find that their sowing, cultivating and reaping is not in vain.

They will enjoy this harvest as they feast together in the fellowship of the saints.

Isa 62:10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

What does it mean to go through the gates and prepare a highway for the people? This is what Jesus our Lord was thinking when he spoke those last words to His disciples and said to go and preach the gospel to every creature. It is a pleasant assignment to assist in building this highway of holiness. It is a labor of love. That which sounds like heavy labor, such as gathering stones and laying them together to make a way for others to pass, is quite in contrast with inmates on the road gang who sweat under the commanding eye of a prison guard.

The standard is best thought of in terms of national flags. They are placed in prominent positions where all can see them and serve under them. The citizens of Zion are to present a standard to the world which will inspire them to march under that standard.

Isa 62:11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Yes, the Lord is being proclaimed unto the end of the world, but much of that proclaiming is done through the lips and actions of those who serve Him. Those who will listen approvingly will find that they have been released from the bondage of sin. There will be a reward during this earthly life. This will then be followed by an even

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greater reward when the trials and tribulations of this life have ended and the faithful have been caught up to be together with Him eternally.

**Isa 62:12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.**

Those who hear and obey the commandment of the Lord will be known by the new name of “Christian.” But, they will also be called by other designations. They are the “Holy people.” They are the “Redeemed” of the Lord. They are the “Sought out.” They make up a city which will never be forsaken. It’s light will shine for ever and ever, both on earth and in heaven.

## Chapter 63

Some have felt that this sixty-third chapter is out of place. They see a lack of connection between the material preceding and following it. This is not the case. God had been explaining that He had both friends and enemies on the earth. The friends would be led in paths of righteousness. The obstinate and rebellious would be punished for their opposition. In this chapter He faces the disagreeable task of being more specific in the matter of punishment. After having viewed the pleasantness of the last few chapters, this is an unwelcome contrast.

**Isa 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.**

Someone was coming from the land of Edom. He is glorious in strength. He wears the robes of majesty. He is the One who speaks in righteousness. He is the One who has the power of salvation.

We must remember that Edom was an enemy of the Lord's people from the time that Esau and Jacob parted ways. When the Israelites desired to move into the promised land from the south, Edom refused permission to cross their territory. They joined forces with the opponents of Israel repeatedly.

In this chapter they are made to stand for those who fight against the plans of Jehovah. Bozrah was an important city in Edom. Some believe it to have been the capitol of the land at one time.



**Isa 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?**

A question is asked concerning this one who comes out of Edom. Why are His majestic garments so red. They look as red as the clothing of those who trample the grapes in the winepresses. This was the means of separating the juice from the pulp of the grapes in that day. There were two vats, one above the other. The one who was treading the grapes did so in the upper vat. The expelled juice then flowed down into the lower vat. In the process, the clothing of the one treading the grapes became as red as blood.

**Isa 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.**

The reply to the question was that this One coming from Bozrah in Edom had been treading on the Edomites as enemies of God. He is a longsuffering God, yet a time comes when His longsuffering comes to an end and He becomes angry and furious with those who will not cease their opposition. His wrath will then be poured out on the evil doers as the grapes are crushed in the winepress.

The reason that His garments are stained is that the blood of His enemies has been spattered on them. Note that the blood is not that of the one treading the enemy. It is that of the enemy. It is not necessary that we see Christ as the avenger here. It may well be that the avenger is the Father. "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord. I will repay."

**Isa 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.**

It was inevitable that this vengeance be taken sooner or later. Evil will be punished when it is clear that further patience is useless. The words “day” and “year” are both used in the verse. This may or may not be significant. The truth being taught is that there will be a time of recompense for evil. That time had arrived for the Edomites.

**Isa 63:5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.**

Because there are no perfectly righteous persons on this earth, there was none else who could bring salvation. It would have been reasonable to think that out of millions and millions of persons, there might be one who was absolutely righteous. There was not a one. Since there was none other who was qualified to remedy the situation, the Divine arm was to be brought to bear. God’s own anger would be poured out upon His opponents.

May the reader not make the mistake of thinking these words have reference only to a rebellious land to the south of Canaan. Edom is typical of the entire army of Satan. It stands in much the same position as does Babylon in the last chapters of the book of Revelation.

**Isa 63:6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.**

The “I” in verse six is God. These enemies of righteousness have been bloodthirsty. He will therefore

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give them their own blood to drink until they become drunken and ready to fall to the ground.

Isa 63:7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Now the “I” is the prophet Isaiah. He finds it necessary to point out that God is not vicious in punishing His enemies. If Israel will pause to recall the many blessings which had been bestowed upon them in past days, they would see that God does support His people when they respect Him.

Even so, if His own people turn against Him they will find cursings instead of blessings. They need to take the warning to heart as they see what happened to Edom. If they will be His people, He will be their God.

Isa 63:8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

Some centuries after Isaiah wrote these words, God’s people were captivated and served seventy years in Babylon. They had become idolatrous. After all He had done for them it would seem that His own people would react in truth and faith. He desired that this might be accomplished. Sadly, they continued in the way of lies and found themselves trampled in God’s winepress.

Isa 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his

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**love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.**

God did not enjoy punishing either Israel or the Edomites. He had been with them through the wilderness wanderings. He would bring them out of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. He did not want them to hurt any more than an earthly parent enjoys seeing a spanked child cry. Sometimes, however, spanking the child saves later grief.

**Isa 63:10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.**

The Holy Spirit of God is the revealer of God's will. He is also the power of God. When God's people have been presented with the truth of God, fighting against that truth will bring down the power of the Spirit upon that people. It is a most unhealthy course of action to set one's self up as God's opponent. It is best not to grieve the Spirit and fight against Him.

**Isa 63:11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?**

Isaiah brought the memories of God's help before the readers. Did they remember how God had allowed them to pass through the midst of the Red Sea? He had shepherded Israel by placing His Holy Spirit within Moses. Israel need not worry about facing the wrath of God if they followed His guidance.

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Isa 63:12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

Through the power of the Spirit Moses was able to bring about the dividing of the water of the Sea. As a result, Moses is known today, and will be known to the end of the world as a leader for God and His people.

Isa 63:13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

A horse that was familiar with the dangers of the wilderness could bring it's rider safely through every threat. God knew how to bring the Israelites through the Sea and then lead them safely to the land of Canaan. All of this did not happen by accident. It was due to the concern of God for His own.

Isa 63:14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

We are presented a picture of an animal finding itself in need of guidance from the desolate mountain top down to luscious pastures in the valley below. God's Spirit had done the same with Israel as He led them to the land of promise. From such experiences Israel should be able to see that God would not tread the faithful in the winepress. He will give them rest and peace.

Isa 63:15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding

of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

Since God has shown Himself to be a friend of the righteous in the past, Isaiah calls upon Him to show His mercy to Israel in both the present and the future. Surely He sees and knows their burdens, and will respond to their needs.

Isa 63:16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

Abraham was long gone. He could not help them in the time of Isaiah. Moses was also dead. He could not help. But, God is everlasting. His promises are to remain forever. He is the only One who can redeem men from the clutches and lies of the Serpent.

Isa 63:17 O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

It seemed to Isaiah as if God had abandoned His people and left them to find their own way. They had hardened their hearts as a result of not having seen God's leadership. Would He not let them know of His love for them? They were in serious danger of being conquered by invaders. If that happened, they would be separated from the inheritance which they had enjoyed for a time.

Isa 63:18 The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

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It seemed to Israel that they had only been allowed to live in Canaan for a brief time. They had expected to inhabit it forever. Already the enemies had defiled the place of worship. They had struck fear into the hearts of Israel. The plea was that God once again intervene in the affairs of both His friends and His enemies. How long O Lord before the blessings and the cursings are to be placed upon the proper recipients?

**Isa 63:19 We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.**

The prayer is that Israel was a very special people over whom God had ruled and called by His own Holy name. These nations who were threatening to overwhelm them had never received the promises which His own people had received. The plan for a coming Messiah out of the chosen people would need God's Spirit to lead them to that new day.

## Chapter 64

Isaiah continues his prayer on behalf of the remnant of Israel who are relatively faithful when compared to large numbers who no longer believe in the power of prayer.

**Isa 64:1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,**

He pleads with the Lord that He will break through that barrier which prevents man from seeing Him and appear as He once did on Mount Sinai. At that time the mountain quaked and fire could be seen in the heavens. If only God would repeat those wondrous events perhaps Israel's enemies would turn back from afflicting them.

**Isa 64:2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!**

The heat and the fire would cause those who opposed God's people to realize the power which supported them. How could the adversaries help but cease their threatenings when faced with such a foe?

**Isa 64:3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.**

When the awesome plagues were sent upon the Egyptians to bring about the release of Israel from slavery in that country, and when the law was given on Sinai all nations knew Israel's God was more powerful than all of the nations on earth combined.

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Isa 64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Neither in the days of delivery from Egypt, or at any other time had mankind ever heard or seen such displays of supernatural energy. That same power had laid up blessings in the future which were awaiting those who proved faithful. To wait for God is to be patient in service with confidence that He will provide rewards greater than man's greatest imaginations.

Isa 64:5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

Isaiah declares that Jehovah is ready and willing to meet those who do not forget His commandments and who live in accordance with them.

There is a serious difficulty here. That difficulty is that Israel has not worked righteousness and remembered the commandments. They have continued in sin. This type of confession is the sort of thing God reacts to in a positive manner. Confession of sin and the hearty, sincere promise to walk in a more pure manner have often times resulted in forgiveness.

Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Neither Israel of old, nor present day Christians

may make the claim of being righteous. We have sin stains upon our souls which can only be removed by the power and purity of one who is absolutely righteous.

The statement that our stained righteousness is as filthy rags is a very vivid example. The original language could well be interpreted as the cloths used by a woman during her monthly period.

If God were to appear and destroy all unrighteousness, every man or woman alive would be swept away like leaves blown away in the wind. The only hope is that God will be gracious to penitent sinners.

Isa 64:7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Did Israel quit calling upon the Lord because He did not seem to respond to their prayers. Or did the Lord not hear their prayers because of their sinful behavior? It seems that a vicious circle had been established.

The prayer leaves no doubt that the one praying is sincerely confessing serious sins on the part of the people. Were these sins so terrible that when God deals with them they will be considered as enemies? If so, this would mean absolute horror.

Isa 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

The father is the one who gives life to his children. God had brought the nation of Israel into being. They



were not a result of their own efforts. And then, when they were in existence, God had every right to form them into what He chose.

There was a problem with this potter and clay illustration. Clay is to be readily molded in the hand of the potter. Israel had not allowed themselves to be made into an honorable vessel. Read the words of Jeremiah concerning honorable and dishonorable vessels. (Jer. 18:1-4)

Jer 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Jer 18:2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Jer 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

Jer 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Also note the words of Paul in Romans 9:21-22.

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Rom 9:22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Isa 64:9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

Even though Israel had sinned seriously Isaiah pleads that the Lord will not cast them off forever. They deserve to be punished, but will God not consider that, in a very special way, they are His people.

Isa 64:10 Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

The cities of which they were so proud when they had moved into the land were headed for desolation. Even that special city where God had allowed a house of worship and praise to Him was among the targets.

Isa 64:11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

The words here are in what is called the prophetic past. The events are so certain to come to pass that they may be spoken of as having taken place. The beautiful temple was to be burned and the treasures would be destroyed or removed. Would God act to prevent this?

Isa 64:12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

The present prayer had presented a number of reasons why it was thought God might be merciful toward those who were His children and who were the works of His own hands. They accepted the fact that they were due some degree of punishment, but perhaps merely a sore affliction would suffice to correct them. This would allow the nations to see that God was not through with His promise to Abraham that the world might be blessed through his seed.

Chapter 65

This commentator has been reflecting upon a new heaven and a new earth for many years. At the age of twelve rheumatic fever struck. I was instructed by my physician to take bed rest for six months, and only to get out of bed to use the bathroom or to eat. There was a heart murmur which could quickly turn into a very serious condition if not handled carefully.

I must admit that some wakeful nights were occupied in wondering what it would be like to die. The passages in the book of Revelation related to the new heaven and earth were read and pondered.

At that time I concluded that I did not know all I would like to know about God's plans for the future of mankind. I have not changed that conclusion through the next sixty-three years. I feel less qualified to make comments on these last two chapters of Isaiah than almost any other chapters in the Word of God. God has stated that His thoughts are higher than my thoughts. Yet I feel that He expects you and me to reach toward heaven with all of our might and all of our mind.

I recently asked a very capable preacher of the gospel whether certain differences of view with respect to the Holy Spirit would possibly stand in the way of our cooperation in spiritual matters. He gave me an answer I will long remember. He said, "I do not think they will. There are many things I do not know about spirits." That is precisely the way I feel about the nature of the spiritual creation. I will do the best I can.

Isa 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

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This chapter begins with words which are quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 10:20-21.

*Rom 10:20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

*Rom 10:21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

As Paul applied it, the passage pointed to the contrast between the way the Lord had dealt with the Jews and the Gentiles. He had made a promise to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob that the seed of Abraham was to become a very special nation in His eyes.

The Jews had experienced a close relationship with the Lord through many centuries. He had led them from being a family to being a nation. He had carefully cultivated that nation and poured out both material and spiritual blessings upon it. Their response to such loving care was to turn to the worship of idols as an unfaithful wife might divide her attentions between her husband and a number of hated rivals.

The Gentiles had not experienced that close relationship. Yet when the invitation to share in the family of God was extended to the Gentile world, large numbers of these strangers believed and were glad to call Him Father.

**Isa 65:2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;**

The chapter previous to this one had shown the Jews pleading with God to demonstrate His concern for them

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as He had done in the past. He had led them when they needed a Shepherd. He had defended them when they were threatened. Now it seemed that danger from other nations was just as real as it had been in those past years. Why was God not letting His power be known to both the Jews and their enemies. Had He disowned them?

God is answering their inquiry in this present chapter. He certainly had every right to disown them. They had insulted Him by turning away from His instructions. They walked in their own ways and openly mocked His will.

Isa 65:3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

He then proceeded to enumerate some of the insults which they had strutted before Him. These were not being done in sly fashion. They were brazen and bold.

They had sacrificed in the gardens which had been devoted to false gods. They had burned incense, upon altars of brick. Incense was normally associated with prayers. This would mean God's peculiar people had adored His rivals, and had done so on altars built with man made brick rather than with unhewn stones which He had commanded to be used for His own altars.

Isa 65:4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

The graves and the monuments would be the closest approach living humans could make to corresponding with the dead. It was not more pleasing to Him for His people to commune with the dead than it was for them to worship idols.

They had offered pork in their sacrifices. This was also a forbidden action. The broth which is spoken of here seems to have been remains of various unclean animals which they had been forbidden as food.

Isa 65:5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Then, when others made an attempt to associate religiously with these sinners, they declared themselves to be “holier than thou.” They were haughty over that for which they should have been ashamed.

Smoke can be very irritating to the nostrils. This is especially true when it comes off a garbage dump. Those who were offering up such sacrifices were bringing on themselves the wrath of the Only God they should have been honoring.

Isa 65:6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

God had not failed to make it plain that He expected His will to be kept. The Jews did not have the excuse that they were ignorant of divine instructions. He had declared that such rebellious deeds would be dealt with. If His people insisted on mocking Him, they would be faced with the consequences

Isa 65:7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

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Nor was this something new in the time of Isaiah. Such things had been going on for a number of generations. By the time the sins of their fathers, and the sins of the present generation were added together, divine action was called for. Upon the very high places where one could most easily recognize the glory of the Creator, they had offered their mockery.

**Isa 65:8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.**

The Lord sometimes spoke of His people as being a vineyard. He uses that figure now. They have wondered if he no longer cared enough about them to work wonders as He had when plagues were sent upon Pharaoh and his people. His answer was that He would not forget that faithful remnant who could produce seed for a new order.

If one were harvesting grapes and found a cluster of fine grapes in the midst of a vast number of rotten ones, he would not cast out the good grapes along with those which were not worth gathering. Thus God would not destroy all of Israel. He would save the remnant to produce a seed for the future.

**Isa 65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.**

That faithful remnant would be carefully guarded and would be used in the future plans for all of mankind. They would inherit God's mountains. They would come

from the seed of Jacob and from the land of Judah, but He speaks of His elect and His servants. This leads us to suspect some followers, not of fleshly Judaism, would elect to become faithful to Him. They would be welcome to become a part of this new creation.

The mountains mentioned here may be spiritual power concentrations. Much of what is presented from this point on fits a spiritual scene better than a material one.

**Isa 65:10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.**

No, the Lord had not forgotten those who truly respected Him. They would receive a new earth which was created particularly for them. They would find prosperity for their livestock and for themselves. Sharon was a fertile plain which was capable of producing many comforts of life. This Sharon was the same. The faithful would be blessed.

**Isa 65:11 But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.**

Large numbers of the Jews had forsaken their covenant with Him. They cared little about true worship and service. They chose to number themselves with the troop which offered their lives in service to false gods, made with men's hands.

**Isa 65:12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter:**

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because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

When God finished numbering them it would more closely resemble a butcher shop than a worship assembly. Rather than bowing down before idols, they would find themselves bowing down before the very slaughter which they were pleading that He protect them from by supernatural wonders.

They had not answered when He called. They had blasphemed His holy name, and had done so in a mocking attitude.

Isa 65:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

A series of contrasts is presented between the conditions the faithful would enjoy and the conditions the rebels would suffer. One is compelled to think of the spiritual food and drink with is promised to God's elect in the Christian age. There is "Living Water." There is the "Bread of Life." Since the foes of the Lord do not desire such spiritual nourishment, they will be subject to starvation of the soul.

Isa 65:14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

What could be said to make the meaning any clearer than this verse does it? All that can be done is to urge

the reader to share in the promised joy and spurn the sorrow and vexation of spirit.

Isa 65:15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

From the time Isaiah pronounced these words until the present, the sinful behavior of Israel at that time is a blot on the name of it's record as a nation. The Lord would turn from that name by which they were known and would call His true children by another name. That new name was "Christian." By that new name God's Kingdom is known today.

Isa 65:16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

The one who is to be blessed in the new age will find those blessings only in the Lord. They will not come through an appeal to powerless false deities. When one swears by the name of Jehovah, that vow is based upon the qualities of the One True God of heaven and earth. The sins of Israel will not be applied to the citizens of the new family of God. They will be removed along with the casting off of that shameful people.

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

The Lord has created more than one heaven and earth. He produced that one which came into being as



recorded in the beginning, as described in the first chapter of Genesis. Then He wiped the earth clean and created a new heaven and earth at the time of flood of Noah. The one He speaks of in the present verse is the one which came into being when the church was established through Jesus Christ.

There is difficulty in determining whether the New Heaven and earth promised in the book of Revelation is a maturation of the one begun in Christ, or is to be considered as different from the present one as the Christian age is different from the age of Moses. There are some quite definite statements regarding the disappearance of the present earth as the elements melt with fervent heat and it is burned up.

I repeat that I do not know all of the mysteries of the spiritual creation. The reader is urged to prepare himself or herself for a new spiritual body more like that of Christ than like that of Adam.

Isa 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

This Jerusalem which God promised to create was clearly not a reconstruction of the city in the land of Canaan. The earthly Jerusalem has not been a city of great joy. It has been filled with war and tears. This new city would be in sharp contrast to that old one.

Isa 65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

The New Jerusalem would be a city which God could be proud of and could share in the joy of His people. This

does not sound like the church of this Christian age. It fits the eternal heavenly realm much more closely. Paul stated that “When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall vanish away.” I believe he was talking about the step by step development of God’s people from one of these new heavens and earth to the next. The Christian age replaced the Mosaic age. But there is still death and sorrow in the eyes and hearts of God’s children today. It will be different when the saints are invited in through the gates of that final city of God where that which is in part shall have been replaced by that which is lacking in nothing.

Isa 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

The present writer is not convinced that any human can completely understand the meaning of the following verses. Some are very confident that they refer to the Christian dispensation. It seems more likely that they speak of a situation in which time has become far less important than is the case at present. Why will there be no more an infant only a few days of age. Why will the sinner bear his sins till he is one hundred years of age?

Both heaven and hell will be populated by spiritual beings that are not born, grow old and die. Let us strive to avoid the horrors of hell and find ourselves in the company of the eternally blessed.

Isa 65:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

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These conditions had not been those of the citizens of earthly Jerusalem. They had built houses and others had lived in them. They had planted vineyards and others had taken them over and enjoyed the fruit which should have been eaten by those who planted and cultivated it.

**Isa 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**

Trees are known to be the most long lived organisms in the world of life. Is God not telling us here that the citizens of His New Heaven and Earth will forever live in an atmosphere of peace, without fear of brutality and loss of the fruit of their labor?

**Isa 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.**

Israel was wondering if Jehovah had utterly abandoned them to the power of their enemies. Why did He not bless His people as He had done in days of old? He replies that He has not forgotten that faithful remnant who love and obey Him as children are expected to obey their parents.. The faithful need not fear for their eternal welfare. They will exist in spiritual city where that which is PERFECT has come.

**Isa 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.**

When those who have proven that they truly desire to commune with Him as their Guide He will welcome their call for help. Nothing will please Him more than to answer their call. He will be anxiously waiting for such a call.

**Isa 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.**

Are the wolf and the lamb of this verse symbols for ferocious bloodthirsty beastlike humans, and helpless victims of those ravenous predators, or are they truly animals which are living in a new state where the survival of the fittest is a thing of the past?

Within the Christian family there still remain those who feed on others. There are tears. There are infants who die and hearts which are broken. Today I know only in part. Then I shall know as I am known. O God, help me to live in such a way that the beauties of the New Heaven may be my inheritance. With all my heart, I wish to live in the midst of such peace and spiritual fellowship!

## Chapter 66

This last chapter of the book of Isaiah describes the destiny of both the faithful and the unfaithful. It follows much same pattern as does the last book of the Bible in that a new order is pictured in both Isaiah and Revelation.

However, we are made to wonder if the two pictures are separate, or are applicable to the same conditions. Is there perhaps an overlapping of the truths regarding the new heaven and earth of Isaiah, and the new heaven and earth of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. Let us ponder the matter.

**Isa 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?**

How big is God? Can man build a house big enough for a dwelling place for the Creator of all things? This verse says NO! God is beyond space and time. He can be found beyond the farthest parts of the created universe. The earth is but a place upon which He can place His spiritual feet. He was here before the beginning, and He will outlast this present heaven and earth.

Solomon recognized that the temple he had caused to be erected as a place of worship for God was far too small to contain Him. He said,

*1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*

The temple of Solomon was constructed of temporal materials. It would not be eternal. God's house is to be

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constructed of the souls of faithful men. These shall never be destroyed. What is meant by the "heaven of heavens?" Finite minds are left in astonished wonder in any attempt to completely grasp such a scene.

Isa 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Anything in the way of stone, wood, silver or gold was brought into existence by the hand of God. One who offers such sacrifices is only offering back to God, that which God offered to man.

God is even more interested in the manner of sacrifice than in the value of precious metals. Any sacrifice which is offered to Him will be acceptable only if that sacrifice is made in an humble spirit by one who at least partially realizes God's greatness and his own need to love and obey.

Isa 66:3 He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

The one who offers what would otherwise be a most acceptable sacrifice sins seriously when that sacrifice is offered in pride. To offer an ox in pride is in the eyes of Jehovah just as wrong as to murder a fellow human. A lamb would ordinarily be an approved sacrifice, but if it

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was offered in pride it was as abominable as offering a dog which was forbidden. A drink offering made in a spirit of pride was as offensive to God as the offering of the blood of a pig. The burning of incense in a haughty spirit was as sinful as bowing and offering prayer to an idol.

Men's ways are not necessarily God's ways. Men who attempt to direct their own steps independently of the instructions given by the Lord are apt to find themselves cut off from His most precious blessings.

**Isa 66:4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.**

God does not force men to obey Him. He created man with free will and expected him to use it wisely. If man insists on following in the footsteps of Satan, God will not turn him into a robot in order to rescue him. Paul spoke very plainly to the saints in Thessalonica. If men wish to believe Satan's lies, they will be allowed to delude themselves and move toward spiritual death. Those who sin must be ready to face the consequences of their decision.

*2 Thess 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

*2 Thess 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

*2 Thess 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

*2 Thess 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

*2 Thess 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

**Isa 66:5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.**

Those who were offering sacrifices to idols and were fighting against Jehovah were mocking the ones who honored God's commandments. They had contended that they were glorifying God even though they made their offerings in a proud and haughty spirit. They were not acting to the glory of God. They were to find this out when the righteous are separated from the sinners. The mockers will then be ashamed of their sins. The ones who respected the Word of the Lord will be joyful.

**Isa 66:6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies.**

The city is God's city. The temple is the place of worship. It is from God Himself that the wonders to be discussed will be brought forth. It would be wise for the readers of the prophet Isaiah to open their eyes, their ears and their hearts to God's coming warning.

**Isa 66:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.**

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A woman was to give birth to a man-child. Normally the birth of a child would be preceded by labor pains. This birth would not be prolonged. It would take place suddenly. The implication is that it would be a surprise to those were going about their ways in this world.

The woman is the nation of Israel. She is to bring forth the Son of God. He is the Seed of the woman who will bruise the head of the serpent. It is He who will cause Satan to be cast down to the dust. The coming of the Christ was to be unexpected by the Hebrew people.

Isa 66:8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

A new nation would come into being very quickly. The Jews who insisted on following their own ways would give way to a new spiritual people who were willing to hear and obey the Lord. The suddenness of this change would be shocking to the haughty ones. The descendants of this new nation of spiritual Israel would multiply in an awesome manner.

Isa 66:9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

Since the time of Adam, God had been preparing the way for man to find salvation from sin. After some six thousand years the period of preparation would be completed. The pregnant woman would give birth to the Saviour of the world. God had made all things ready. He would not allow mockers to prevent the completion of

the plan of salvation. The Redeemer would come out of the womb of Zion.

Isa 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

The city of God was to become a gladsome place. Those who considered her precious were to rejoice in the coming birth. Why then does God state that those who rejoice for her were mourning? This is said because the ones who had been persecuted by those who despised the will of God had mourned would become the ones who rejoiced over the new birth. We recall the words of God's own Son, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be filled."

Isa 66:11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

The newborn would be nourished through the breast of the mother. That which was dedicated to God in the time of Isaiah would find satisfaction and delight in the glory which the Lord would show to the world through the new Jerusalem, the church of God, the spiritual temple in which God would dwell and fill with Himself.

Isa 66:12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

Isa 66:13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

This new Zion, or mountain of God would be founded on peace. Gentiles would be invited to become a part of it. God would give her His affection as a mother would care for her precious infant. He would nurse her, carry her on his hip and bounce her upon His knee.

This new and spiritual Jerusalem would find God's peace flowing through her like a river. Both the Jew and the Gentile would cherish that peace as they labored together in the service of their Father in heaven.

Isa 66:14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

The contrast between God's attitude toward those who love and obey Him and those who place their own will in opposition to His will is kept before the reader constantly. The heart is the seat of emotions. The bones are the supporting framework of the body. Both the heart and the bones of the faithful will be made healthy and complete when the new order is born.

The unhappy condition of the opposers of the Lord will find their way most difficult. Having God mad at you is not the best way to find peace of soul.

Isa 66:15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Those who wish to do battle with the Lord will find Him ready for that battle. He will be armed with fire to

burn them. His fury will be turn things upside down like a tornado. There will be no escape from His wrath.

Is this a picture of the punishment which was to be poured out upon the rebellious Hebrews in the destruction of Jerusalem? Or does it to beyond that to show the horror of the final judgment when His friends and His foes are each sent to their eternal destinies?

Isa 66:16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

It seems that this is the final judgment. "All flesh" is caused to answer for their choice of a way of life. There will be many who lose their spiritual lives in this terrible confrontation between God and His enemies.

Isa 66:17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

Obviously those discussed in this verse are offering sacrifices, but they are doing so in the gardens which are used also for sacrificing to idols. They include the meat of hogs and of mice in their sacrifices, eating this forbidden food themselves and offering it to the Lord at the same table. It shall prove to be poison for their souls.

Isa 66:18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

We may hide our sins from our fellow humans. We will never hide them from the all-seeing eye of the Lord. He is aware of every deed and every thought of man. His glory shall be demonstrated so clearly that all will have opportunity to either praise Him, or foolishly reject Him.

Isa 66:19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

The Bible speaks of the “Mark of the beast.” It also speaks of the sign of the Son of man. Those who have praised God will escape the terrible fury of the Lord. They will be grateful for the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross will be appointed as missionaries to all of the nations of the earth. The message is to be preached to every soul, regardless of color or national origin. The Jews will cherish the thought of inviting Gentiles into the new creation.

Isa 66:20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

These brethren which are to be brought will be made up of both Jews and Gentiles. They shall come from every

direction, by every means of transportation, to gather in the New Jerusalem. When a soul is converted to God, the one converting that soul is offering that which God considers as worth more than all the world.

These offerings will not be polluted or forbidden sacrifices. They will be clean and suitable for entry into the new temple of God. What a wonderful gathering this would be. What happiness and joy will be experienced by all who bring others to God's side

Isa 66:21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

The priests in this new order will not be limited to the descendants of Aaron or of Levi. They will be a royal priesthood, with every citizen of the city of God offering his own soul as a living sacrifice as his prayers rise up before the Lord as a sweet incense.

Isa 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

This new heavens and earth will not be replaced. They will exist forever. The Jew is not to be eliminated because he is of the seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham by faith will stand side by side with the Gentile who lives by that same faith. Those faithful, both Jew and Gentile, will be safe in the arms of the Heavenly Father.

Isa 66:23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

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This verse does not indicate that the law of Moses will be kept in the new creation. That law was to be nailed to the cross when the Saviour offered the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men who will follow Him. It does indicate that the citizens of the New Jerusalem will refuse to offer sacrifices to idols. They will come to worship before the Lord, and Him only!

**Isa 66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.**

The similarity of wording between this last verse of the book of Isaiah and the 6th and 7th verses of the Book of Revelation must be set beside one another as we close this study.

*Rev 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

*Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

I hope that if I succeed in avoiding the hideous conditions of those who are condemned in the judgment, that looking upon their suffering will not last but for a moment. How could heaven be a place of peace if one could observe the torment of the condemned for ever and ever.

### **Afterword:**

After having spent an enormous number of hours in concentrated reading in and writing on, the book of Isaiah I wish to express my thanks to the Lord for allowing me the opportunity. I do not question the unity of the book. It has a main theme which runs throughout. God is giving men the chance to move step by step along with Him as He brings men back to eternal life which was lost in the beginning.

Those who hunger for a return to that condition of spiritual prosperity and peace will be guided back. Those who are determined to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thus direct their own paths will be allowed to oppose the will of the Creator. But they will have proven themselves not fit for the new eternal city of the saints. As Eve was informed, "In the day that thou eastest thereof thou shalt surely die." The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is only digestible by God. It is deadly poison to man.

*Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

*Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*Prov 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Thank you Dear Lord!  
Thank you Isaiah!



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